January 5, 2015 – FDSTF Update

Task Force Members --

1. **Meeting This Month** -- The next scheduled meeting of the Florida Defense Support Task Force will be **January 15, 2015 at the Doubletree Hotel, 101 S. Adams St., Tallahassee, FL** beginning at 9:00 AM. Draft meeting agenda is attached.

2. **Call In Number for Task Force Meeting** -- Call in number: 800-501-8979  Access Code: 8784566

3. **Attachment** -- Draft Agenda for Task Force Meeting

Happy New Year!

Regards, BG.

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Articles of Interest

DOD Budget–
DoD braces for political battle over military pay

By Andrew Tilghman, Staff Writer

The Pentagon is bracing for one of its biggest political battles in years as a blue-ribbon commission on military compensation and retirement nears the end of its two-year study and moves closer to releasing its proposals for change by Feb. 1. An internal document obtained by Military Times reveals the Defense Department is setting up a rapid-response plan that will scrutinize the commission's potentially controversial proposals and send a recommendation to President Obama within 60 days, or by April 1. DoD leaders have no idea what the independent commission will propose to Congress, so they have tapped a team of high-level officials to review, analyze and prepare a formal response to influence a potentially historic vote on Capitol Hill.

Retiring Senator: Lone Path to Fiscal Deal is Package Both Parties Won't Love

By John T. Bennett

A retiring US senator has some advice for both political parties: The lone way to get rid of sequestration is to accept a deal neither would like very much. Sen. Saxby Chambliss, R-Ga., has been part of "gangs" formed to craft bipartisan fiscal plans. The latest was the so-called "gang of six," which served up a massive deficit-reduction plan in 2011 that went nowhere on Capitol Hill. And in his final days as a senator, Chambliss says he's hopeful that the Republican-controlled 114th Congress will "say, 'OK, guys, we have got to get serious about this.'"
Defense News © January 3, 2015

By John T. Bennett

Many US defense insiders are hoping for another federal budget deal that again eases military spending limits, but crafting a deal will resemble a political Rubik's Cube. And, in a potential blow to the Defense Department's constant quest for more dollars, a key player is signalling support for leaving all spending caps as-is. As defense insiders and their allies on Capitol Hill looked toward the new GOP-controlled Congress, many eagerly predicted Republicans will quickly pass a budget resolution that boosts a $535 billion cap on Pentagon spending for 2016.........

Space Coast –

**SpaceX launch set for Tuesday**


Orlando Sentinel © January 4, 2015

By Scott Powers

SpaceX and NASA plan to launch a rocket Tuesday morning to send supplies and equipment to the International Space Station — the first such mission since another company's effort blew up in Virginia in October. The SpaceX rocket Falcon 9 is set to launch from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station at 6:20 a.m., lifting the company's Dragon capsule toward rendezvous later this week with the space station. The launch has been postponed several times since an early December attempt was scrubbed........

NS Mayport –
BAE Mayport gets $14.5 million Navy contract mod


Marine Log © January 4, 2014

BAE Systems Southeast Shipyards Mayport, LLC, Jacksonville, FL, is being awarded a $14,572,040 modification to a previously awarded contract (N40024-10-C-4406) for the selected restricted availability of the Arleigh Burke class destroyer USS Roosevelt (DDG-80), to include hull, machinery, electrical, electronics, ship alterations, and piping alteration and repair work. The primary focus of this repair package is to accomplish structural repairs and habitability upgrades. Work will be performed in Jacksonville, FL, and is expected to be completed by May 2015. Fiscal 2015 operations and maintenance (Navy) and fiscal 2015 other procurement (Navy) funding in the amount of $14,572,040 will be obligated at time of award. Contract funds in the amount of $14,363,237 will expire at the end of the current fiscal year. The Southeast Regional Maintenance Center, Jacksonville, FL, is the contracting activity.

Other Items of Interest –

In 2015, Army will lose nearly 20,000 soldiers in drawdown


Army Times © December 27, 2014

The Army stands to lose 18,200 soldiers in the drawdown plan for 2015, through attrition and reduced accessions, but also with retention screening boards that may lead to soldiers being forced out. Chief of Staff Gen. Ray Odierno said involuntary separation actions will be targeted at the various officer and noncommissioned officer ranks "to keep the force in balance," and to compensate for the additional soldiers who were
brought into service during the manpower buildup for the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq......

**KC-46A Test Plane Completes First Flight**

Defense News © December 29, 2014

By Aaron Mehta

The KC-46A Pegasus tanker program hit an important milestone Sunday with the successful first flight of its engineering test plane. The Boeing 767-2C, a test version of the KC-46A without the refueling boom and other tanker equipment, took wing at 9:29 a.m. Pacific time, landing three hours and 32 minutes later at Boeing Field just outside of Seattle. It marks the first test flight of any kind for the KC-46A tanker program, which will produce 179 new planes to replace the aging KC-135 tanker fleet, with production ending in 2027. The tanker replacement program is a major focus for Boeing's defense arm as many of its programs wind down. In a company statement, Boeing test pilot Ron Johnston said the 767-2C performed "flawlessly," adding that pilots took the plane up to 28,000 feet and near max speed while verifying various systems........

**Defense 2015 Preview: Downturn Ends but Industry Troubles Not Over**

National Defense Magazine © December 30, 2014
By Sandra Erwin

Pentagon contractors are entering the new year with a mix of caution and optimism. Military spending is about to hit bottom and is projected to inch up over the next several years. With Ashton Carter as defense secretary, the Pentagon gains a leader who has been an ardent critic of budget cuts and will again be on the front lines of that fight. But industry CEOs still face a rough road ahead as the Pentagon slows down arms purchases and military spending remains caught in the crossfire of partisan battles on Capitol Hill. The industry heads into the fifth year of the defense downturn with some assurance that the "worst is behind," said defense analyst Robert Stallard, of RBC Capital Markets. “We are seeing the trough in U.S. defense spending, and the next step
is a return to growth," he told investors. It remains to be seen, though, whether modest growth in the budget will boost contractors' bottom lines. Investors also will be watching the Pentagon’s other budget, the “overseas contingency operations” fund that pays for ongoing wars………..

Here’s What To Expect in National Security in 2015


Defense One © December 24, 2014

Russia stormed into Ukraine, stoking Cold War flames. A little-known group of fighters calling themselves the Islamic State upended the civil war in Syria and re-kindled Iraq, opening wounds in a place where thousands of American troops gave their lives. The on-paper end to U.S. combat in Afghanistan is still nowhere near reality. And isolated North Korea is at it again, this time threatening cyber war. Bottom of FormThe year 2014 was one of many challenges and threats across the globe and in Washington, where defense spending remains an annual battleground. Heading into the New Year, there’s no shortage of problems at a time when uncertainty is the norm………..
January 12, 2015 – FDSTF Update

Task Force Members --

1. **Meeting This Week** – Looking forward to seeing you at this week’s meeting of the Florida Defense Support Task Force on Thursday, **January 15, 2015 at the Doubletree Hotel, 101 S. Adams St., Tallahassee, FL** beginning at 9:00 AM. Draft meeting agenda is attached.

2. **Call In Number for Task Force Meeting** -- Call in number: 800-501-8979  Access Code: 8784566

3. **Best Practices Study DRAFT** -- Florida Defense Alliance members are reviewing the DRAFT of the TPG Best Practices study and will submit their recommendations to the Task Force no later than January 23, 2015. They will review the Best Practices Study to identify and recommend practices from other states and communities that would be feasible to implement in Florida to improve the state’s ability to protect, sustain and enhance military installations and missions. The intent is to identify best practices for incorporation into agenda items for consideration by the Florida Legislature.

4. **Attachment** -- Draft Agenda for Task Force Meeting

Regards, BG.

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Articles of Interest:

BRAC –

**BRAC Lurks below Surface of European Infrastructure Initiative**


Defense Communities 360 © January 8, 2015

The European Infrastructure Consolidation announced Thursday should help DOD make its case to Congress for a new BRAC round, according to the Pentagon’s top installations official. Since the Obama administration first asked permission three years ago to conduct additional base closures, one of the most popular reasons cited by lawmakers for ignoring the request was that the department still needed to streamline its overseas footprint. On Thursday, John Conger, performing the duties of the assistant secretary of defense for energy, installations and environment, acknowledged the effort to pare excess infrastructure partially was intended to respond to lawmakers’ concerns……..

**Defense Officials Signal Intention to Request New BRAC Round**


Defense Communities 360 © January 11, 2015

Comments last week by two senior DOD officials provided a relatively strong indication the Obama administration once more will ask Congress for permission to conduct another round of base closures when it submits its fiscal 2016 budget request next month. On Friday Rear Adm. John Kirby, the Pentagon press secretary, told reporters that the European infrastructure consolidation announced the previous day didn’t change the department’s view of the pressing need for a new BRAC round.

“You know, we’re operating right now with what we think is about a 25 percent excess infrastructure here in the continental United States. And we simply can’t afford that,” said Kirby. “And I suspect you’ll see that — that be part of the discussion moving forward into February,” he said............
Stakeholders Meet to Streamline Air Force’s Utilities Privatization Process

http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/stakeholders-meet-to-streamline-air-forces-utilities-privatization-process/?utm_source=dc360&utm_campaign=1f9a5afe0d-RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_04f8ff45e8-1f9a5afe0d-55784537&ct=t(RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN)#

Defense Communities 360 © January 6, 2015

Stakeholders from across the Air Force and DOD met at the Air Force Civil Engineer Center (AFCEC) to streamline the process for turning over utility systems to the private sector. Officials from headquarters Air Force, AFCEC’s Installations and Energy directorates, and the Defense Logistics Agency Energy, along with Air Force legal counsel, major command utilities privatization representatives and installation contracting officer representatives, focused on eliminating redundancies from the existing process for privatizing water, wastewater, electric and natural gas utilities, reported the AFCEC Installations directorate. “We have to change in today’s business environment; the military has been naive in this realm,” said Robert Moriarty, director of the Installations directorate……..

Bill would allow easier sharing of various services between military, cities


Enid News and Eagle © January 11, 2015

By Jeff Mullin

Language included in the new defense spending bill will make it easier for military installations and municipalities to share support services, says Mike Cooper, city of Enid military liaison. The language, championed by Sen. Jim Inhofe, R-Okl., is designed to overcome concerns by military leaders about previous legislation that opened the way for military-municipal partnerships. “This is a great tool that can be leveraged
nationwide,” said Cooper, who also serves as chairman of Oklahoma Strategic Military Planning Commission and national president of Association of Defense Communities. “Senator Inhofe is all about increasing mission capability and reducing costs.”

DOD Budget–

New Players Mean Budget Deal Remains a Long Shot

With new lawmakers heading up the House and Senate Budget committees in the 114th Congress, the likelihood that Congress is able to duplicate the late-2013 agreement that lifted the fiscal 2014 and 2015 defense spending caps by a total of $31 billion appears remote. That deal was negotiated by Rep. Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) and Sen. Patty Murray (D-Wash.), but both are moving to new committee assignments this year. At this point, it’s not entirely clear how their replacements, Rep. Tom Price (R-Ga.) and Sen. Mike Enzi (R-Wyo.), plan on addressing sequestration. If Congress does not revise the 2011 Budget Control Act, the topline for defense spending would rise only $1.7 billion to $523 billion in FY 2016…

Editorial: New Shot at Sequester Relief

With Republicans poised to take control both chambers of Congress, it’s up to them to strike a budget deal that will avert automatic spending cuts slated to resume in full force this year. Last time, the bipartisan budget deal was crafted by two budget chairs with significant clout within their caucuses: Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., and Rep. Paul Ryan, R-Wis. This time, it will be two Republicans, Rep. Tom Price, R-Ga., and Sen. Mike Enzi, R-Wyo., who will spearhead a deal. But to succeed, they must adopt Ryan-Murray principles to get a deal with broad bipartisan support. That means including
senior Democrats, since a plan written for the House GOP won't get the necessary Democrats in the Senate to pass. That, in turn, means also including domestic elements that Democrats can support, allowing defense caps to be raised. The deal has to be more than merely red meat for the right……..

**Congress should see Obama's defense budget and raise it**


The Hill © January 12, 2015

By Mackenzie Eaglen, contributor, and Charles Morrison

As the 114th Congress kicks off, the new Republican majority has an important opportunity to prove it is serious about national security. Its first major test will come early, as reports indicate the White House will release its fiscal year 2016 budget, unusually, on time this Feb. 2. Congress is expecting a base budget request for the Pentagon of $535 billion — roughly $21 billion less than pre-sequestration levels of spending, but still about $35 billion over the legal budget cap of $500 billion. President Obama's submission of another defense budget that ignores the law should clear up any confusion by policymakers that the military is not getting enough funding to meet its many needs right now. The president is admitting, in effect, that his own defense budgets are too low by blowing through the budget caps…….

**Chairman: Sequestration Cuts Would Require Strategy Change**


DOD News © January 11, 2015

By John D. Banusiewicz

Unless Congress changes the Budget Control Act, which now requires a return to sequestration-level spending cuts in 2016, the military will need to change its strategy, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff said in an interview broadcast today.
In an appearance on "Fox News Sunday With Chris Wallace," Army Gen. Martin E. Dempsey said the Army is drawing down from 570,000 soldiers to 450,000, but he noted that a Pentagon analysis shows sequestration would drive that number to 420,000, and even lower under some circumstances. "Under those circumstances of sequestration in the Budget Control Act, we would, in fact, have to change our strategy, and we would be far less able to maintain the kind of global presence and the kind of stability we bring to our allies," the general said………

MacDill AFB –

Squadron of fighter jets at MacDill for training


Tampa Tribune © January 7, 2015

By Howard Altman | Tribune Staff

MacDill Air Force Base is busier than usual these days. Aside from the usual flights of KC-135 Stratotanker aerial refueling jets, and the jets that fly dignitaries in and out of the base, MacDill is hosting Navy F-18s from Naval Air Station Oceana in Virginia, according to Air Force 2nd Lt. Patrick Gargan, a spokesman for the 6th Air Mobility Wing, the base host unit. The Navy fighter jets arrived at MacDill on Jan. 4 and are expected to stay until Jan. 17, said Gargan. The planes will be flying no earlier than 8 a.m. and last no later than 8:30 p.m, Gargan said. The fighters are Hornets and Super Hornets, F/A-18C/D and F/A-18E/F models, according to Air Force Tech. Sgt. Brandon Shapiro, a wing spokesman. A fleet replacement squadron, the exercise is to train the newest aviators, Shapiro told the Tribune in an email…….

Eglin AFB –

F-35 Program Office: Gun Remains On Schedule

http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/air-space/strike/2015/01/07/f35-gun-on-track/21401907/

Defense News © January 8, 2015

By Aaron Mehta
The gun on the F-35 joint strike fighter remains on schedule to go operational in 2017, the Pentagon said Wednesday. The Daily Beast reported on Dec. 31 that the gun would not be able to be used until 2019, but in a statement F-35 Joint Program Office spokesman Joe DellaVedova described that story as a "misreporting" of the facts. The gun in question is a 25mm system known as the GAU-22, developed by General Dynamics. It is internal on the F-35A model and carried in an external pod of the F-35B and F-35C designs. GAU-22 testing for all three models is scheduled to start this year.

The F-35 Has To Phone Texas Before Taking Off


Defense One © January 8, 2015

By Patrick Tucker

The U.S. military ran the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter through a series of tests aboard the USS Nimitz super carrier in San Diego in early November. It performed adequately, with one exception — it needed to send its diagnostic data to Lockheed Martin in Fort Worth, Texas, before taking off. If the most recent exercises are any indication, the F-35 may need to phone home every time it sets out on a mission. First the good news. The plane flew through its aerial paces well enough and passed a majority of its flight tests.

Hurlburt Field –

New commander at ‘The best wing in the Air Force’


Northwest Florida Daily News © January 6, 2015
By KELLY HUMPHREY | Daily News

After 18 months as the commander of the 1st Special Operations Wing, Col. Bill West passed the ceremonial flag on Tuesday to the wing’s incoming commander, Col. Sean Farrell.

―You are truly coming to the best wing in the Air Force,‖ West told his replacement.

Farrell’s arrival at Hurlburt is a homecoming of sorts. Born at Eglin Air Force Base, he is a 1990 Florida State University graduate. Farrell was assigned to Hurlburt previously, starting in March 1997 to December 2003.

NS Mayport –

By the numbers: The economic impact of littoral combat ships in Mayport


Jacksonville Business Journal © January 9, 2015

By Jensen Werley

The break-down of jobs and regional GDP that will be created per littoral combat ship in Mayport. My latest Jacksonville Business Journal cover story is about what the Navy’s littoral combat ships — the state-of-the-art surface combat ships being built by Lockheed Martin Corp. and Austal USA — will mean for Mayport. Eight of the ships are designated to be homeported at Mayport Naval Station. My story focused on the work that has to be done to prepare the base for the arrival of the ships, but I was also interested in looking at what would be the economic impact of the new vessels.

Florida National Guard –

Governors Brace for Next Iteration of Battle over Army National Guard Aircraft

After successfully fending off the Army’s plan last year to shift the National Guard’s Apache attack helicopters to the active component, the nation’s governors are expecting another fight over the Guard this year. “We already know that the Pentagon intends to resubmit plans to reduce the size of the Army Guard and to remove the Guard’s Apache helicopters,” Utah Gov. Gary Herbert said last week at a State of the States speech in Washington. “Governors and Congress said no once. And we will say it again. The Guard is the most cost-effective, combat-ready force in our nation’s arsenal,” said Herbert, who serves as co-chairman of the National Governors Association.

NAS Key West –

**VCNO Visits NAS Key West**


Navy News Service © December 16, 2014

Vice Chief of Naval Operations (VCNO) Adm. Michelle Howard visited Naval Air Station (NAS) Key West and conducted an all-hands call, Dec. 15. During Howard’s visit, she toured annexes, received a first-hand look at on-base housing provided by Balfour Beatty Communities and addressed Sailors and Coast Guardsmen on the prospective future of warfighting. During the all-hands call, Howard discussed plans to align the Navy’s workforce more with today's civilian workforce, survey results regarding sexual assault reporting and cyber culture. Howard talked about the dimensions of warfighting, with the normal three being at sea, under the sea and in the air. She added another dimension, "Cyber, which is the next common space, [and] brings us into the fourth dimension of warfighters," said Howard.

Defense Industry –
Five Reasons Defense Lobbyists Are Facing Harder Times On Capitol Hill

http://www.forbes.com/sites/lorenthompson/2015/01/06/five-reasons-defense-lobbyists-are-facing-harder-times-on-capitol-hill/

Forbes © January 6, 2015

By Loren Thompson

It’s turning out to be a tough decade for defense lobbyists on Capitol Hill. Although lobbying is almost universally reviled in popular culture, it’s an unavoidable facet of the marketing function when companies depend on the federal government for revenues. At the very least, contractors need to field congressional operatives who can protect key franchises from the efforts of competitors to turn them into bill-payers for other priorities. The legislative process is so baroque that it affords numerous opportunities for mischief. But some decades are more receptive to lobbying than others, and the current one is shaping up to be the least friendly since World War Two — at least for those who represent defense interests. After ten years of continuous war, military spending peaked just as the decade was beginning, thanks to the election of an administration more focused on domestic initiatives and the departure of U.S. forces from Iraq.

Other Items of Interest –

New U.S. Stealth Jet Can’t Fire Its Gun Until 2019


The Daily Beast © December 31, 2014

America’s $400 billion Joint Strike Fighter, or F-35, is slated to join fighter squadrons next year—but missing software will render its 25mm cannon useless. The Pentagon’s newest stealth jet, the nearly $400 billion Joint Strike Fighter, won’t be able to fire its gun during operational missions until 2019, three to four years after it becomes operational. Even though the Joint Strike Fighter, or F-35, is supposed to join frontline U.S. Marine Corps fighter squadrons next year and Air Force units in 2016, the jet’s software does not yet have the ability to shoot its 25mm cannon. But even when the jet will be able to shoot its gun, the F-35 barely carries enough ammunition to make the weapon useful.
Go East, Young Man: US Closes Bases In Western Europe, Builds Up In East

Breaking Defense © January 8, 2015

By SYDNEY J. FREEDBERG JR.

The Pentagon giveth, and the Pentagon taketh away. While the Defense Department is shrinking or shuttering roughly 30 facilities across Europe, the real story isn’t a downsizing: It’s a shift. Even as the US consolidates facilities in Western Europe — some of which date to World War II — it’s building up infrastructure in Eastern Europe to contain the rising Russian threat. The European Infrastructure Consolidation (EIC) announced this morning will pull the US completely or partially out of sites in Britain, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Portugal, and the Netherlands. Once $1.4 billion in shutdown costs are paid over the next few years, Defense officials said this morning, EIC should yield $500 million a year in savings. At the same time, however, the Pentagon’s pouring $985 billion this year into the entirely separate European Reassurance Initiative (ERI), most of it for exercises, patrols, and other shows of force, but at least some for facilities in Eastern Europe……..

Analysis: In the End, LCS Dodges the Critics

Defense News © January 11, 2015

By Christopher P. Cavas
The past year was one of great anticipation in naval circles as the US Navy considered how to up-gun, lethalize, improve, expound or expand on its littoral combat ship concept. Not that the service wanted to do it — the effort was directed by Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel, reacting to critics who derided the LCS as an under-armed, short-legged, non-survivable, overpriced folly. In February, Hagel told the Navy to develop "a capable and lethal small surface combatant [SSC], generally consistent with the capabilities of a frigate." The service was to consider new and existing designs and
versions of the LCS. The defense secretary also told the Navy to issue no more LCS contracts after the 32nd ship — short of the total buy of 52 ships........
January 20, 2015 – FDSTF Update

Task Force Members --

1. **February Task Force Meeting** – The next meeting of the Florida Defense Support Task Force will be on Thursday, **February 19, 2015 at the Doubletree Hotel, 101 S. Adams St., Tallahassee, FL** beginning at 9:00 AM.

2. **Best Practices Study DRAFT** -- Florida Defense Alliance members are reviewing the DRAFT of the TPG Best Practices study and will submit their recommendations to the Task Force no later than January 23, 2015. They will review the Best Practices Study to identify and recommend practices from other states and communities that would be feasible to implement in Florida to improve the state’s ability to protect, sustain and enhance military installations and missions. The intent is to identify best practices for incorporation into agenda items for consideration by the Florida Legislature.

3. **Attachments** –
   - 2015 Task Force Meeting Schedule – Updated
   - Federal defense related spending by state

Regards, BG.

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Articles of Interest:
Pentagon Still Pushing To Retire A-10 and Close Bases


DOD Buzz © January 12, 2015

By Richard Sisk

The Pentagon renewed its commitment Friday to retiring the Air Force A-10 Thunderbolt ground attack aircraft and closing excess military bases in the U.S., setting up another battle with Congress in budget hearings to begin next month. Congress last year rejected the Air Force’s push to mothball the A-10, popularly known as the Warthog, and the Pentagon’s proposal to establish a new Base Re-Alignment and Closure Commission (BRAC) but Rear Adm. John Kirby, the Pentagon press secretary, said both issues would be a top priority for the Defense Department in hearings on the 2016 defense budget……..

No BRAC until Military’s Future Role Is Clarified, Thornberry Says

http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/no-brac-until-militarys-future-role-is-clarified-thornberry-says/?utm_source=dc360&utm_campaign=8b21f26779-RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_04f8ff45e8-8b21f26779-55784537&ct=t(RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN)#

Defense Communities 360 © January 15, 2015

One week after taking the reins of the House Armed Services Committee, Rep. Mac Thornberry (R-Texas) revealed a strong reluctance to consider authorizing a new round of base closures, and underscored the need to better define the future roles and missions of the nation’s military before going ahead. “We are still having a discussion in this country about what the role of the United States is in the world and about what sort of military capabilities we need to fulfill that role. Once you give up a base or a training range, it’s gone forever,” Thornberry told CQ. “And, personally, I’m not comfortable yet saying we will never need this base or this training range until we sort our way through this bigger question of what kind of military capabilities are we going to need to fulfill the role that we intend to play in the world,” he said……..

Armed Services chief: No 'appetite' for new round of base closures
By Martin Matishak

The chairman of the House Armed Services Committee says there is little support on his panel among Republicans or Democrats for a new round of military base closures. “I don’t think there’s a lot of appetite on the committee, on either side, to do that,” Rep. Mac Thornberry (R-Texas) told reporters after the panel’s inaugural meeting of the new Congress. “I think we need to have this conversation about what our role in the world is before we start giving stuff up,” he added. “Because once you give up a base or a training range, you’re not going to get it back.” The Pentagon is expected to propose a new Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC) to lawmakers when it sends its fiscal 2016 budget proposal to Capitol Hill next month.

Air Force Confirms Intention to Ask Congress for BRAC Authorization

Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James on Thursday acknowledged DOD would be asking Congress to hold another BRAC round as part of the fiscal 2016 budget request. James, who was delivering a “State of the Air Force” briefing at the Pentagon along with Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Welsh, also told reporters that the new budget would ask to retire fleets of aging aircraft, including the A-10 Warthog, as it did last year. “We are going to be asking the Congress of course to eliminate sequestration, we will renew that call, as well as to allow us to get rid of excess base infrastructure. We’ll be renewing that as well. And we will once again ask for the authority to divest some of our older aircraft in order to free up money to plow back into people, readiness, and modernization,” James said.

Army Planners Look Ahead to Looming BRAC Round
The Army is banking on a new round of base closures to eliminate excess infrastructure, and plans to craft a strategy for realigning and closing installations so it is ready when the next BRAC is authorized, according to the 2025 vision and strategy document the Army's office of the assistant secretary for installations, energy and environment released recently. “The Army requires additional BRAC authorization to take unnecessary facilities out of the funding stream. This will allow the Army to apply these resources toward readiness and other priorities,” according to Strategy 2025.

DOD Budget–

Budget Deal Will Be Difficult to Justify, Sessions Says

Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-Ala.), a senior member of the Senate Armed Services and Budget committees, says the bar will be relatively high for fiscal conservatives to sign off on an agreement to relax the Budget Control Act cap on defense spending. “I believe if people want to raise the defense cap, then they’re going to have to justify it,” Sessions told Defense News. “We’re going to have to talk about it, and we’re going to have to go to more than just general rhetoric but specific justifications because it doesn’t do any good to have … the Budget Control Act if we’re not going to adhere to it but [for] a year or two.”

USAF Leaders Offer FY16 Budget Hints

By Aaron Mehta
Expect the US Air Force's FY16 budget request to look similar to what the service submitted in FY15, including an ongoing push to retire fleets of aging aircraft, the services top two officials told reporters Thursday. Speaking at a semi-annual "State of the Air Force" event, Secretary Deborah Lee James and Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Welsh confirmed they will move forward with plans to retire fleets despite strong pushback from Congress over the A-10 Warthog and, to a lesser extent, the U-2 spy plane and KC-10 tanker.

**Hagel: Budget Uncertainty Is the Biggest Challenge Facing the Military**


Defense One © January 15, 2015

By Marcus Weisberger

Chuck Hagel's tenure as defense secretary is drawing to a close where it all began 48 years ago when he showed up at the base gate here for Army basic training in one early morning in April 1967. The former Army sergeant and Vietnam veteran was right at home offering up career and life advice to an auditorium packed of senior enlisted military leaders, a group of individuals that Hagel has always been comfortable in front of throughout his nearly two-year tenure as defense secretary..........

**Thornberry Hopeful Lawmakers Will Relax Spending Cap**

http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/thornberry-hopeful-lawmakers-will-relax-spending-cap/#

Defense Communities 360 © January 19, 2015

Rep. Mac Thornberry (R-Texas), the new chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, said he was optimistic Congress would relax the stringent cap on defense spending for fiscal 2016, but at the same time offered no clear strategy for achieving
that aim. “I think we will find some way to improve the situation and I think we definitely should,” Thornberry told CQ last week. “And I really believe that most Republicans and Democrats in the House also agree with that — that there needs to be a fix to sequestration,” he said. The chairman acknowledged, however, that it is not clear how the two parties could strike a deal to lift the defense spending cap in the 2011 Budget Control Act.

Space Coast –

**SpaceX launches rocket but can't retrieve it in 1 piece**


Orlando Sentinel © January 9, 2015

By Scott Powers

SpaceX blasted off its Falcon 9 rocket Saturday morning with a capsule of supplies and equipment for the International Space Station but failed in its attempt to bring the used rocket back down in one piece. The spacecraft’s Dragon capsule reached orbit on its way to a Monday rendezvous with the station. It was the private company's 14th consecutive flawless launch of the Falcon 9 rocket. This time, however, SpaceX tried something new: an effort to control the booster's return and land it gently on an ocean barge, a step toward the company's goal of making its rockets reusable and launches much cheaper. The difficult maneuver didn't entirely work.

**James 'Disappointed' by SpaceX Delay**


By Aaron Mehta
The secretary of the Air Force is "disappointed" that SpaceX was not certified for military space launch before the end of 2014, but remains confident the company will meet the requirements set forth from the service. "I'm disappointed that it didn't happen at the end of December, but to me, it is not a question of 'if,' it is a question of 'when' [certification] will happen," Deborah Lee James told an audience at the Atlantic Council Wednesday. SpaceX is attempting to become the first company to break the monopoly on military space launch held by the United Launch Alliance (ULA), whose Atlas V and Delta IV vehicles provide transport to military satellites under the Evolved Expendable Launch Vehicle (EELV) program.

**Atlas V rocket set to launch Tuesday from Cape Canaveral**


Orlando Sentinel © January 19, 2015

By Scott Powers

An Atlas V rocket is set to blast off from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station on Tuesday night with a military telecommunication satellite intended to help build a communications network in the sky. The rocket, scheduled to lift off at 7:43 p.m. Tuesday, is carrying the Mobile User Objective System 3, or MUOS-3, satellite. It is the third in a five-satellite Navy network intended to provide smartphone-like service to in areas that would otherwise be isolated from high-speed voice and data communications.

Eglin AFB –

**Officials Remain Confident In F-35A Schedule**

http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/2015/01/15/f-35a-schedule/21830501/


By Brian Everstine
F-35 Joint Program Office executive Lt. Gen. Chris Bogdan said in October that he was worried that the Air Force might not be able to make the deadline of Aug. 1, 2016, because of the manpower issue. "The maintainer issue is not an F-35 program issue, the maintenance issue is an Air Force problem," Welsh said. "We have enough people to prioritize this to the point where will be able to get to IOC." While the service should have enough maintainers to make the deadline, the details on how it plans to fill the maintenance ranks will not be releasable until the president signs off on the fiscal 2016 budget proposal, expected early next month. Welsh said the service has been working with Congress on how to get maintainers into the F-35 schoolhouse, along with other ways to address the shortfall. If these plans are not agreed to, however, the schedule could be at risk……

NS Mayport –

**Mayport to get frigates again — kinda**


By JoAnna Delfin

Mayport Naval Station used to be known as Frigate Row, with the small surface combatants making up the backbone of the local fleet. But just over four years ago, the frigates started going away, being decommissioned and sold off to other navies. Taking their place: the littoral combat ship, a cutting edge vessel with its share of critics but strong Navy support. Now, those vessels are going to be called frigates, according to Defense News………. 

**LCS Now Officially Called A Frigate**


By Christopher P. Cavas

Since its inception in 2001, the US Navy's Littoral Combat Ship program has been described as needed to replace the fleet's frigates, minesweepers and patrol ships. But
the ship’s place in the line of battle continues to be debated. Navy Secretary Ray Mabus thinks one of the reasons the ship is misunderstood is the nontraditional LCS designator. He directed an effort to find a more traditional and appropriate designation for the LCS and several other recent ship types, such as the Joint High Speed Vessel (JHSV), the Mobile Landing Platform (MLP) and the Afloat Forward Staging Base (AFSB). The first of the types to be redesignated is the LCS………

NSA Panama City –

NOAA divers come for the water, stay for the savings


News Herald © January 9, 2015

By CHRIS OLWELL

Key West’s loss is Panama City’s gain. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) will move a winter diving training program from Key West to Panama City this winter to reduce the cost of the program, said Greg McFall, director of NOAA’s Diving Program. McFall said the decision to move the three-week program was based on the area’s world-class dive training facilities, including the Navy Dive School at Naval Support Activity Panama City, the underwater crime scene investigation program at Florida State University Panama City, and the NOAA Panama City Laboratory, which studies, among other things, fish populations. “Panama City is a beautiful city, so it seemed like the right choice to make, with the synergy of all the other attributes,” McFall said, referring to local diving programs. “You have the best federal, Department of Defense training facility right there.”........

Florida National Guard –

NGAUS: Commission Must Rethink Who’s Really ‘Ready’

http://breakingdefense.com/2015/01/ngaus-commission-must-rethink-whos-really-ready/
By GUS HARGETT

The National Guard Association of the United States is confident the White House and Congress will choose wisely when selecting the men and women to sit on the National Commission on the Future of the Army. The commissioners must be open-minded, forward-thinking individuals with knowledge of all three components of the Army (the active force, the Reserve and the National Guard). We wish them well as they begin their important duties and offer our thoughts on issues they should discuss during their months of study and consideration.

NAS Key West –

**Last Navy frigate pulls into Key West**

*Decommissioning in near future for USS Kauffman*

http://keysnews.com/node/62288

BY ADAM LINHARDT

Military history was made in Key West as the last Navy frigate in service, the USS Kauffman, arrived Wednesday at the Mole Pier for her final deployment. The Naval Station Norfolk-based Kauffman is the last Navy frigate in service, as all the other 453-foot Oliver Hazard Perry-class ships have been mothballed. She will fuel in Key West before her last mission to patrol the C...

Defense Industry --

**WASHINGTON Defense Industry Running out of Time; Mergers Loom**


By Paul McLeary

For the past several years, defense watchers in Washington have been anxiously awaiting an expected surge in merger and acquisition (M&A) activity among the big prime defense contractors as the Pentagon budget tightened. But that hasn't happened to the level that many analysts expected. Other than the April announcement of an agreement between Orbital Sciences and Alliant Techsystems to combine their
businesses into a $4.5 billion, 13,000-person space, defense and aviation developer and manufacturer, most of the primes have instead been filling niche needs and spinning off smaller business segments. Some Wall Street analysts have said that the fiscal 2016 budget will represent the seventh year of the current downturn in defense spending, which has been coupled with the disruption of the budget cuts and the congressionally mandated sequester cuts, which kick in if the Pentagon doesn't stick to its budget caps………

**USAF Launches Slate of New Acquisition Initiatives**


Defense News © January 14, 2015

By Aaron Mehta

The US Air Force is launching a wave of new initiatives aimed at bringing down the cost and time associated with acquiring new technologies, service secretary Deborah Lee James announced Wednesday. The initiatives are bundled together under the banner of "Bending the Cost Curve," a program title that comes with its own logo and the requisite BTCC acronym. The goal is to work more closely with industry in order to find solutions that work for both sides, James said during an event hosted at the Atlantic Council here in Washington. "We have got to stop spending more and more in order to get less and less, so what we have to do is bend that cost curve," James said………

**Other Items of Interest –**

**Graham nominated for Armed Services seat**


Tallahassee Democrat © January 9, 2015
By Ledyard King

Florida Rep. Gwen Graham is about to snag a seat on the powerful House Armed Services Committee, despite her vote Tuesday against electing party leader Nancy Pelosi as House speaker. Pelosi, D-Calif., said Friday the House Democratic Steering and Policy Committee voted to recommend 27 Democrats for committee posts. The group includes freshmen such as Graham and returning House members who want new committee assignments. The full Democratic caucus is expected to approve the nominations next week. “The Democratic members recommended to serve on the following committees have proven themselves to be forward-looking leaders who embody the diversity, drive, and vitality of our caucus,” Pelosi said. “They will bring fresh perspective and new energy to each of these committees.” Pelosi, the House minority leader, apparently wasn’t interested in retaliating for Graham’s decision to vote for Democratic Rep. Jim Cooper of Tennessee as speaker. Three other Democrats also voted for someone other than Pelosi……………..

Air Force Range Infrastructure Study Underway

http://fr.dfns.net/2015/01/06/air-force-range-infrastructure-study-underway/

DFNS.net © January 6, 2015

The Air Force began a major study into the future of its test-range infrastructure, one which could decide how the service runs its live-flight testing for the next 20 years. Ed Chupein, chief for Air Force ranges, airspace and operations sustainment, told Defense News that a review is underway to provide Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Welsh with options on how to revitalize the training infrastructure. “At a very high level, that’s to see where this enterprise fits in with all the other enterprises, whether it’s manpower installations, weapon systems, and its used for very high level guidance and then drops down and pushes down,” Chupein said.

Cut Pay? Trim COCOMs: How To Act Wisely On Military Pay

http://breakingdefense.com/2015/01/cut-pay-trim-cocoms-how-to-act-wisely-on-military-pay/


By MATTHEW LEATHERMAN
Imagine a business that’s restructuring costs. The idea is to restrain employee compensation and free up money for operations and investment, thus allowing the company to grow. Everyone’s familiar with the surrounding debate: leaders spotlight the need for efficiency, and workers insist that the company not break faith with them. It’s a classic dispute between management and labor. Now imagine that this organization isn’t a business, but rather the Pentagon. It shouldn’t require too much creativity. Congress chartered the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission to address this exact circumstance – rather than doing so itself – and the commission will report out in the coming weeks.

**McCain open to changes in military pay, benefits**


The Hill © January 13, 2015
By Kristina Wong

Senate Armed Services Chairman John McCain (R-Ariz.) says he is open to changing military pay and benefits for future servicemembers, a move fiercely opposed by military advocacy groups. McCain told reporters that he "can probably support a number of changes that need to be made." But he cautioned those changes would only apply to troops joining in the future. "In other words, anybody who has already joined the military is eligible for those pay and benefits, but as of a certain date, people joining may be subject to changes in those benefits," he said. His remarks come just two weeks before a congressionally appointed commission is due to issue recommendations to lawmakers and the White House on reforming military compensation. The report is expected on Feb. 1.

**Graham gets plum appointment**


News Herald © January 15, 2015
By CHRIS OLWELL
Freshman Rep. Gwen Graham secured a seat on the Armed Services Committee, where she will join Rep. Jeff Miller, R-Fort Walton Beach, which means the entire Panhandle will be represented on the influential committee. Graham, D-Tallahassee, asked to be assigned to the committee because District 2 is home to Naval Support Activity Panama City and Tyndall Air Force Base, two of Bay County’s most important economic drivers. She's among the Democratic minority on the committee, which has about 60 members, according to an unofficial listing of its members on its website.

Hagel: Military compensation changes coming

Military Times © January 15, 2015

By Andrew Tilghman

Big changes are probably coming soon to military pay and benefits, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel told troops Wednesday. That has been the drumbeat for months, and Hagel said he expects it to come to a head as a top political issue in the next few weeks when a commission impaneled by Congress releases the results of a massive two-year study. "I think this will be as big an issue ... over the next year as there is, and it should be, because when you are talking about that entire compensation package for all of you and your families, I mean that is key," Hagel told several hundred sailors during a visit aboard the amphibious assault ship America, just off the coast of San Diego.
January 26, 2015 – FDSTF Update

Task Force Members --

1. **February Task Force Meeting**  – The next meeting of the Florida Defense Support Task Force will be on Thursday, **February 19, 2015 at the Doubletree Hotel, 101 S. Adams St., Tallahassee, FL** beginning at 9:00 AM.

2. **Attachment** – Notes from today’s TPG Conference Call

Regards,  BG.

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Articles of Interest:

FDSTF –  
**Spending marathon without end: military buffer zones**  
Buying up land around military bases has become an economic strategy all on its own in recent years, with millions being spent from Northwest Florida to California in a competition that's heating up. The main goal: win the Pentagon's favor in case there's another round of installation closures and transferring of lucrative military operations and their payrolls similar to the last big downsizing in 2005. But vying for the approval of Washington's military brain trust, by creating so-called buffer zones to insulate such posts as Eglin Air Force Base and Pensacola Naval Air Station from commercial and residential encroachment just outside their fences, may not work...........

Public Private Partnerships –

DOD Could Benefit from Increased Use of P3s

Defense Communities 360 © January 22, 2015

Over the past two decades, the Department of Defense has grown increasingly reliant on public-private partnerships (P3s) to upgrade its infrastructure for family housing and utilities. But ever-tightening budgets for installations services and further cuts in end strength — along with the looming threat of a new round of base closures — are increasing pressure on the services to realize new efficiencies in installation management. A greater reliance by the Pentagon on P3s, beyond its existing arrangements, would have numerous benefits while helping it to cope with the federal government’s emphasis on austerity, according to Nick Greenwood, managing director of the infrastructure advisory group for KPMG...........
In his first major speech as House Armed Services Committee (HASC) Chairman, Rep. Mac Thornberry struck a defiant tone and made clear the panel will block any White House and Pentagon plans it deems unwise. The Texas Republican stepped into the spotlight on Tuesday, using a morning speech at the American Enterprise Institute to signal the 2016 budget cycle likely will be a repeat of the previous year. Last year, the congressional defense committees rolled back many of the Obama administration's plans to retire weapon systems and alter personnel policies. For those who believe Congress should simply swallow hard and approve the executive branch's plans, Thornberry had a simple message: Don't get your hopes up. And he delivered a forceful explanation of why he believes the Constitution — and the men who wrote it — and historical precedent are on his side.

Congress, Pentagon Will Have to Agree to Disagree on Budget Issues

Just two weeks before the Obama administration submits its budget proposal to Congress for fiscal year 2016, at least on the defense side, the battle lines have been drawn. The Pentagon can forget scrapping the A-10 attack aircraft, taking warships out of service or closing any more military bases in the United States. The military, too, will have to keep funding the remanufacturing of main battle tanks and continue to buy other hardware it says it doesn't need. “Sometimes their priorities are just plain wrong,” said Rep. Mac Thornberry, R-Texas, chairman of the House Armed Services Committee. Thornberry said he respects the difficult job of Defense Department leaders who have to make “tough choices” following five years of steep budget cuts. But Congress, he said, is not going to rubber stamp any budgets and will put its foot down on any proposals to
“give things away” that might be needed in the future, including aging hardware that the military says it can’t afford to maintain………..

Carter, Not Hagel, to Brief the Defense Budget on Capitol Hill

http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/01/21/carter-not-hagel-to-brief-the-defense-budget-on-capitol-hill/

Foreign Policy © January 21, 2015

By Kate Brannen

One of Ashton Carter’s first jobs as defense secretary? Head to Capitol Hill to present and defend the Pentagon’s 2016 budget, a planning document he’s had little opportunity to shape. Chuck Hagel, who is planning to stay on as SecDef until his successor is sworn in, was expected to handle the annual round of congressional budget hearings. But, according to defense and Hill sources, that task is now going to fall to Carter, who only stepped down as deputy defense secretary a year ago. Because work on the defense budget begins at least a year out, it’s likely Carter was involved in the early stages of the 2016 budget. But even with a Pentagon pro like Carter, who knows the department inside and out, the budget schedule will throw him into some of the thorniest acquisition and personnel issues right off the bat……..

10 Things To Watch In The 2016 Budget Request

http://aviationweek.com/blog/10-things-watch-2016-budget-request

Aviation Week © January 22, 2015

by Amy Butler

Six years into his presidency, President Barack Obama is planning to finally submit his budget request to Congress on time—meaning the week of Feb. 2 this year. In it, he will deliver what is likely to be his last meaningful budget push, as the president's final budget request is made during a lame duck year. Defense officials are hoping that sequestration—mandatory deep cuts dictated by Congress—are behind them. But it is still technically the law of the land. The Pentagon intends to submit its budget with the assumption that sequestration will not take effect in fiscal 2016 and beyond. Should it remain in effect, several programs will suffer in a major way……..

Hagel Offers Warning on Spending Caps
Defense Communities 360 © January 22, 2015

During what he called one of his last official news conferences, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel told reporters Thursday that many of the gains achieved by the military will be lost if lawmakers fail to provide DOD relief from the statutory spending cap for fiscal 2016. “The progress we have made will quickly evaporate if sequestration returns in 2016,” Hagel said. The two-year budget deal reached in late 2013 provided much-needed relief from the Budget Control Act defense spending caps for FY 2014 and 2015. But the department stands to lose $34 billion from next year’s budget request if Congress doesn’t act to loosen the FY 2016 cap……..

HASC chair: DoD 'nickel and diming' troops

Military Times © January 22, 2015

By Leo Shane III

Pentagon personnel budgeting is "nickel and diming our people to death," according to the chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, and he hopes an upcoming compensation review can restore some sanity to the debate. "It’s more helpful to step back and look at what sort of pay and benefits are working as we hoped they would, which ones are not effective, and (whether) this structure makes sense in being able to recruit and retain the people we need moving ahead," said Rep. Mac Thornberry, R-Texas, in a breakfast roundtable with reporters Thursday. The comments were the new chairman's latest shots at Pentagon planners, who he says too often dismiss lawmakers' concerns over budget priorities and accuse Congress of parochialism over national security……..

Chief: Sequestration could create 'hollow Army'

Army Times © January 22, 2015
By Michelle Tan
The Army is in danger of becoming a "hollow Army" if sequestration returns in 2016, the service's top officer said Thursday. "If sequestration occurs, for the next three to four to five years, we're moving towards a hollow Army," Army Chief of Staff Gen. Ray Odierno said. "What does a hollow Army mean? My definition of a hollow Army is one that we don't properly train our soldiers. They aren't able to do the exercises that they need. They're not able to have the ammunition necessary. They don't have the equipment they need. They're not able to sustain their equipment to the levels that are necessary for them to respond, no notice, to an unknown threat in potentially five different places around the world."......

MacDill AFB –

MacDill AFB hosts cross-service exercises

USAF News © January 20, 2015

By Tech. Sgt. Brandon Shapiro

The 6th Air Mobility Wing here hosted a massive 300 sortie Navy F-18 pilot training exercise from Jan. 4-17. F-18 Hornet and Super Hornets from Strike-Fighter Squadron ONE ZERO SIX (VFA-106), a Navy training squadron, chose MacDill Air Force Base because of its top-notch accommodations, geographical location, and proximity to training specific complexes. This is the first of numerous cross-service exercises scheduled for 2015. VFA-106 is responsible for preparing the finest strike fighter aircrew and maintenance professionals for the fleet in support of combat operations around the world. "The Deployed Unit Complex located at MacDill has great facilities that are able to accommodate our training, operations, and maintenance efforts," said Navy Lt. Nathan Miller, a VFA-106 instructor pilot. "MacDill is also an ideal location because of its nearness to the Avon Park Range Complex, where all of our training takes place.".........
Colleges create cyber programs to fill worker demand


Military Times © January 20, 2015

By Jerome R. Stockfisch,

Target. Home Depot. Sony Pictures. The now infamous computer hacks infuriated consumers who had personal information compromised and Hollywood honchos who had embarrassing emails made public. But headline-grabbing computer intrusions are only a fraction of what is going on in the Wild West of cybercrime. According to Nextgov, the online resource for federal technology decision makers, energy giant BP faces 50,000 attempts at cyberintrusion a day. The Pentagon? Ten million a day. The National Nuclear Security Administration? Another 10 million. Dramatic websites from two major computer security companies, Norse Corp, and Kaspersky Lab, display vivid real-time maps of ongoing cyberwarfare being waged around the globe. That has sparked a mad dash for cybersecurity..........

JTACs, training at MacDill, guide fighter jets to enemy targets


Tampa Tribune © January 22, 2015

By Howard Altman | Tribune Staff

As the Navy F/A-18 Hornet fighter jet roars 11,000 feet overhead awaiting instructions for dropping a 500-pound bomb on an enemy anti-aircraft battery, Dutch army Capt. Nico Schoone scans the target then consults “the bible.” Schoone is a joint terminal attack controller, or JTAC in military parlance. He is the pilot’s eyes and ears on the ground, responsible for making sure where the enemy, as well as civilians and friendly forces are, knowing the weather, physical layout and topographic conditions, then guiding the U.S. fighter jet’s munitions on target. “The bible,” as he calls it, is a U.S. military manual, called “FIRE,” that gives JTACs the information they need to communicate with personnel from all branches of the armed forces...........
Eglin AFB –

**UPDATE 1-Pentagon says classified data on U.S. F-35 jet fighter program remains secure**

[http://in.reuters.com/article/2015/01/20/lockheed-fighter-idINL1N0UZ21720150120?feedType=RSS&feedName=everything&virtualBrandChannel=11709](http://in.reuters.com/article/2015/01/20/lockheed-fighter-idINL1N0UZ21720150120?feedType=RSS&feedName=everything&virtualBrandChannel=11709)

Reuters © January 21, 2015

By Andrea Shalal

WASHINGTON The Pentagon on Tuesday said classified data about the $399 billion F-35 fighter jet program remains secure, despite fresh documents released by NSA whistleblower Edward Snowden last week which said China stole "many terabytes" of data about the jet. The U.S. Defense Department's F-35 program office said the latest documents released by the German magazine Der Spiegel "rehashed" a previously disclosed and reported 2010 incident, which it said compromised only non-classified data about the new warplane being built by Lockheed Martin Corp............

NS Mayport –

**What's next for Mayport? Consulting firm's efforts could be first step in designating village as a Community Redevelopment Area**


Florida Times-Union © January 24, 2015

By Amanda Williamson

Waterfront land in Mayport, once eyed for a new cruise ship terminal, is potentially open for a slew of development opportunities. The City of Jacksonville has hired Orlando-based consulting firm VHB to define the boundaries of a potential Community Redevelopment Area, label issues faced by the community and designate a plan to mitigate the conditions. Photos
Shrimp trawlers rest off the pier at Singleton's Seafood Shack, one of two permanent locations in Mayport for commercial fisherman to dock. Situated on the mouth of the St. Johns River, the village has always turned to fishing to survive, but over the years, it has struggled to maintain its working waterfront. Several shrimp trawlers rest against the docks behind Singleton’s Seafood Shack. Out of necessity, a local shrimper hand-built the restaurant’s small pier, a tight space that fits roughly five vessels. A short distance up the river, Safe Harbor Seafood Market and Restaurant offers the only other permanent mooring in Mayport for commercial fishermen………

Tyndall AFB –

Vote looms on land near Crooked Island


News Herald © January 19, 2015

By JOHN HENDERSON

Joel Vaughn was among the fishermen enjoying the brisk, sunny weather Monday morning at Mexico Beach Canal Park. Vaughn, who spends half the year living in Mexico Beach and maintains a residence in Georgia, said there’s nothing like that stretch of secluded beach from Mexico Beach up to Tyndall Air Force Base. He has concerns a proposed 195-unit subdivision slated to be built along it will change the ambiance. “I think it is going to take something way from us,” he said. “We can’t stop it if they want to do it.”……

Bay County Approves Housing Development Project Near Tyndall Air Force Base


WJHG © January 20, 2015

New homes will be coming to Bay County. Tuesday morning Bay County Commissioners voted unanimously in favor of a housing development project that will begin on a the stretch of land east of Tyndall Air Force Base and west of Mexico Beach. There were some concerns of over crowding and loud noises coming from the base, since the development would be built near the flight path, but the county says they worked that out with Tyndall. “They did have some concerns regarding the
development of that property," Bay Co. Planning Director Martin Jacobsen said. "We've worked with them to limit the intensity of development the height of the development." 

Naval Air Station Pensacola –

Gulf Power, military bringing large-scale solar power
Pensacola News Journal © January 22, 2015

Gulf Power is partnering with the U.S. Navy and U.S. Air Force to build solar energy farms at three different facilities across Northwest Florida. Today, the utility submitted the renewable projects to the Florida Public Service Commission (FPSC) for approval. The projects could be in service as early as December 2016. "This is an important collaboration between Gulf Power, the Navy and the Air Force," said Stan Connally, Gulf Power president and CEO. "As military installations seek solutions to promote renewable energy generation, we have worked alongside our military customers to help provide cost-effective solutions — and all our customers will reap the benefit." This is Gulf Power's second alternative energy project since launching the 3.2-megawatt Perdido Landfill Gas-to-Energy facility in 2010. Together, these new solar facilities, which will be developed by HelioSage Energy, could produce enough energy to power approximately 18,000 homes for one year.

Utility Plans to Build Solar Plants at Three Florida Airfields


Defense Communities 360 © January 22, 2015

Gulf Power, a subsidiary of Georgia-based Southern Co., is planning to build a total of 120 megawatts of solar power at three military facilities on the tip of the Florida Panhandle — Eglin Air Force Base and the Navy’s Holley and Saufley fields. If the solar farms are approved by the Florida Public Service Commission, the project’s developer, HelioSage, would begin construction in February 2016. The three plants would be expected to come online beginning in December 2016. The planned capacity for each of the solar farms is as follows:
- Eglin AFB in Fort Walton Beach (30 megawatts);
- Holley Field in Navarre (40 megawatts); and
- Saufley Field in Pensacola (50 megawatts).

The utility will serve its customers across Northwest Florida with power from the new solar facilities. The solar farms will help diversify Gulf Power’s energy supply and provide a cost-effective alternative during peak energy usage, reported the Pensacola News Journal.

**Gulf Power, military propose state's largest network of solar power plants**


Tampa Bay Times © January 25, 2015

By Ivan Penn

Florida's smallest investor-owned utility is proposing to build the state's largest network of solar power plants as part of an agreement reached with the U.S. military. Gulf Power, a subsidiary of Georgia-based Southern Co., announced a proposal Thursday to build a total of 120 megawatts of utility-scale solar power at Eglin Air Force Base in Fort Walton Beach, Holley Field in Navarre and Saufley Field in Pensacola. The joint effort among Gulf Power, the Navy, Air Force and HelioSage, the project's developer, will help meet the U.S. Department of Defense's goal of achieving 25 percent renewable energy by 2025.

**Defense Industry --**

**Defense contractors see opportunity in cybersecurity sector**


Los Angeles Times © January 22, 2015

By **W.J. HENNIGAN**

Federal agents notified more than 3,000 U.S. companies in 2013 that their computer systems had been hacked. Obama's State of the Union speech spotlighted cybersecurity, likely a growing sector for defense contractors 'More companies are realizing that they need to become more
proactive than reactive in their cyberdefenses.' After a year that saw destructive cyberattacks on major U.S. companies, President Obama's call to stiffen America's digital defenses could help bolster the bottom lines of top defense and aerospace contractors facing cutbacks in Pentagon spending. In his State of the Union address Tuesday, Obama urged Congress to pass legislation to help battle the cyber spies, thieves and saboteurs who have wreaked havoc at major U.S. financial institutions, communications companies, retail chains and other civilian companies and infrastructure. The proposed bill would enhance information sharing between government and the private sector..........

Other Items of Interest –

LCS Now Officially Called A Frigate


Defense News © January 21, 2015

By Christopher P. Cavas

Since its inception in 2001, the US Navy's Littoral Combat Ship program has been described as needed to replace the fleet's frigates, minesweepers and patrol ships. But the ship's place in the line of battle continues to be debated. Navy Secretary Ray Mabus thinks one of the reasons the ship is misunderstood is the nontraditional LCS designator. He directed an effort to find a more traditional and appropriate designation for the LCS and several other recent ship types, such as the Joint High Speed Vessel (JHSV), the Mobile Landing Platform (MLP) and the Afloat Forward Staging Base (AFSB). The first of the types to be redesignated is the LCS..........
Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland will host the new Air Force Installation and Mission Support Center (AFIMSC) headquarters, officials announced Wednesday. Joint Base San Antonio was selected over three other candidates — Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Va., Scott Air Force Base, Ill., and Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio — primarily because much of the new organization’s subordinate staff already are located there, according to a press release. “Following site surveys at the four candidate locations, we ultimately selected Joint Base San Antonio because almost 50 percent of AFIMSC’s subordinate unit personnel currently reside at the installation,” said Timothy Bridges, deputy assistant secretary for installations. “In fact, two of AFIMSC’s primary subordinate units will share the same building with the headquarters. We believe co-locating AFIMSC with a large percentage of its subordinate staff will allow the Air Force to harness operational synergy as the headquarters matures into full operational capability,” Bridges said..........

States’ Support for the Military Increasingly includes Paying for On-Base Construction

http://www.defensecommunities.org/installation-innovation-forum-2015/states-support-for-the-military-increasingly-includes-paying-for-on-base-construction/#

One of the most surprising findings from ADC’s recent survey of state military affairs organizations was that 52 percent of the respondents have paid for on-base construction projects as a way to support the military at a time when funding for military construction and installation support is under tight constraints. IIF 15 will feature several sessions about the innovative approaches states and communities have adopted in recent years to support local installations. One session will highlight examples included in State of Support: Highlights of State Support for Defense Installations, such as engaging community-based advocacy organizations, forming commanders councils, and conducting assessments of installations’ strengths and vulnerabilities, as well as investing in both off-base and on-base infrastructure. In an effort to raise its military value, the state of Connecticut has spent $14 million since 2005 to support Naval Submarine Base New London through investments in its on-base infrastructure and training capabilities. The most recent state-funded project was a $3 million grant to
develop a microgrid at the sub base to improve energy reliability and reduce energy use.

Air Force Refines Encroachment Program

http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/air-force-refines-encroachment-program/?utm_source=dc360&utm_campaign=645dab0276-RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_04f8ff45e8-645dab0276-55784537&ct=t(RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN)#

Defense Communities 360 © January 25, 2015

Recent moves by the Air Force are helping to bolster its encroachment management program, including issuing new guidance for a comprehensive initiative to limit incompatible development outside its installations and establishing the Air Force Civil Engineer Center (AFCEC) as the program office for the service-wide effort. In October, officials assigned the center’s planning and integration directorate the task of providing reach-back support to installations, major commands and direct reporting units on all aspects of encroachment, AFCEC reported.

Army leaders now hope to slow the drawdown


Army Times © January 22, 2015

By Michelle Tan

The Army is considering taking measures to slow the drawdown, though the service still plans to eventually reach an end-strength of 450,000 active-duty troops. Army Secretary John McHugh, in a Wednesday interview with Army Times, said he hopes to "retain some faces in our structure to fill out units that are undermanned." The Army is on pace to hit 490,000 active-duty soldiers by the end of fiscal year 2015. It also is slated to cut about 20,000 soldiers every year to reach 450,000 by the end of fiscal 2017. However, senior Army leaders are discussing extending that timeline an additional year — that is if sequestration can be avoided in 2016.

On-Base Residents Lose Renters Insurance Due to BAH Cuts
A change to how the Defense Department calculates housing rates is not only impacting those who live off base, but also those who live on base in privatized military housing. Due to this year's 1 percent reduction in service member's base allowance for housing, all residents of privatized military housing will no longer have renters insurance included as part of their lease on military bases nationwide, according to Defense Department sources. That change will hit as soon as March 1 for some military members, according to a letter obtained by Military.com. Residents of Fort Campbell's on-base housing, run by international property company Lend Lease, were informed this week that renters insurance will no longer be provided thanks to the DoD changes.
Task Force Members --

1. **February Task Force Meeting** – The next meeting of the Florida Defense Support Task Force will be on Thursday, **February 19, 2015 at the Doubletree Hotel, 101 S. Adams St., Tallahassee, FL** beginning at 9:00 AM.

2. **Attachment** – TPG Monthly Report for January

Regards, BG.

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Articles of Interest:

**BRAC** –

**NJ lawmakers warn against new base closings round**

A bipartisan group of New Jersey House members is urging the Defense Department to avoid proposing a new round of military base closures in its next budget request. “At a time when the United States faces adapting threats from around the globe, including groups like [the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria], we cannot afford to diminish the capabilities we use to neutralize these threats, and protect our freedoms at home,” the lawmakers wrote in a letter to Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel late last week. “One needs to look no further than the recent terror attacks in Paris to realize that the threat of terrorism at home and abroad is ever-present,” they added. The bipartisan group, led by Republican freshman Tom MacArthur, argues a new Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC) is too costly and that there are “many better ways” for DOD to save money.

McCain, Service Chiefs Warn about Impact of Spending Caps


The nation’s top military officers on Wednesday bemoaned the impact of the Budget Control Act spending caps on national security, warning lawmakers they will not be able to carry out the nation’s defense strategy if Congress fails to offer any relief from pending sequestration. Army Chief of Staff Gen. Raymond Odierno told the Senate Armed Services Committee his force is as unready as at any other point in its 239-year history, with only 33 percent of the service’s brigades “ready to the extent we would expect them to be if asked to fight.” If sequestration is imposed starting in fiscal 2016, Odierno said the Army will need to cut 60,000 soldiers after already eliminating 80,000 troops in recent years. The service also would need to end, restructure or delay all of its acquisition programs, resulting in a “40 percent modernization decrease.”
The five-year spending plan the Defense Department plans to release next week along with its fiscal 2016 budget request will exceed the statutory spending caps by $150 billion, amounting to “little more than a wish list,” reported CQ. DOD will request $534 billion for its FY 2016 base budget, topping the 2011 Budget Control Act spending cap by almost $35 billion. The FY 2017 and 2018 budget projections would surpass the caps by $35 billion and $32 billion respectively, according to a source familiar with the proposal. The FY 2016 budget, after adding in the $52 billion the department is seeking for the overseas contingency operations account, represents a $15 billion jump over current year funding. The Pentagon is scheduled to release its new budget on Monday……..

Deficit Battle Would Spark GOP-on-GOP Skirmish

By John T. Bennett
The US Senate Budget Committee’s chairman wants new federal spending cuts to help reduce the country’s “endless supply of debt,” setting up a Republican-on-Republican clash. The Congressional Budget Office released a report Monday that concludes the federal deficit will fall to the lowest level of the Obama administration era, $468 billion. Democrats quickly cited that figure, down from $483 billion last year, as evidence President Barack Obama’s policies are working. Many Republicans, however, zeroed in on another CBO finding: America’s debt level will rise from $13 trillion today to $21.6 trillion come 2025. Fiscal conservatives on Capitol Hill, who helped create the environment that spawned sequestration and spending caps, reacted with calls for even less government spending……..

25 Issues To Watch In the Coming DoD Budget

Defense News © January 27, 2015
**Issue: Return of the caps**

**Context:** The Ryan-Murray budget agreement kept 2014 and 2015 funding fairly stable. But without a new deal, DoD's 2016 budget will revert to the 2011 Budget Control Act sequestration caps. The question is: how will DoD prepare?

**Possibilities:** Be on the lookout for proposed force structure changes, discrete personnel reductions, major program delays or deferments, and plus-ups in specific areas in anticipation of multi-year sequestration.

**Issue: Living without OCO**

**Context:** As the overseas contingency operations (OCO) budgets shrink, recent attempts to fund base requirements out of OCO will be increasingly difficult to pull off, even as the growth of operations and maintenance (O&M) and personnel costs puts pressure on investment.

**Possibilities:** Look at the percentage of the procurement, research and development, personnel and O&M. Are there changes in composition by service or account? What are the possible changes in the composition of R&D by budget activity and/or defense technology area? How will OCO be used?...........

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**Kendall: Sequestration Will Harm U.S. Military Superiority**


DOD News © January 28, 2015

By Cheryl Pellerin

The severe, multiyear budget cuts of sequestration will have a negative impact on the Defense Department and U.S. military technological superiority, Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Frank Kendall told a congressional panel today. Kendall testified before the House Armed Services Committee with Air Force Lt. Gen. Mark Ramsay, director of force structure, resources and assessment for the Joint Staff. The topic was the Department of Defense and technological change.

DoD has had a short break from sequestration since Congress reached a two-year budget agreement in December 2013. The agreement offered temporary relief from sequestration until 2016 and gave the Pentagon at least short-term stability on spending for the first time in several years. Kendall recently was asked to advise the Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee on areas in which Congress could help DoD improve acquisition outcomes, he said. No. 1 by a wide margin, he said, was that Congress should end the threat of sequestration........

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**Sequestration: GOP, Dems 'Don't Have a Plan'**

President Barack Obama on Thursday will lay out a plan to end sequestration that Republicans immediately will reject, but GOP members "don't have a plan" of their own. Obama will travel to Philadelphia to meet with House Democrats at a caucus retreat, and is expected to provide details of his 2016 budget plan. In it, the White House says he will for the second consecutive year propose ending sequestration. Obama will release that budget plan on Monday, including a $534 billion base Pentagon spending plan and a $51 billion overseas contingency operations (OCO) request. The White House says the federal spending plan "will reverse harmful sequestration cuts and instead show how we can invest in his vision for middle class economics by making paychecks go further, creating good jobs here in the United States, and preparing hardworking Americans to earn higher wages." 

Lawmakers and the top US military officers on Wednesday warned of dire consequences if the Defense Department is hit by additional automatic cuts. The chiefs of America's armed forces warned that more across-the-board cuts could require them to craft a new national defense strategy while possibly losing their ability to conduct two major operations simultaneously. Senior Senate Armed Services Committee members bemoaned more sequester cuts, but none offered a plan nor spoke of a new effort to get rid of them. "Despite an accumulating array of complex threats to our national interests... we are on track to cut $1 trillion from America's defense budget by 2021," SASC Chairman Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., said. "If we in Congress do not act, sequestration will return in full in fiscal year 2016, setting our military on a far more dangerous course..."
By Paul McLeary

The Department of Defense is preparing to submit a $585 billion fiscal 2016 funding request to Congress on Feb. 2, according to a source with knowledge of the budgetary documents. The request includes $534 billion in base budget funding along with a $51 billion overseas contingency operations (OCO), the source said. The request would shoot past the congressionally mandated budget cap of $499 billion for 2016, as the Obama administration has long pledged to do. The request would lay the groundwork for a contentious debate with Congress over spending priorities, and guarantees another several rounds of tense hearings with the service chiefs and defense secretary on Capitol Hill next month……

**Obama’s Attempt to Overturn Sequester Runs into Republican Roadblock**

Congressional Republicans have made it clear they will not support President Obama’s plan to pay for a fiscal 2016 budget request that tops the statutory spending caps by $74 billion through an unspecified combination of spending cuts and the elimination of tax breaks. Many Republicans would join Obama and Democrats in lifting the Budget Control Act spending cap for the Pentagon, but they are unwilling to provide higher spending for domestic programs as well, reported CQ. An aide to House Budget Chairman Tom Price (R-Ga.) outright rejected the budget proposal which the president is scheduled to submit to Congress on Monday……

**New Budget Will Feature 6th Gen Fighter**

By Paul McLeary
More pieces of next Monday's fiscal 2016 defense budget request are beginning to fall into place. The Pentagon's future years funding projection to be released with each annual budget request will include more money than planned, the Pentagon's second in command said on Wednesday. The fiscal 2016 future years defense program (FYDP) slated to be released on Feb. 2 "reverses the decline in defense spending over the past five years and works to address the under-investment in new weapons by making targeted investments in those areas we deem to be the highest priority," Deputy Defense Secretary Bob Work said. Earlier in the day, Pentagon acquisition chief Frank Kendall told a Senate panel that there is money in the next budget for the Air Force to begin work on its 6th generation fighter…….

The Pentagon's new fiscal cliff


Politico © January 28, 2015

By Jeremy Herb

President Barack Obama and congressional Republicans say they want to boost Pentagon spending by tens of billions of dollars next year — but that's just budget theater. The administration and the new Republican-controlled Congress are creating another budgetary cliff on defense spending, forcing the military to face across-the-board cuts if Pentagon spending busts the caps that are already law. The sequestration cap for Pentagon spending is about $499 billion, but the Obama administration is set to propose a $534 billion base defense budget, according to budget documents. And many analysts expect congressional Republicans propose a similar, if not higher, topline

CNO warns budget cuts will hurt morale, readiness


Navy Times © January 28, 2015

By David Larter

The Navy's top officer cautioned legislators Wednesday about falling retention among the Navy's most skilled and highly trained sailors, and he pointed the finger at budget cuts that are again looming. Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Jon Greenert told the Senate Armed Services Committee that across-the-board sequestration cuts in 2013 had started to eat away at historic highs in retention, and urged Congress to act to avert
the cuts set to again take effect in October. "We are already seeing disconcerting trends in our retention, particularly our strike fighter pilots, our nuclear trained officers, our SEALs, cyber warriors, and some of our highly trained, highly skilled sailors in information technology, AEGIS radar and nuclear fields," Greenert said during the closely watched testimony.........

Modest Deal to Lift Defense Cap Likely, Expert Says

http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/modest-deal-to-lift-defense-cap-likely-expert-says/?utm_source=dc360&utm_campaign=b03d02ee9f-RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_04f8ff45e8-b03d02ee9f-55784537&ct=t(RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN)#

Defense Communities 360 © February 1, 2015

Lawmakers likely will reach an agreement to relax the fiscal 2016 spending cap on defense programs along the lines of the bipartisan budget deal reached in late 2013 that provided DOD moderate relief for FY 2014 and 2015, according to a top defense analyst. “I would bet that they end up raising them $5 billion to $10 billion,” Todd Harrison, a senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, told reporters Friday. The 2013 deal raised the Budget Control Act cap for both defense and domestic spending by $22 billion in FY 2014 and $9 billion in the current year. With Republicans wresting control of the Senate in the mid-term elections, the dynamic in Congress has changed and it’s not clear that deal can be recreated.......

US Budget Request Will Change Drastically, Experts Say

http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/policy-budget/budget/2015/02/01/fiscal-2016-defense-department-budget-request-will-change/22599163/

Defense News © February 1, 2015

By Paul McLeary

The $585 billion fiscal year 2016 defense budget request — so painstakingly sculpted by White House and Pentagon before being sent to Capitol Hill this week — will likely die a long, complicated death as it winds its way through the congressional committees, analysts say. "I don't think it's likely DoD gets anything close to what they're planning right now," Todd Harrison with the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments (CSBA), told reporters on Jan. 30. The reason is that the request blows right past the $499 billion spending cap that Congress imposed in the 2011 Budget Control Act for the
coming fiscal year, and one dollar over that cap would automatically kick in sequestration, which cuts and burns all programs across the board to meet the cap number………

**Column: Salute. Empathize. Repeat.**

http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/policy-budget/congress/2015/02/01/salute-empathize-repeat-congresswatch-column/22606223/

Defense News © February 1, 2015

By John T. Bennett

Congressional Republicans and Democrats empathize with military leaders who must deal with sequestration. And who wouldn't. If one listens only to current and retired four-star general and admirals, one could be excused from thinking the across-the-board budget cuts will bring down the world's lone superpower. "No foe could wreak such havoc on our security that mindless sequestration is achieving," retired Marine Corps Gen. James Mattis, a former head of US Central Command, told the Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) last week……..

Team Orlando –

**Simulation report bodes well for Orlando**


Orlando Sentinel © January 29, 2015

By Marco Santana

The military continues to move toward simulations and away from live-action training as a way of saving money, according to a report released Thursday that should encourage regions such as Central Florida that boast a strong simulation industry,
entrepreneurs say. The study, conducted by the business-research company Government Business Council, showed that the U.S. Air Force, by increasing its use of simulators, will save $1.7 billion from 2012 to 2016. The U.S. Navy, meanwhile, will see $119 million annual savings by shifting to simulators. "It's a validation for what we are doing in Orlando," said Waymon Armstrong, CEO of Orlando's Engineering & Computer Simulations. "It's good for all of us here." Defense contractor Lockheed Martin is an anchor of Orlando's simulation industry, which also includes a large number of entrepreneurs who have built simulation-related startups.

Better Simulation Could Save the Military Millions

http://www.defenseone.com/technology/2015/01/better-simulation-could-save-military-millions/104172/

Defense One © January 30, 2015

By Patrick Tucker

How much is a good video game worth? To the military, the answer is billions. Pentagon leaders responding to a new survey conducted by the Government Business Council, GBC, said that the main thing restraining simulation training was “fidelity.” Read that to mean the games just are not feeling realistic enough. The survey notes that the military appetite for virtual training is strong and growing. Its most commonly associated with Air Force flight simulation. But the Navy also relies on simulations to help servicemen understand how to use equipment on ships and subs. Then, of course, there’s also computer-based battlefield training.

MacDill AFB –

MacDill could actually gain from military cutbacks


Tampa Tribune © February 1, 2015

By Howard Altman | Tribune Staff
To U.S. Rep. David Jolly, BRAC is not a four-letter word. OK, so it’s not really a word, just another military acronym. But to Jolly, BRAC is still not in the category of those four-letter words you won’t find in these pages. BRAC, which officially stands for the **Base Closure and Realignment Commission** (I guess BCRC is just too hard to say), is being pushed by the White House and Pentagon, which are looking to cut spending even as they are increasing it. Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel says another round of BRAC is required. “You know, we’re operating right now with what we think is about a 25 percent excess infrastructure here in the continental United States,” said Hagel’s press secretary, Rear Adm. John Kirby. “And we simply can’t afford that.”

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**Eglin AFB –**

**F-35 nears completion of all-weather climatic testing**


Aerospace Manufacturing and Design © January 31, 2015

For the past four months, an **F-35 Lightning II** has endured extreme weather temperatures to certify the fleet to deploy to any corner of the world. An F-35B from the F-35 Patuxent River Integrated Test Force in Maryland has undergone rigorous climatic testing at the U.S. Air Force 96th Test Wing’s McKinley Climatic Laboratory located at Eglin Air Force Base, Florida. The laboratory supports all-weather testing of weapon systems to ensure they function regardless of climatic conditions. With 13 countries currently involved with the program, the F-35 must be tested in meteorological conditions representative of those locations from which it will operate, ranging from the heat of the Outback of Australia to the bitter cold of the Arctic Circle above Canada and Norway. “We’ve designed an environment here at the chamber where we can simulate virtually any weather condition – all while flying the jet at full power in either conventional or vertical takeoff mode,” said Dwayne Bell, McKinley Climatic Laboratory technical chief. The F-35B Lightning II was ferried to Eglin AFB in September 2014 to begin a six month assessment of the aircraft’s performance in wind, solar radiation, fog, humidity, rain intrusion/ingestion, freezing rain, icing cloud, icing build-up, vortex icing and snow........
NAS Jacksonville –

**NAS JAX to mark final deployment of P-3C Orion**

Military Times © January 22, 2015

The local naval aviation community is gearing up for a historic day. On Thursday morning, the last remaining P-3C Orion squadron on the East Coast will deploy for the final time. The United States Navy is phasing out the aircraft. Naval Air Station Jacksonville has been home to the P-3C Orion since the Cold War era of the 1960s. People on the First Coast might recognize it by its four propellers. It's often seen flying over the city. Orion's primary function is to track submarines, but it also completes electronic surveillance and combat missions………

**Civilian company among list of fighters in Jacksonville skies for Navy training exercise**


Florida Times Union © January 29, 2015

By Clifford Davis

Many of the fighter planes Jacksonville residents have heard roaring through the skies aren’t Navy planes. In fact, they’re not even military. They are Cold War-era fighters flown by a civilian company with ex-military pilots known as ATAC, or Airborne Tactical Advantage Company. The U.S. military hires the firm to act as opposition forces for training exercises like the Navy is currently holding off the coast of Jacksonville. “They’re very competent and I know almost all of them,” said Rear Adm. Andrew Lewis, commanding officer of Carrier Strike Group 12. “The vast majority of them are retired Navy and Air Force………

Tyndall AFB –
Florida's Second Congressional District's newly sworn-in representative spent some time in Bay County Friday. Congresswoman Gwen Graham visited Tyndall Air Force Base for the first time since she was elected to office in November. The event was closed to the public, but NewsChannel 7 caught up with Graham at her Bay County office Friday afternoon. She says the military community is one of her top focuses. Graham was also assigned to the House Armed Services Committee this month, which she said was her top choice. "The men and women who serve our country, active and veterans, are my number priority, to do everything i can to serve them," Graham said. "And so the opportunity today to tour Tyndall and find out about the activity on Tyndall Air Force Base, military and otherwise, it's a little city, was just wonderful."……..

Florida National Guard –

**General: US Army Programs Hinge on Helo Swap**


By Joe Gould

Key US Army aviation modernization plans — Future Vertical Lift, the Improved Engine Turbine program and digital cockpit upgrades for Black Hawks — all hinge on the service's cost-cutting Aviation Restructure Initiative (ARI), senior service officials said on Thursday. The plan, which has stirred controversy with National Guard advocates, is unpalatable but necessary in light of sequestration budget cuts, said Army Vice Chief of Staff Gen. Daniel Allyn, speaking at an Association of of the US Army aviation event. The restructure calls for the service to divest its fleet of OH-58 Kiowa Warrior helicopters and use the AH-64 Apache to fill the Kiowa's reconnaissance and scout role. It would pull Apaches from the Guard inventory to fill the gap, and, in turn, provide the Guard with UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters. The Army would also cut three of its 13 combat aviation brigades, while the Guard retains all 10 of its brigades……….
Patrick AFB –

**Reserve wing cuts ribbon on $4 million aircraft hangar**


Air Force Reserve Command © January 23, 2015

The 920th Rescue Wing held a ribbon-cutting ceremony Jan. 12 to mark the completion of an addition/renovation project on Hangar 630 - the wing's fixed-wing aircraft isochronal inspection hangar. The primary incentive for the project was to expand the structure by roughly 10,000 square feet (from the building's original 17,000), in order to fully enclose the wing's HC-130P/N King refueling aircraft. Prior to the renovation, Hangar 630 was a "nose dock" - large enough to accommodate all but the tail of the C-130 airframe upon which the wing's HC-130 is built. The ability to fit the aircraft completely inside the hangar and close the doors allows wing maintainers to proceed with aircraft maintenance operations during all types of weather conditions, as well as to reduce corrosion problems for the aircraft caused by the salt air environment……..

Defense Industry –

**What Downturn? Top Pentagon Contractors Turn In Strong Results Despite Soft Demand**


Forbes © January 29, 2015

By Loren Thompson

With all of the top U.S.-based military contractors having now reported fourth-quarter and full-year results for 2014, it appears that the current downturn in Pentagon spending is taking a surprisingly small toll on profits. U.S. defense spending peaked in 2010 and has been losing altitude ever since thanks to a deficit-reduction measure called the
Budget Control Act that caps military spending. With most of the mandated military savings coming from technology accounts, it seemed like a no-brainer that weapons makers would get hit hard. But a combination of cost-cutting, stock buy-backs and earnings gains from businesses outside the federal marketplace has minimized the pain to investors……

Other Items of Interest –

Panel will propose new military retirement system


Military Times © January 28, 2015

By Andrew Tilghman

The long-awaited report on military compensation set to drop Thursday will propose fundamental changes to military retirement and health care benefits, according to several people familiar with the report. The Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission will propose detailed legislation to phase out the current 20-year cliff-vesting pension payable immediately upon leaving service, according to people who have been briefed on the report but requested anonymity before discussing its recommendations. The plan calls for Congress to create a hybrid system that includes a smaller defined-benefit pension along with more cash-based benefits and lump-sum payments. A significant portion of troops' retirement benefits would come in the form of government contributions to 401(k)-style investment accounts, those familiar with the report told Military Times…….

Commission calls for abolishing Tricare


Military Times © January 29, 2015

By Patricia Kime

The congressional commission has recommended a complete overhaul of the military health system — one that does away with Tricare, changes the medical command structure and seeks to improve Defense Department coordination with Veterans Affairs. The goal of the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission's recommendations, according to its final report released Thursday, is to preserve the
quality of combat care that saved many troops' lives in Iraq and Afghanistan but also improve access to health treatment for those who use the system........

Is N.C. really the most military friendly?

[http://www.fayobserver.com/elite/is-n-c-really-the-most-military-friendly/article_8247cd9c-1202-570a-a0ab-ec6f2541777c.html](http://www.fayobserver.com/elite/is-n-c-really-the-most-military-friendly/article_8247cd9c-1202-570a-a0ab-ec6f2541777c.html)

Fayetteville Observer © January 31, 2015

Story by Johanna Royo

Highway welcome signs are a way for states to officially toot their own horn to millions of travelers. To tell drivers about the thing that makes that state special. Mississippi calls itself the birthplace of America's music. Kentucky, the birthplace of Lincoln. Florida lays claim to all sunshine, Alabama is beautiful and Tennessee is the volunteer state. At five of its busiest entrance arteries, North Carolina claims to be the "Nation’s Most Military Friendly State." Not just a military friendly state, the most military friendly in the entire nation. But does saying it make it so?........
February 9, 2015 – FDSTF Update

Task Force Members --

1. **February Task Force Meeting** – The next meeting of the Florida Defense Support Task Force will be on Thursday, **February 19, 2015 at the Doubletree Hotel, 101 S. Adams St., Tallahassee, FL** beginning at 9:00 AM.

2. **TPG Best Practices Study** – Later this week, members will be receiving the summary of recommendations generated by Florida Defense Alliance members who reviewed the Best Practices study. Recommendations will be discussed at the next Task Force meeting.

3. **Task Force Strategic Plan Update** – Staff is currently preparing an updated DRAFT of the Task Force Strategic Plan for review and comment by members. This DRAFT will be sent out to members early next week. Last update of the Strategic Plan was in 2013.

4. **Attachments**
   - Agenda for next Task Force meeting
   - FDSTF letter in support of NAS Key West
   - Grant extension – Florida 8 A Alliance
   - Notes from bi-weekly TPG conference call

Regards, BG.

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Articles of Interest:

BRAC –

**Congress Will Come around on BRAC, Pentagon Official Says**

[Link to article](http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/congress-will-come-around-on-brac-pentagon-official-says/?utm_source=dc360&utm_campaign=d4feda96ef-RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_04f8f45d8-d4feda96ef-55784537&ct=t(RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN)#)

Defense Communities 360 © February 2, 2015

Congress ultimately will approve DOD’s request to hold a new BRAC round, Pentagon Comptroller Mike McCord said Monday, but he acknowledged it could take more time. During a briefing on Monday on the department’s fiscal 2016 budget proposal — which repeats last year’s request to hold a base closure round in 2017 — McCord recalled the two decades he spent as a staff member for the Senate Armed Services Committee. “I spent five years working with Sen. [John] McCain’s staff, at the time to get authority for what turned into the 2005 BRAC round,” he said. “We started back in 1997. So it doesn’t necessarily happen overnight. And in this case, it certainly has not,” McCord said, reported the Hill.

**BRAC’s Long, Hard Slog**

[Link to article](http://www.airforcemag.com/MagazineArchive/Pages/2015/February%202015/BRAC%27s-Long,-Hard-Slog.aspx)

Air Force Magazine © February 3, 2015

By Megan Scully

Congress is no fan of base closures. Lawmakers on both sides of the aisle have a powerful hole card to trump the Pentagon’s reasoned arguments in favor of another base realignment and closure round: the costs of the last BRAC round relative to the meager savings it produced. The Defense Department calls the 2005 BRAC an anomaly. It argues that with the military in the midst of fighting two prolonged and manpower-intensive wars in Iraq and Afghanistan—and defense spending at a historic
The last round focused on “transformation” (the popular catchphrase during the tenure of Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld), rather than cutting costs. The next BRAC, defense officials promise, will be different. Its focus will be eliminating unneeded infrastructure, rather than moving missions and consolidating facilities. As a result, it will cost less and savings will stack up a lot faster………..

**Congress Isn’t Budging on BRAC**

http://www.airforcemag.com/DRArchive/Pages/2015/February%202015/February%2004%202015/Congress-Isn%E2%80%99t-Budging-on-BRAC.aspx

Air Force Magazine © February 4, 2015

**BY AUTUMN A. ARNETT**

Congress will not budget for another Base Realignment and Closure, said Rep. Randy Forbes (R-Va.), Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee’s seapower and projection forces panel, on Tuesday. The President’s Fiscal 2016 budget request, released Feb. 2, once again seeks a new BRAC round. Pentagon Comptroller Mike McCord on Monday urged Congress to reconsider its long-held opposition to BRAC, noting it’s been 10 years since the last round of base closures. “We have excess capacity. There is a compelling logic for it, and we’re going to have to deal with it at some point,” said McCord. Forbes, however, said the issue comes down to maintaining an adequate force structure…………

**Carter Favors an ‘Efficiency’ BRAC**

http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/carter-favors-an-efficiency-brac/#

Defense Communities 360 © February 3, 2015

Ashton Carter, the president’s nominee for defense secretary, said he would direct the department to carry out a base closure round that focuses on efficiency and consolidation rather than transformation if Congress authorizes a new BRAC, according to written answers he provided the Senate Armed Services Committee in advance of his confirmation hearing Wednesday. “BRAC 2005 was skewed by the fact that a large number of its recommendations were focused on transformation, had high up-front costs and were never expected to yield savings,” Carter stated. “However, those recommendations that were focused on efficiency had impressive payback and
accounted for a small portion of the costs — much like the 1993 and 1995 rounds.”

**New BRAC Round Would Limit Military Force Structure, Forbes Says**


Defense Communities 360 © February 3, 2015

Rep. Randy Forbes (R-Va.), chairman of the House Armed Services’ Seapower and Projection Forces Subcommittee, said he opposes a new BRAC because conducting a round of base closures would freeze the military’s force structure at a level he believes is too low. “If you believe, as I believe, that these force structures are not right, that we are going to have to build these force structures up greater, then you’d better fight like the dickens to make sure you don’t have a BRAC,” he told reporters on Tuesday, reported the *Hill*. “Because once we shut some of these capabilities and some of these facilities down, we will never be able to afford to build them back up again,” said Forbes, who previously led the committee’s Readiness panel which is responsible for military infrastructure policy.

**BRAC Cleanup Funding to Continue Long-Term Decline under FY’16 Request**


Defense Communities 360 © February 5, 2015

Funding to clean up installations closed during the first five BRAC rounds would fall 20 percent to $251.3 million in fiscal 2016, under the president’s new budget proposal. The request would continue a sharp drop in funding for past base closure rounds since FY 2013, when Congress allocated $759.6 million for cleanup and other closure costs. The FY 2015 omnibus spending bill approved in December provided $315 million for past BRAC cleanups. That allocation, however, represented a $45 million increase over the president’s budget request, and lawmakers may be inclined to boost the administration’s request again for FY 2016.
For the past three years, officials at the Pentagon have asked Congress for permission to take stock of how many of the military’s vast network of installations across the country have become obsolete and ought to be shrunk or shuttered. The Defense Department, by far the nation’s largest and costliest bureaucracy, estimates that it could operate far more efficiently and save billions of dollars each year by shedding at least 20 percent of its real estate. Yet, year after year, the nearly unanimous response from lawmakers has been: Don’t even think about it. They have barred the Pentagon from carrying out a detailed assessment of its properties, because closing useless bases would mean lost jobs and revenue in home districts...........

The Army’s active-duty end strength would continue its steady decline under the president’s fiscal 2016 budget request, falling by 15,000 troops to 475,000. DOD’s current plan calls for the Army’s active forces to shrink to 450,000 by 2018. The number of National Guard soldiers would drop by 8,200 this year to 342,000, and the Army Reserve would hold at 198,000 under the proposal, reported Stars and Stripes. The number of Air Force personnel, after dipping over the past two years, would rise slightly from 483,000 to 492,000, under the FY 2016 request. Many of the new slots would be allocated to the nuclear enterprise and cyber security.......
By Paul McLeary

The Pentagon has been conducting a "running reset" on its aircraft, ships, nuclear assets and ground vehicles over the past two years due to the limits placed on defense spending by the Budget Control Act (BCA), senior defense leaders said Monday, but the fiscal 2016 budget request looks to kick-start the modernization process in a big way. And that push is being funded in part by an additional $21 billion added to the 2016 budget request aimed specifically at that modernization. "This budget is the best balance of ends, ways and means that we could possibly achieve given the level of resources" available, said Deputy Defense Secretary Bob Work at an afternoon briefing with reporters.

DoD Request Blows By Budget Caps in '16


Defense News © February 2, 2015

By Paul McLeary

The Pentagon is asking Congress to fund it to the tune of $24.9 billion more in fiscal 2016 than was enacted in 2015 when the base and wartime budgets are combined, budget documents released Monday confirm. That increase comes from a $38.2 billion increase in the base budget request, and a $13.3 billion decrease from 2015 in the overseas contingency operations (OCO) request. The request would shoot past the congressionally mandated budget cap of $499 billion for 2016, as the Obama administration has long pledged to do. The raw topline numbers have been public for the past week: an overall $585.3 billion request for base and supplemental wartime accounts, which includes $534.3 billion in base funding and $50.9 billion OCO request for operations in Afghanistan, Iraq/Syria, Europe, Africa, and elsewhere.

GOP Leaders Reject Obama's Sequester Plan
A key House Republican greeted the White House's fiscal 2016 budget proposal with a rhetorical shovel, saying its tax increases means it immediately is headed for a political grave. House Appropriations Committee Chairman Hal Rogers, R-Ky., was among the first lawmakers to respond to President Barack Obama's penultimate federal spending request, which includes $585 billion for the Pentagon and proposes getting rid of sequestration. Many congressional Republicans want to end the sequestration budget cuts, but only for the military. Some Democrats are willing to support that, but only if domestic sequester cuts also are eliminated. The two sides disagree on how to do that, just as they have for four years……..
Air Force, Riding Budget Boost, Warns On Sequester; U-2 Is BACK!

http://breakingdefense.com/2015/02/air-force-riding-budget-boost-warns-on-sequester-u-2-is-back/

By COLIN CLARK

We won’t know much about it, but protecting America’s military satellites and the data they gather and share is a key target of the 2016 service budget. Several senior Pentagon budget wallahs declined in the top-level budget briefings today to answer specific questions about the spending levels of what is known as Space Situational Awareness (SSA) and Space Control funding. From conversations with a range of senior Air Force and independent experts over the last three months, it’s clear that substantial money of $1 billion or more is being spent on a range of efforts to guarantee the operation of satellites in a hostile environment. Expect Congress to be receptive to most space spending because of the threat that senior Pentagon officials say is real and growing fast ever since the Chinese anti-satellite test……..

Tanks Come Roaring Back In Army Budget


By SYDNEY J. FREEDBERG JR.

After years of cuts and cancelled programs, tanks and other armored vehicles are beginning a comeback. In contrast to other investments in the 2016 budget request released today, the ground vehicle increases have so much congressional backing — and involve such relatively small amounts — that they’re actually likely to happen. Four tracked vehicle programs and one wheeled vehicle enjoy significant ramp-ups in the 2016 request……..
Pentagon Unveils $585 Billion Budget Request


Defense One © February 2, 2015

By Gordon Lubold and Marcus Weisgarber

The Pentagon unveiled its fiscal 2016 budget proposal of $585 billion on Monday, an increase over last year’s budget in recognition of the military’s wide-ranging need to respond to global conflicts in places like Liberia and Eastern Europe, buy new equipment and modernize the force. billion over last year. The administration’s request for its war chest, the military’s separate Overseas Contingency Operations account, which pays for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and now the train-and-equip program for Syrian rebels and other operations, is less than it was last year. The $51 billion request for the so-called “OCO” budget is about 21 percent less than the enacted operations budget last year……..

Smith Expects Groundhog Day on DoD Budget

http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/policy-budget/congress/2015/02/02/obama-budget-a10-congress/22758815/

Defense News © February 2, 2015

By John T. Bennett

The House Armed Services Committee’s top Democrat expects a repeat of last year, when Congress reversed a list of Pentagon budget-cutting proposals. For the second consecutive year, the Obama administration’s defense budget request puts forth weapons program plans and other cost-cutting proposes. But few, such as an Air Force plan to retire the A-10 attack plane, are expected to make it through the defense authorization and appropriations committees. "It is fitting that the Department of Defense released its budget request on Groundhog Day," committee Ranking Member Rep. Adam Smith, D-Wash., said in a statement. "Sequestration is a failed policy that remains the law of the land, and Congress has yet to enact a long-term solution……..
Carter: Cuts Make Strategy 'Not Executable'


Defense News © February 4, 2015

By John T. Bennett

The Obama administration's defense secretary nominee says he cannot execute the existing national defense strategy if more across-the-board budget cuts occur. Ash Carter, a former deputy defense secretary, told the Senate Armed Services Committee on Wednesday he believes "the strategy is not executable under sequestration-level budget caps." In written responses to questions posed in advance by the committee, Carter explained how he will gauge whether the US military is getting ample funding. "The measure must be, can the department meet the security challenges of today, while also investing adequate resources to prepare for future security challenges, both the expected and the unexpected," Carter says……..

House Budget Chairman Shows No Interest in Lifting Defense Cap


Defense Communities 360 © February 5, 2015

At a hearing Wednesday on the president’s fiscal 2016 budget request, House Budget Chairman Tom Price (R-Ga.) offered no indication he would like to exceed the statutory spending caps for either defense or domestic programs. Price blasted the White House proposal for jeopardizing the remaining $541 billion in discretionary spending cuts scheduled to be imposed by the Budget Control Act through FY 2021, reported CQ. “In order to increase spending across the board, the president’s budget would unravel bipartisan agreements that have secured a modicum of spending restraint in recent years,” he said. “At the end of the day, a proposal that never balances and ignores key drivers of the nation’s debt is not a serious plan,” Price added……..

No Capitol Hill Consensus for DoD Hike

Defense News © February 8, 2015

By John T. Bennett

Many US lawmakers believe the Pentagon needs more annual funding, but a consensus has yet to form on whether Congress should do anything about it. The White House last week submitted a $534.3 billion base budget request that would breach defense spending caps set by the 2011 Budget Control Act by nearly $25 billion. Lawmakers are expected for the second consecutive year to shift money to block proposed cost-cutting moves, but immediate attention on Capitol Hill went to the caps. "I hope that we will do the right thing," said Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Thad Cochran, R-Miss., who also heads the panel's defense subcommittee………

Eglin AFB –

A very special kind of training

http://www.nwfdailynews.com/military/the-red-7/a-very-special-kind-of-training-1.431622

By KELLY HUMPHREY

At first glance, the Army’s 7th Special Forces Group’s (Airborne) Combat Readiness Training Facility doesn’t look that different from an ordinary gym. Racks are filled with free weights, an elevated track runs around the perimeter and loud music pulsates from overhead speakers. The purpose of the CRTF goes beyond your neighborhood fitness center, however. Working inside the facility is a team of professionals dedicated to helping the Army’s elite special operators perform at their optimal level – physically, psychologically and even spiritually…………

NS Mayport –

Action News Investigates: 8 warships coming to Naval Station Mayport

Abandoned strip malls and empty storefronts line the road leading up to Naval Station Mayport, which needs a boost. It's about to get one. Sparks and hammers are flying inside the Marinette Marine Company Shipyard. In the midst of the snow and the frozen Menominee River, at the border of Wisconsin and Michigan, sheets of steel are being cut, bent and molded as a ship is being built. Action News anchor John Bachman traveled to Northeast Wisconsin to get an exclusive look at a new piece of American military muscle that will bring nearly 1,000 jobs and millions of dollars to Northeast Florida……..

Defense Industry –

What Military Contractors Can Learn From the Pentagon’s 2016 Budget

http://www.defenseone.com/technology/2015/02/what-military-contractors-can-learn-pentagons-2016-budget/104505/

By Marcus Weisgerber

The Pentagon’s 2016 budget proposal shows growth across multiple sectors of the defense industry, but budget caps could slow the speed of weapon purchases. From the outside, the Pentagon’s budget looks relatively similar that the plan the Defense Department laid out one year ago. But upon closer inspection, President Barack Obama’s budget request gives a glimpse into how the military will look decades from now. A number of new research-and-development projects could lead to major, multibillion weapon programs down the road. As such, defense firms are paying close attention to these projects……. 
Navy Stands up ‘Information Dominance’ Command in Southeastern Virginia


Defense Communities 360 © February 4, 2015

The Navy held a ribbon-cutting ceremony last week to mark the creation of the Information Dominance Forces Command in Suffolk, Va., an organization made up of about 700 military, civilian and contractor personnel. The command has been operating since October, working to improve cybersecurity through dozens of efforts both ashore and afloat. Over the past several months, the command has been consolidating and aligning the missions, functions and tasks previously managed by the separate information dominance commands of Navy Cyber Forces, Fleet Cyber, Naval Meteorology and Oceanography, and the Office of Naval Intelligence, according to spokesman Matthew Klee. The organization is unique in being a “type command” formed around a capability, Klee said, reported the Suffolk News Herald……..

The Pentagon Wants To Expand Its Cyber Forces


Defense One © February 4, 2015

By Aliya Sternstein

The military services each want to bring on board an additional 20 to 60 computer security whizzes starting next fall to fill the ranks of a 6,000-person Cyber Command, according to President Barack Obama’s fiscal 2016 funding request. Air Force Maj. Gen. James Martin earlier this week said that increases in the service’s operations and maintenance budget would create a total of 39 cyber teams. Those teams will include “200 military personnel in cyber operations and cyber warfare positions to counter growing worldwide cyber threats,” according to budget documents. “We’re stopping the downsizing,” Martin told reporters on Tuesday, when the budget was released……..
The Pentagon’s Weapon Wish Lists Could Disappear

http://www.defenseone.com/politics/2015/02/pentagons-weapon-wish-lists-could-disappear/104619/

Defense One © February 4, 2015

By Marcus Weisgerber and Molly O'Toole

The military’s billion-dollar wish lists for weapons that did not make it onto the Pentagon’s budget might disappear as lawmakers decide whether they’re worth it. Long live the Pentagon wish list? Lawmakers this year might not ask the military services to send them wish lists of weapons, that on-again, off-again practice of informally requesting items not included in the Pentagon’s official budget proposal. Aides for both the House and Senate Armed Services committees say members of the panels have not decided whether they will request the unfunded priority lists. Traditionally these lists, which are closely watched by defense firms and lobbyists, are chock full of expensive programs that fell just below the cut line. In the past, the military brass from services compiles the lists, at the request of lawmakers. It’s seen as a way for service chiefs to go around the administration’s budget request and ask Congress to fund or put back items they want. ……

New White House Strategy Tackles Changed World

http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/2015/02/05/obama-strategy-russia-china-islamic-state-nss/22915347/

Defense News © February 5, 2015

By Paul McLear

For the first time in almost five years, the White House on Friday will release a new National Security Strategy when National Security Adviser Susan Rice unveils the document at the Brookings Institution here. The new strategy comes as the Obama administration enters the final two years of its stewardship and prepares to hand off its foreign policy legacy to the next Democratic nominee for president. Analysts say that the new congressionally mandated report will likely be unable to hide from the almost hopelessly outdated May 2010 NSS, released just months before a series of seismic events transformed thinking about US national security in recent years. In the spring of 2010, the Arab Spring had not yet roiled the capitals of major Middle East powers, Russia was still years from annexing Crimea and beginning its shadow war in eastern Ukraine, the bloody attack on the US consulate in Benghazi was still two years away,
the leadership of what is now the Islamic State terrorist network were disparate small bands of Islamists and Iraqi Baathists with no common cause, and few knew who Kim Jung-un was, let alone were preparing for him to come to power in North Korea in 2011……..

The Navy’s Hidden Crisis


Politico © February 05, 2015

By ROBERT C. O'BRIEN

Not many Americans understand how many Army divisions we have, the percentage breakdown of the Air Force’s fighter/bomber mix, or the three “Triad” legs of our strategic nuclear force. But just about everyone understands the Navy’s “ship count” and what it means for a president to send a carrier battle group into a crisis zone. And so, amid a more complicated and complex discussion this week over the sequestration’s impact, it didn’t go unnoticed Wednesday when Ashton Carter, President Obama’s defense secretary nominee, told Congress that the aircraft carrier fleet would likely continue to shrink. It was only the latest revelation, though, about how deeply and how quickly the Navy’s ambitions are shrinking—even in an age when our adversaries are growing their own navies in oceans around the world. Ever since Theodore Roosevelt’s “Great White Fleet,” the U.S. Navy has been how the country’s leaders have projected power on the world stage—but it’s now clear from years of cutbacks, sequestration, and an aging fleet that we’re going to be doing less of that power projection in the years ahead……..

Active Army drops below 500,000 soldiers

http://www.militarytimes.com/story/military/careers/army/2015/02/05/active-army-drops-below-500000-soldiers/22922649/

Military Times © February 5, 2015

By Jim Tice
Personnel strength of the Regular Army has dropped below 500,000 for the first time in 10 years, with 498,642 soldiers being listed on active duty in the most recent official headcount of the force. Statistics compiled by the Defense Manpower Data Center show that as the Army entered 2015 its reserve components had a combined strength of 547,007 soldiers — 349,881 in the National Guard, and 197,126 in the Army Reserve. The Army drawdown is on track to reduce the active component to 490,000 soldiers by Oct. 1, as required in the fiscal 2015 budget authorization from Congress. The drawdown is projected to continue after Oct. 1, with the fiscal 2016 spending request now before Congress listing an objective end-strength for next year of 475,000 soldiers, which is well shy of the manning projections of 450,000 to 420,000 soldiers that may be necessary if mandatory spending cuts called sequestration continue to the end of the decade.........
Task Force Members --

1. **February Task Force Meeting This Thursday** – The next meeting of the Florida Defense Support Task Force will be on Thursday, **February 19, 2015 at the Doubletree Hotel, 101 S. Adams St., Tallahassee, FL** beginning at 9:00 AM.

2. **Meeting Books for Members** – The meeting books will be FEDEX’d to members today.

3. **Task Force Strategic Plan Update** – Staff has completed an updated DRAFT of the Task Force Strategic Plan for review and comment by members. This DRAFT will be sent out to members later today and will be included in the meeting books. Last update of the Strategic Plan was in 2013.

4. **Attachments**

   - Agenda for next Task Force meeting
   - Task Force legislative update
   - 2015 National Security Strategy

Regards, BG.

**Bruce Grant**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, FLORIDA DEFENSE SUPPORT TASK FORCE

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Articles of Interest:

BRAC –

**Wittman Places High Bar for New BRAC Round**


Defense Communities 360 © February 11, 2015

The Defense Department needs to make a stronger case to convince Rep. Rob Wittman (R-Va.) that the House Armed Services’ Readiness Subcommittee should approve its request to hold a new round of base closures. Wittman, who chairs the readiness panel, wants answers from DOD on two different questions before he would consider authorizing another BRAC, reported the Daily Press. One is finding out where the department is spending too much money. He does not believe that spending cuts should be applied equally across the services. The other answer Wittman is looking for is an analysis of the potential savings from a new round over the next five years. That way the savings would show up in the five-year spending plan DOD submits each year with its budget request. Longer-term savings really aren’t accounted for, he said……..

**The Insanity Defense (Department) Will Remain Hard Pressed to Win Congress’ Approval for BRAC**


Defense Communities 360 © February 12, 2015

The Pentagon shouldn’t be surprised that Congress rejected its requests the past three years to realign and close additional bases and likely will ignore its request again this year. Until defense officials revise the BRAC law to address lawmakers’ concerns about the 2005 round’s ballooning implementation cost and less-than-promised annual savings, there is no reason to believe Congress will suddenly embrace a new round of base closures, Lucian Niemeyer, a former staff member of the Senate Armed Service Committee, says in a commentary published
in Real Clear Defense. —Each year, Congress has asked the Pentagon to suggest improvements to the BRAC law and, each year, there have been none. It would be insane for Congress to say "yes" to the same process and expect a different result,” said Niemeyer, founder of the Niemeyer Group…….

As military downsizes, debate sharpens over BRAC
Stars and Stripes © February 11, 2015
By Hugh Lessig

If the Pentagon wants to convene another round of military base closings, it must clear a congressional subcommittee chaired by Rep. Rob Wittman, R-Westmoreland. Wittman will be a tough sell. He says there is no appetite in Congress for another Base Realignment and Closure commission, known as BRAC. For him to be convinced, the Defense Department must do more homework. However, Peninsula military installations could still face cuts without BRAC. The Army is thinning its ranks in hopes of becoming more nimble and flexible. That could mean fewer soldiers at Fort Eustis. At Langley Air Force Base in Hampton, cuts to the Air Combat Command headquarters have resulted in undetermined job losses.......
"I hope that we will do the right thing," said Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Thad Cochran, R-Miss., who also heads the panel's defense subcommittee. But on Capitol Hill, what constitutes the right course of action depends on who is doing the talking………

**House lawmakers: Sequester hurting Army readiness**


The Hill © February 9, 2015

By Martin Matishak

A bipartisan pair of House lawmakers recently warned their colleagues about the negative toll sequester will have on the U.S. Army's readiness unless lawmakers reverse the looming budget cuts. "Inaction will put us further down the path of undermining our national security, local economies, and the livelihoods of military families who have sacrificed so much over the last thirteen years," Reps. Tulsi Gabbard (D-Hawaii) and Martha Roby (R-Ala.) wrote Friday in a “Dear Colleague” letter to all House members. “We believe alleviating the impact of sequestration on the military must be a top priority of the 114th Congress, and that there is the will within the Congress to do so,” they added………..

**Former Defense Officials Reinforce McCain’s Campaign to Increase DOD Budget**

http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/former-defense-officials-reinforce-mccains-campaign-to-increase-dod-budget/?utm_source=dc360&utm_campaign=057a3c4348-RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_04f8ff45e8-057a3c4348-55784537&ct=t(RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN)#

Defense Communities 360 © February 11, 2015

Two former defense undersecretaries on Tuesday told the Senate Armed Services Committee that DOD’s annual budget should be raised by tens of billions of dollars to address expanding global threats, declining troop readiness and the need to develop new weapons. The recommendation from Eric Edelman and Michèle Flournoy would far exceed the fiscal 2016 budget proposed by President Obama, which calls for spending $35 billion more than the statutory spending cap, reported Stars and Stripes. –The United States probably faces the most
complex and volatile security situation that we’ve faced in a long time, if ever,” said Eric Edelman. Edelman said additional spending is needed for a variety of needs, including intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance; and cyberspace and long range strike capabilities……

**DOD Budget Has Room for Cuts, Experts Say**


Defense Communities 360 © February 11, 2015

At a hearing of the House Armed Services Committee on Wednesday, defense experts pointed to a number of places the Pentagon could slash spending to meet the Budget Control Act caps starting in fiscal 2016. For starters, DOD should consider the recent recommendations of the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission, which include offering contributions to 401(k)-style accounts for service members who leave before reaching the 20-year service milestone, reported Military Times. “They’ve got a sound approach there — it certainly could use some tweaks and improvements from Congress,” said Todd Harrison, a senior fellow with the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments……

**Lawmakers talk big cuts for Pentagon budget**


Military Times © February 11, 2015

By Andrew Tilghman
Big cuts to the Pentagon budget that once would have been unthinkable were openly discussed Wednesday on Capitol Hill as lawmakers summoned a panel of experts to weigh in on the White House’s newly released 2016 defense budget request. This year's budget battle will be exceptionally intense because a two-year deal in 2013 that eased the impact of the spending caps known as sequestration will expire when the 2016 fiscal year begins in October. If lawmakers fail to reach a new agreement to extend that relief, the Defense Department will have to make major across-the-board cuts to planned spending. That is forcing lawmakers to scrutinize the military budget in search of big-ticket items and lower-priority programs to target……

**USAF Budget: Hardest Choices Yet to Come**
Defense News © February 11, 2015
By Aaron Mehta
The US Air Force requested $122.2 billion for fiscal 2016, a budget that emphasizes designing the Air Force of the future while addressing current needs. The budget was crafted to balance the future force with what Maj. Gen. Jim Martin, Air Force deputy assistant secretary for budget, called the "most urgent combat and commander requirements." "It's a request that's based on necessity, what we need for today's readiness in a long-term strategic framework, the capabilities we'll need in the future," Martin said. "It also allows us to begin the recovery from three years of operating at reduced funding levels." In many ways, it's an ideal budget. Unfortunately, it's also an idealized one………..

Air Force commanders warn against but prepare for possible sequester

Air Force Times © February 12, 2015
By Brian Everstine
The Air Force has learned lessons from the fiscal 2013 sequestration-forced standdown that cut flying hours, and expects to be better prepared if Congress does not reverse the law and mandatory cuts return in 2016. In fiscal 2013, the Air Force had to stand down 17 combat squadrons and reduce readiness of additional units to save money when sequestration went into effect. The budget cuts will return next year unless Congress acts to reverse them. The service was taken by surprise in 2013, and while the fiscal 2016 budget proposal does not take into account sequestration cuts, top service officials are still planning for the possibility……..
SpaceX launch of DSCOVR satellite delayed to today


Florida Today © February 9, 2015
By James Dean

SpaceX will be busy today with spacecraft potentially coming and going from orbit at the same time. The company will try to launch a Falcon 9 rocket from Cape Canaveral less than two hours before a Dragon capsule returning from the International Space Station is due to splash down in the Pacific Ocean. Launch of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Deep Space Climate Observatory mission has been scheduled for 6:05 p.m. today. A first launch attempt on Sunday scrubbed because an Air Force tracking radar went down. With a poor weather forecast Monday, NASA said launch managers elected to push the second attempt to today, when there is a 70 percent chance of favorable conditions for the instantaneous launch window…….

SpaceX, Air Force sign deal for landing pad at Cape


Florida Today © February 10, 2015
By James Dean

SpaceX and the Air Force have reached an agreement to use a former Atlas launch pad on Cape Canaveral Air Force Station as a landing site for returning Falcon rocket boosters. "The way we see it, this is a classic combination of a highly successful launch past morphing into an equally promising future," Brig. Gen. Nina Armagno, commander of the 45th Space Wing, said in a statement. Before flying boosters back to shore, SpaceX must first show it can land safely on an ocean platform. The company will make a second attempt to do that today after a planned 6:05 p.m. launch of a Falcon 9 with the Deep Space Climate Observatory. SpaceX envisions flying rockets back to shore, quickly refurbishing them and readying them for additional flights, a capability the company is confident would dramatically lower launch costs and revolutionize the industry…….
F-16, MV-22 Osprey to fly at Melbourne air show
Florida Today © February 10, 2015

By Rick Neale
Next month, an Air Force F-16 Fighting Falcon will scream across the sky as one of the featured attractions during the Melbourne Air & Space Show. And a Marine Corps MV-22 Osprey — an unusual hybrid of airplane and helicopter — will also turn heads during demonstration flights, said Bryan Lilley, air show director. The Melbourne Air & Space Show takes place March 21-22 at the Melbourne International Airport. The Navy Blue Angels will headline the event. "We've got some awesome military stuff coming. We're really excited about it. It's a heavily weighted military show, and that's a rare thing these days," Lilley said. "It's harder and harder to assemble this type of lineup," he said………

SpaceX launches observatory on 3rd try, nixes test
Stars and Stripes © February 11, 2015
By MARCIA DUNN
SpaceX launched an observatory inspired by former Vice President Al Gore toward a solar-storm lookout point a million miles away Wednesday. The unmanned Falcon 9 rocket blasted off on the third try in four days, successfully hoisting the spacecraft for NASA, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and Air Force. Gore - who dreamed up the idea for an environmentally conscious, Earth-gazing satellite 17 years ago - returned for the sunset launch. He was at the previous two attempts as well, eager to see his brainchild finally soar. Besides watching for solar outbursts, the observatory will provide continuous pictures of the full, sunlit side of Earth............

MacDill AFB –

Ribbon Cutting for Cybersecurity Center Comes as Danger Increases
http://wusfnews.wusf.usf.edu/post/ribbon-cutting-cybersecurity-center-comes-danger-increases
With a seemingly endless number of recent computer data breaches, the need for improved cybersecurity continues to grow. A statewide initiative based out of the University of South Florida is stepping up its efforts to fill that need. Friday's formal ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Florida Center for Cybersecurity, or FC-squared, came a day after it was announced that hackers gained access to the data of 80 million customers of health insurer Anthem. It also came the same week President Obama proposed spending $14 billion on cybersecurity efforts. The Center, which is based at the University of South Florida's Tampa campus, brings together the 12 schools in the State University System in an effort to make Florida a leader in cybersecurity research and education. 

Thunderbirds honor MacDill as top military show site

http://tbo.com/list/military-news/thunderbirds-pay-tribute-to-macdill-20150212/?page=1

As far as the Thunderbirds are concerned, MacDill Air Force Base is —Go.” According to the 6th Air Mobility Wing, the base host unit. The award was presented to MacDill on Feb. 9, with Secretary of the Air Force Deborah Lee James presenting the award to Tampa Mayor Bob Buckhorn. —Each year, the Thunderbirds perform across the nation, dazzling audiences and inspiring the next generation of airmen to serve their country,” said James. —To be named the best military show site is quite an achievement, and a testament to what happens when our Air Force works hand in hand with the community.”
F-35A Will Make IOC

http://www.airforcemag.com/DRArchive/Pages/2015/February%202015/February%2013%202015/F-35A-Will-Make-IOC.aspx

Air Force Magazine © February 13, 2015

BY ARIE CHURCH AND JOHN A. TIRPAK

The Air Force will make its F-35A Lightning II initial operating capability deadline in 2016 but not without some maintenance and manpower gymnastics, Gen. Hawk Carlisle, head of Air Combat Command, said. “It’s a tremendous challenge … there’s a couple of ways we’re looking at to potentially do it,” he said at a panel discussion at AFA’s Air Warfare Symposium on Thursday. Without maintainers freed up from retiring the A-10, USAF leadership is looking at contract maintenance to support F-35 training at Luke AFB, Ariz., and to be able to fully man its combat-coded F-35 unit at Hill AFB, Utah, Carlisle said. USAF is also looking at standing down some legacy squadrons earlier than planned to free maintainers for the F-35, he added. However, “All of those things are a short-term fix … I think we have a way forward to get to (initial operational capability) … in ’16 sometime between August and December, but that’s just the beginning,” he said.

NS Mayport –

Deployment Ready


Mayport Mirror © February 11, 2015

By Ensign George Hinerman and MC3 Jackie Hart
The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Farragut (DDG 99), with HSM-46 Detachment Six successfully completed composite training unit exercise (COMPTUEX) as part of the USS Theodore Roosevelt Carrier Striker Group (TRCSG) and returned to Naval Station Mayport, Feb. 6. COMPTUEX is a requirement for deployment, designed to test multiple departments across the ship. The fast-paced exercise simulates multiple, real-world scenarios that test the ability of ships to work together.

Mayport, Roosevelt Teams Respond To Active Shooter Drill


Florida Times-Union © February 11, 2015

Naval Station Mayport teamed up with USS Roosevelt on Feb. 5 to practice real world scenarios as part of the two-week-long force protection and anti-terrorism exercise Solid Curtain-Citadel Shield 2015. The Feb. 4 event was part of the Citadel Shield exercise and included an active shooter drill on the pier. Citadel Shield is an installation-level training exercise to test the ability of naval security forces during an emergency. SC-CS 15 is a force protection exercise conducted by Commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command (USFF) and Commander, Navy Installations Command (CNIC) on all Navy installations in the continental United States to allow Navy security personnel to hone skills and situational readiness using real-life training scenarios.

Tyndall AFB –

F-22's role, impact in Inherent Resolve increasing


Air Force Times © February 12, 2015

By Brian Everstine

The Air Force's most advanced fighter has been in battle against the Islamic State group for about five months, and has performed well enough to now be an anchor of airstrike sorties. The F-22 flew its first combat mission in September, striking an Islamic State headquarters building in Syria. Since then, the F-22 has flown as part of strike packages in most of the combat sorties as part of Operation Inherent Resolve in both
Iraq and Syria. It has flown combat missions, escorted bombers and helped manage other fighter aircraft on their sorties, Air Combat Command chief Gen. Hawk Carlisle said at the Air Force Association Air Warfare Symposium here

Airmen outraged after Tyndall nixes 'Taps,' reveille

Air Force Times © February 13, 2015
By Stephen Losey
Tyndall Air Force Base in Florida has decided to stop playing "Taps" and reveille in and near residential areas — and airmen are furious. Tyndall said in a Facebook post Thursday that it has stopped playing the songs — which for more than a century have often marked the beginning and end of the day for troops — in and near residential areas. The change was made "in an effort to minimize impact to our shift workers and families," Tyndall said. The songs will continue to be played in operational areas "to honor our heritage and reflect on the sacrifices of those who came before us," Tyndall said

Trumbull’s military housing tax exemption gets support

http://www.newsherald.com/military/trumbull-s-military-housing-tax-exemption-gets-support-1.438407
News-Herald © February 15, 2015

County property appraisers would be prohibited from seeking property taxes on housing improvements at U.S. military bases in Florida under a proposal that easily marched through its first House appearance Thursday. The House Finance and Tax Committee unanimously backed a proposal (HB 361) by Rep. Jay Trumbull, R-Panama City, aimed at recognizing that housing under a program known as the Military Housing Privatization Initiative, on land owned by the federal government, is exempt from ad valorem taxation. The Military Housing Privatization Initiative involves the military entering agreements with private developers to own and operate military-family housing. In Bay County, initiative developments are located at Tyndall Air Force Base and Naval Support Activity Panama City……
NSA Panama City –

Land deal could cost county $1.6 million


News Herald © February 7, 2015

By JOHN HENDERSON

Bay County could lose $1.6 million on a land deal it made in 2010 to try and ensure the Navy base remained open. County commissioners accepted an offer last week for the state to pay the county $1.3 million to buy property the county purchased in 2010 for $2.9 million from a private developer next to Naval Support Activity Panama City (NSA PC). The property was bought as a buffer against private development in the belief that development could make it more likely the base would close. Now Bay County officials are hoping state or federal help comes and the county doesn’t lose money on the deal in the end..........

Florida National Guard –

Proportionately, More Guard and Reserve

http://www.airforcemag.com/DRArchive/Pages/2015/February%202015/February%202012%20015/Proportionately,-More-Guard-and-Reserve.aspx

Air Force Magazine © February 12, 2015

BY JOHN A. TIRPAK

"I believe we should boost the size" of the Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve, Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Welsh said in an interview with Air Force Magazine last week. "I think we can keep more capacity in those components," and "if we move more force structure into the Guard and Reserve, that’s great." Welsh acknowledged
that the reserve component is less costly to maintain, but he insisted increasing it must not be done "right now ... at the expense of the active component." He explained, "The analysis we've done shows that that would be a bad idea and we can show how that would hurt mission capability, not help it." Ideally, he would like to grow the Guard and Reserve "proportionately" with the Active Duty "to operate that force structure, that hardware." But the active component is "at a red line ... We're going to break it if we go any smaller," he added.......
For the second time in three years, state legislators outside of the Florida Keys have filed bills that would preempt a court case seeking to determine if military residential and commercial properties in Key West are taxable or not. It's action that's very familiar to the Monroe County property appraiser and those following tax issues regarding military properties in Key West...

Defense Industry –

Local defense contractors would benefit from Obama's military budget — if it passes


By Jensen Werley

President Barak Obama's proposed budget comes with a windfall for the military: about $561 billion in base discretionary funding for the 2016 fiscal year — $38 billion above sequestration funding levels, according to sister paper the Washington Business Journal. That could mean a boon for defense contractors that had been languishing under the military spending cuts that came with sequestration. “Sequestration is essentially affecting us now,” said Jennifer Carter, business development manager for LSI Inc., a local company that creates aviation training systems for the military, in a statement. ............

Ash Carter Could Face Big Decisions on Industry Consolidation

http://www.nationaldefensemagazine.org/blog/Lists/Posts/Post.aspx?ID=1741

National Defense Magazine © February 7, 2015

By Sandra Erwin

The Pentagon in recent years has frowned on mega-mergers of top weapons
contractors, a policy that is likely to continue under soon-to-be confirmed Defense Secretary Ashton B. Carter. But Carter could face challenges to that policy in the near future as defense contractors weigh their options in a tight market. There is growing speculation that such a test might come in 2015 or 2016, following the award of a major Air Force contract to build a new stealth bomber. The competition for the $100 billion Air Force long-range strike bomber program includes three of the Pentagon’s top contractors. The contest pits Northrop Grumman against a Boeing-Lockheed Martin team. Whoever loses the bomber is likely to come under pressure from investors to make a big move — to either merge with a competitor or acquire a piece of one, predicts aerospace industry analyst Richard Aboulafia, vice president of the Teal Group .............

Air Force, Army Name Superior Suppliers

Defense News © February 10, 2015

By Aaron Mehta
The US Air Force and Army have released the names of the top companies under the Pentagon’s Superior Supplier Incentive Program (SSIP), breaking the top 25 largest industry partners for each service into three tiers of performance. Among the top tier suppliers for the Air Force are the business units like Lockheed Martin Aeronautics and engine manufacturer Rolls Royce, while major firms such as Boeing military aircraft and Northrop Grumman’s aerospace system were listed as Tier 2..........

Reform Pentagon Acquisition By Slowing Down the F-35

Defense One © February 12, 2015

By William D. Hartung

Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., and Ashton Carter, the incoming next defense secretary, agree on one thing – the need for acquisition reform at the Pentagon. They should start by looking at the F-35 program. McCain, in his opening remarks at Carter’s confirmation hearing last week, provided a litany of examples of major programs that had incurred
huge cost overruns, from a new aircraft carrier to the F-35 combat aircraft. His basic message was that if the Pentagon doesn’t change the way it buys weapons, it won’t matter how much money it gets.

Other Items of Interest –

**Air Force Divestment Strategy Postpones Some Aircraft Retirements**


Defense Communities 360 © February 9, 2015

Force structure changes included in the Air Force’s fiscal 2016 budget request would affect installations in 17 states, with the largest impacts at bases with A-10 units, officials said last week. The FY 2016 budget would continue the strategy proposed last year by the Air Force to phase out a number of weapons systems, but will postpone the retirement of some systems by several years to retain critical capability in the near term while positioning the service to support a leaner, more modern force in the future, according to a press release. “We are investing in nuclear, space, ISR [intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance], the Guard and Reserve, and have discontinued our personnel downsizing programs,” said Secretary Deborah Lee James. The service’s 2016 budget calls for retiring the A-10 Thunderbolt II fleet in FY 2016 to free up resources for multi-role aircraft that can provide close air support in future conflicts. The A-10’s retirement is phased across four years in parallel with the service’s acquisition of the F-35 Lightning II fleet.

**US Security Strategy Reflects Changed World**


Defense News © February 7, 2015
By Paul McLeary
For the first time in almost five years, the White House has released a new National Security Strategy that makes the case for American leadership in a world in which terrorist threats and Great Power politics share equal billing as national security threats. The new strategy comes as the Obama administration enters the final two years of its stewardship and prepares to hand off its foreign policy legacy to the next Democratic nominee for president. The congressionally mandated strategy was unable to hide from the almost hopelessly outdated May 2010 version, released just months before a series of seismic events transformed thinking about US national security.

Bill would hide personal info of special ops members


Tampa Tribune © February 11, 2015

BY JAMES L. ROSICA

Lawmakers will consider an exception to Florida’s public records law that would black out identifying information of active and retired members of the military’s special operations units. The bill (SB 674/HB 185) gets its first review on Wednesday by the House Veteran and Military Affairs Subcommittee. It would extend an exemption now covering home addresses, telephone numbers, dates of birth and other information now in the public record to special ops service members, their spouses and children. The exemption already covers judges, prosecutors, police, firefighters and certain state investigators, among others.

Analysts: Navy brass view F-35C's stealth as overrated


Navy Times © February 9, 2015

By David Larter

The top officer of one of three services projected to spend tens of billions of dollars on stealthy new F-35 Joint Strike Fighters, now says "stealth may be overrated."
During a speech last week to a Washington audience, Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Jon Greenert described what he's looking for in the next generation of strike aircraft — and it doesn't look like the controversial F-35. "What does that next strike fighter look like?" Greenert asked the packed forum. "I'm not sure it's manned, don't know that it is. You can only go so fast, and you know that stealth may be overrated. ... Let's face it, if something moves fast through the air, disrupts molecules and puts out heat — I don't care how cool the engine can be, it's going to be detectable. You get my point."…….

**Air Force details proposed aircraft cuts state by state**


Combat Aircraft © February 9, 2015

The Air Force's fiscal 2016 budget proposal, like the previous budget, calls for eliminating A-10 units across the service while giving new missions to Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve units. The service on Friday released details on how those and other changes would affect bases stateside and overseas. "The force structure actions in this budget represent a careful balance between readiness today and tomorrow. World events have increased demand on our Air Force in the near term, but we can't afford to lose sight of tomorrow's threats," Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Welsh said in a news release. "Honoring our commitment to the combatant commanders to provide intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, command and control and close air support requires not only that we provide those capabilities today, but also that we are ready to provide them in the fights of the future."........

**How Reforming Benefits Could Undermine the Pentagon’s Future**

The Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission's, or MCRMC, recommendations might seem appealing to some segments of the military community and their families. However, I caution anyone who may be inclined to accept the MCRMC findings without giving them a very detailed level of scrutiny. After 13 years of wartime deployments and several years of compensation cuts to the all-volunteer force due to sequestration, morale is already plummeting in the force. A 2014 Military Times poll documents declining morale in the force: “Troops report significantly lower overall job satisfaction” and “declining interest in re-enlistment now compared to five years ago.” It found a 43 percent drop among respondents who rated their pay as “good” or “excellent,” while those rating overall quality-of-life plummeted from 96 percent in 2009 to 56 percent in 2014.

DOD Energy Consumption Hits Record Low

Energy use by the Defense Department, including both installation and operational energy, in fiscal 2013 fell to the lowest level recorded since at least FY 1975, according to a new report from the Energy Information Administration. DOD’s overall share of federal energy usage dropped from 87 percent in 1975 to 78 percent in 2013. Installation energy — which includes the energy required to operate installations, including energy required by non-combat vehicles — accounts for 30 percent of the department’s consumption. The agency attributed the decline to a handful of policy initiatives, along with the drawdown of military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Howard: Move the Navy SEAL Museum
By Michael R. Howard

Navy SEALs, their families and the public deserve a world-class SEAL museum that honors and highlights the distinguished service and sacrifice of this unique fighting force. They deserve a museum where those on active duty can visit with their families, where those in training can learn the SEALs’ history and heritage, where large numbers of tourists can gain perspective. The museum needs to be close to its roots, in a place where the population understands and embraces the military (especially SEALs), a place where it will have the support of government at every level. That place is Hampton Roads. It is not Fort Pierce, Fla., where the museum is now……..

Should the Navy SEAL Museum Find a New Home?
https://medium.com/@thebluesuiter/should-the-navy-seal-museum-find-a-new-home-7e43926ecc89
The Blue Suiter Blog © February 10, 2015
by The Blue Suiter

If you didn’t already know where the National Navy UDT-SEAL Museum was located, where would you think? Washington, D.C.? Perhaps Coronado, California, where SEAL training is conducted at the Naval Special Warfare Center? You’d be forgiven for assuming either, but you’d be wrong. The National Navy UDT-SEAL Museum is located in Fort Pierce, Florida, about 90 minutes south of the Kennedy Space Center on the east coast. But recently a minor stir was caused by an op-ed in the The Virginian-Pilot that called for the Navy SEAL Museum to be uprooted from the sunny climes of Fort Pierce, where it has been since it opened in 1985, and moved somewhere else, such as Coronado or Naval Amphibious Base Little Creek in Virginia Beach, Virginia. Giving substantial weight to the convincing and well-written op-ed was the author himself, retired Navy captain and former SEAL Michael Howard. Capt. Howard lives in nearby Vero Beach and, oh yeah, was the executive director of the museum from 2004 to 2012........

Pentagon Gets Carter after Senate Confirmation
http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/pentagon-gets-carter-after-senate-confirmation/#

Defense Communities 360 © February 13, 2015

Ashton Carter is expected to assume the official duties of the defense secretary and take the oath of office in the next several days, the Pentagon reported following the Senate’s 93-5 confirmation vote Thursday. Carter, 60, will become the 25th Pentagon chief after earlier stints in the Obama administration as deputy secretary and acquisition chief. The pain-free confirmation process enjoyed by Carter was a tribute to his popularity on both sides of the aisle.
Prior to the vote, John McCain (R-Ariz.), chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, praised the candidate on the Senate floor. “He is one of America’s most experienced defense professionals, respected by Republicans and Democrats alike,” McCain said..........

Military panel warns of Tricare 'death spiral'


The Hill © February 11, 2015
By Martin Matishak

Members of a blue-ribbon commission on Wednesday pushed lawmakers in the House to take a hard look at their proposal for abolishing Tricare, the military’s health insurance plan. The proposal, one of 15 recommendations recently unveiled by the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission, has quickly become a source of fierce debate on Capitol Hill. “Tricare is a broken program,” Commissioner Stephen Buyer told a subpanel of the House Armed Services Committee. Retired Adm. Edmund Giambastiani said Tricare is in a “death spiral” because the program has been “squeezed” in the name of efficiency, which has resulted in decreased access and fewer services. The commission’s proposal would allow nearly 5 billion active-duty family members, soldiers in the reserve components and retirees who are not yet old enough to receive Medicare to leave the Tricare system and sign up for a private insurance plan…..

Air Force Chief Welsh Signals Shift To Modernization, AKA Weapons

http://breakingdefense.com/2015/02/air-force-chief-welsh-signals-shift-to-modernization-aka-weapons/

Breaking Defense © February 12, 2015
By COLIN CLARK

More than half-way into his tenure as Air Force Chief of staff, Gen. Mark Welsh has shifted focus from the service’s airmen to its weapons, declaring today that “we must modernize the Air Force. This isn’t optional. We must do it. And It will be painful because we will have to make hard choices.” Welsh’s speech here at the annual Air Force Association winter conference comes while rumors swirl that the service is poised to release important details about
two major new programs. The rumor is that officials will release tomorrow the requirements of the new jet fighter trainer, T-X. That will be followed soon thereafter by a public release of elements of the Long Range Strike Bomber program...........

Senate Confirms Carter as Defense Secretary


Defense News © February 12, 2015

By John T. Bennett
The US Senate on Thursday overwhelmingly approved Ash Carter to become the country's 25th defense secretary. After a weeks-long delay while he recovered from back surgery, Carter's nomination sailed through the upper chamber with a final tally of 93-5. He testified for around five hours on Feb. 4 before the Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) submitted additional answers to the panel on Monday, and it voted unanimously Tuesday to send his nomination to the floor. A spokesman said Carter's first official day on the job will be Feb. 17.......
A-10 are spurious or unbelievable, they say. Gen. Mark Welsh, the Air Force Chief of Staff, knows this all too well. He also knows that the Air Force can save an estimated $4.2 billion by retiring the A-10 fleet. So Welsh charged the head of Air Combat Command with sitting down with the Marines and the Army the first week of March at a CAS summit so everyone could "reset" the CAS conversation and focus on the best ways to accomplish the mission — and not just the A-10, he told reporters this morning…...
February 25, 2015 – FDTSF Update

TF members --

1. **Next Task Force Meeting on March 19th** – The next meeting of the Florida Defense Support Task Force will be on Thursday, **March 19, 2015 at the Doubletree Hotel, 101 S. Adams St., Tallahassee, FL** beginning at 9:00 AM.

2. **Task Force Strategic Plan Update** – Staff has completed an updated DRAFT of the Task Force Strategic Plan with all changes highlighted in red for review and comment by members. Staff requests members submit changes/additions/deletions/edits no later than March 4th.

3. **Attachments** –

   - 2015 Task Force meeting schedule.

Regards, BG.

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Articles of Interest:

BRAC –
Wittman Argues against Administration’s BRAC Request

http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/wittman-argues-against-administrations-brac-request/#

Defense Communities 360 © February 20, 2015

At last week’s hearing of the House Armed Services Committee with defense experts on where savings could be found in the defense budget, Rep. Rob Wittman (R-Va.), chairman of the committee’s readiness panel, focused on the witnesses’ support for a new round of base closures as one avenue for cutting costs. At the outset of the hearing, Bensahel listed a new BRAC round as one of three priorities for reforming DOD spending. —The Army and the Air Force have each estimated that they have around 20 percent excess capacity. It is unconscionable to require these services to continue spending money on facilities that they do not need while the budget caps require them to cut end strength, training, and readiness, which puts American troops at risk,” she said………..

DOD Budget—

Army Cuts Would Be Widespread under Sequestration, Odierno Says


Defense Communities 360 © February 16, 2015

Few installations will be spared from further reductions in personnel if Congress and the White House fail to strike a deal to lift the Budget Control Act spending caps, Gen. Ray Odierno, Army chief of staff, told reporters last week from the Navy port at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam. —If [sequestration] continues, we’re going to have to reduce the size of the Army further,” he said, reported Stars and Stripes. —It would be across the entire Army, and just about every installation in every state would be affected.” The second round of restructuring the Army is now contemplating will shrink the service by at least 40,000 soldiers to an end strength of 450,000 by fiscal 2020. Officials are considering cuts that will slash the force by 70,000 soldiers, however; that larger reduction is expected if the statutory spending caps remain in place much longer…….

Ashton Carter, military leaders must pivot on spending priorities
Ashton Carter, who took office as Secretary of Defense this week, and the heads of the military services all insist that it is impossible to execute the nation’s security strategy without busting through the $499 billion cap that law imposes on next year’s Pentagon budget. The military leaders warn that if Congress will not raise the cap and provide the $534 billion in non-war funds that they requested earlier this month for fiscal year 2016 — and get rid of future years’ caps — the United States will require a cheaper security strategy. If only that were true. What passes for American security strategy these days is a mixture of militarized global profligacy and national self-worship. The latest example is the “National Security Strategy,” which the White House released Feb. 6. It lists eight — top strategic risks,” including non-security ills such …………. 

New DoD chief: We must become leaner, balance budget

The Defense Department must steer through 'wasteful' sequestration cuts and continuing budget uncertainty as it looks to the future, new DoD Secretary Ash Carter said in a letter to defense personnel Feb. 17. Carter, who was confirmed by the Senate Feb. 12 and sworn in Feb. 17, said he was committed to building the force of the future while working through sequestration – which imposes a "wasteful uncertainty and risk to our nation's defense." "We must balance all parts of our defense budget so that we continue to attract the best people – people like you; so that there are enough of you to defend our interests around the world; and so that you are always well-equipped and well-trained to execute your critical mission," he said. He said to win support from taxpayers the Defense Department must show it can make better use of every dollar it spends. "That means a leaner organization, less overhead, and reforming our business and acquisition practices," Carter said………. 

DoD Official: No Alternate Sequester Budget in '16
The Pentagon has not drawn up an alternate sequester-compliant budget for 2016 if Congress fails to act and the mandatory budget cuts kick in on Oct. 1 a senior Pentagon official said this week. Unlike in previous years when Pentagon budget planners developed multiple budgets to account for the president's request and a sequester, the defense department felt that putting more than one budget together at a time was too much strain on the workforce, Pentagon comptroller Mike McCord told a small roundtable discussion in his office. On Feb. 2, the White House asked Congress to fund the Pentagon at $534 billion in base funding for 2015, $35 billion higher than spending caps allow. The request has set up a showdown with the budget and appropriations committees on Capitol Hill this spring, as newly minted secretary of defense Ash Carter and the service chiefs make their case for the money they say is critical to carry out the president's national security strategy ..........

Sequestration: Don’t Believe All The Hype

From Wall Street to Pennsylvania Avenue, speculation is on the rise about the defense budget: Are we headed for yet another impasse and automatic sequestration budget cuts like the one that occurred in 2013? Or not? The sequestration process has few fans and a slew of misconceptions. As talk of another round of sequestration grows, it is important to separate rhetoric from reality. (Rhetoric is in bold!) First, there is no doubt. Another round of sequestration is a lock. The recently released fiscal 2016 budget proposes agency funding that exceeds spending caps set by current law. If Congress appropriates these funds and does not increase the caps, current law would require another round of across-the-board, salami-slice cuts. This is the only act that really constitutes –sequestration,” despite widespread use of the word in other contexts.........

Republicans, Democrats Want More DoD Spending
Republicans and Democrats remain deeply divided about how much the country should spend on the military, but a growing number of all Americans say the Pentagon budget is too small. Fifty-six percent of all Republicans polled by Gallup said the United States spends "too little" on its military, compared with 17 percent of Democrats. Independents fell in the middle, at 33 percent. Notably, the nonpartisan polling firm said 34 percent of all those surveyed answered "too little," the highest amount since 2001. Thirty-two percent believe the US is spending too much on the Defense Department. "For the past decade, Americans have been more likely to say the US government spends too much on defense rather than too little, but today, a slim margin separates these views," Gallup said in a summary of a nationwide poll, conducted Feb. 8-11.

DoD Official: No Alternate Sequester Budget in '16

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Congress starts its fiscal 2016 defense budget work in earnest this week, with officials from the Navy and Marine Corps on the Hill to talk about their priorities and the services' top enlisted leaders on hand to discuss quality-of-life issues. Lawmakers will also debate budget requests for the Coast Guard and Department of Veterans Affairs, and House Armed Services officials will begin their review of the president's recent request for a new authorization of military force in the Middle East..........

Tyndall AFB –

**The F-22’s Belated Combat Debut Against Islamic State Earns Praise**

Lockheed Martin Corp.’s F-22 fighter jet, making its debut in warfare more than nine years after it was deemed combat-ready, has flown at least 112 missions against Islamic State positions in Syria and Iraq, the U.S. Air Force’s commander of combat forces said. The stealth fighter known as the Raptor has guided airstrikes into Syria, disseminated large volumes of data to fellow fliers and attacked Islamic State’s oil facilities, General Herb “Hawk” Carlisle, said in a telephone interview. “If at all possible, they try to have F-22s on as many missions as they can because” the jets play the role of an aerial quarterback, Carlisle said. ............

Florida National Guard –

**DoD study: Army aviation plan saves money, less risky**

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A Defense Department study of the Army's controversial Aviation Restructuring Initiative found the service's plan saves more money and presents less "risk" compared with the National Guard's proposed alternative, according to findings obtained by Army Times. The study by DoD's Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation office found:

- The ARI manages high demand with a smaller fleet. However, it is not sized for prolonged stability operations.
- The Guard alternative provides more crews and units with less disruptive force structure changes, but some units would only be partially equipped.
- The Guard alternative costs $89 million to $176 million more annually. It also has a higher one-time cost; $570 million compared with $77 million for ARI.
- The Guard's proposal, which would include multi-component AH-64 Apache battalions, presents tempo and training risks. Frequent Guard deployments would put high stress on the force during peacetime, and the proposal calls for a training schedule more aggressive than what was conducted during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Defense Industry –

Military budget increase would be welcomed -- but not needed -- by Jacksonville's largest defense contractor


Jacksonville Business Journal © February 16, 2015

By Jensen Werley

With the uncertainty of whether President Barack Obama's military budget, which marks the first increase in defense spending since sequestration, will pass, some local defense contractors are hopeful for the future but remain cautious. One of those is military construction firm Sauer Inc., Jacksonville's largest military contractor. "On the surface it would sound favorable," said Gary Weeks, vice president of Sauer's federal division. "It depends on where he puts that money. If it's for facilities, upgrades or new construction or renovation it would certainly benefit us."
AF Pledges Greater Transparency for Industry

http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/policy-budget/industry/2015/02/16/af-pledges-greater-transparency-industry/23508047/

Defense News © February 16, 2015
By Aaron Mehta

The US Air Force continued its push for closer communications with industry, with top officials telling attendees at the Air Force Association's Air Warfare Symposium that the service is seeking more transparency and open exchange of ideas with its commercial partners. The symposium, host to more than 900 attendees and 33 industry exhibitors, also became the central stage for the service's pledge to change its acquisition strategies in order to spur technological innovation. William LaPlante, the service's top acquisition official, said a priority going forward is "improving our relationships, our transparency, [and] our credibility with the outside world," which he acknowledged has not always been the case……

Other Items of Interest –

Air Force's first female four-star to retire


Air Force Times © February 13, 2015
By Kristin Davis, Jeff Schogol and Aaron Mehta

Gen. Janet Wolfenbarger, the Air Force's first female four-star general, will retire this summer, Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Welsh announced on Friday. Wolfenbarger, the daughter of an Air Force pilot, began her career in 1980 as a technical intelligence analyst in the armament division at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida. She has served as head of Air Materiel Command at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, since June 2012. On Friday, Welsh praised Wolfenbarger as a "brilliant" commander and thanked her for her service. Lt. Gen. Ellen Pawlikowski, currently the top military acquisition official in the service, has been nominated as her replacement……
**North Carolina Governor to Create Military Affairs Department**

http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/north-carolina-governor-to-create-military-affairs-department/#

Defense Communities 360 © February 16, 2015

North Carolina will create a department of military and veterans affairs to improve services for active-duty personnel and veterans, as well as to promote the state’s military bases, Gov. Pat McCrory (R) said during his State of the State address earlier this month. “At a time when so many servicemen and women are coming home from Afghanistan and Iraq through North Carolina, as I mentioned before, we must have an efficient and well-coordinated process in place to meet the needs of active-duty personnel and veterans,” McCrory said Feb. 4. “These services are right now scattered across many areas of state government with no accountability, causing delay, frustration, and sometimes poor customer service.”

**State of Readiness Approaches Troublesome Levels, Briefing Reveals**


Defense Communities © February 24, 2015

The overall readiness of the nation’s military has been severely degraded, with units scheduled for deployment receiving a disproportionate share of available resources, Pentagon officials told the House Armed Services Readiness Subcommittee during a recent closed-door briefing. While justifiable, this imbalance will eventually yield an unviable and technologically inferior fighting force and challenges our ability to win decisively against growing adversaries,” according to one of the briefing charts from the unclassified presentation obtained by CQ. Relief stemming from the two-year Ryan-Murray budget deal reached in December 2013 has helped restore some of the readiness decline but absent further relief from the Budget Control Act spending caps, readiness levels will continue to erode……
March 2, 2015 – FDSTF Update

TF members --

1. **Next Task Force Meeting on March 19th** – The next meeting of the Florida Defense Support Task Force will be on Thursday, **March 19, 2015 at the Doubletree Hotel, 101 S. Adams St., Tallahassee, FL** beginning at 9:00 AM.

2. **Task Force Strategic Plan Update** – Per Chairman direction, staff has completed an updated DRAFT of the Task Force Strategic Plan with all changes highlighted in red for review and comment by members. Staff requests members submit changes/additions/deletions/edits no later than March 4th. Several suggested changes have already been submitted and will be incorporated into the final draft for consideration and approval at the March 19th meeting.

3. **Attachments** –
   - Notes from TPG Conference Call.
   - FDSTF Legislative Tracker – As of March 2, 2015.

Regards, BG.

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Articles of Interest:
DOD Budget—

Thornberry’s Defense Budget Exceeds Pentagon’s Request by $16 Billion


Military.com © February 27, 2015

by Brendan McGarry

A lawmaker in the U.S. House of Representatives is calling for a fiscal 2016 defense budget that would exceed spending caps by $50 billion. Rep. William "Mac" Thornberry, R-Texas, chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, submitted the proposal in a letter Friday to Rep. Tom Price, R-Georgia, and chairman of the House Budget Committee. Thornberry and most of his colleagues on the defense panel recommended a national defense budget of $577 billion. The account includes funding for defense-related activities at the Pentagon and Energy Departments, and excludes funding for war operations. That would restore spending to a level proposed before the 2011 passage of deficit-reduction legislation known as the Budget Control Act…….

Army secretary optimistic on relief from budget caps

http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/02/25/us-usa-army-vehicles-idUSKBN0LT1PQ20150225?feedType=RSS&feedName=everything

Reuters © February 25, 2015

By Andrea Shalal

U.S. Army Secretary John McHugh on Wednesday said he was optimistic lawmakers would agree to some form of relief from congressional budget caps for fiscal 2016, given widespread recognition the resulting spending cuts would undermine military readiness. McHugh said that if the budget caps, known as sequestration, remained in place, U.S. lawmakers would have to make tough decisions about which missions it wanted to Army to abandon. "You do reach a point ... in sequestration where our overseers are going to have to say what they don’t want us to do any longer," he told a defense writers breakfast. If sequestration cuts take effect, he said, the Army would try to protect two big weapons programs for new ground vehicles: a Humvee replacement
contract due to be awarded this year, and a new armored personnel carrier deal won by British company BAE Systems Plc's U.S. unit………

**Less than half of combat squadrons fully ready for combat**


Air Force Times © February 25, 2015

By Jeff Schogol

Less than half of the Air Force's combat-coded squadrons are fully prepared for combat, top service officials told lawmakers on Wednesday. "While the specific numbers are classified, I'll tell you the overall combat capability of our combat coded squadrons in the Air Force is still below 50 percent, so fewer than 50 percent of them are fully combat capable," Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Welsh told the Senate Appropriations defense subcommittee on Wednesday. And if Congress does not block the spending cuts called for in the Budget Control Act, the decline in squadrons that are fully combat ready will be "stunning," Welsh said…………

**UPDATE 1-Bid for more US defense funds gets chilly House reception**

http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/02/26/usa-budget-navy-idUSL1N0W02IR20150226

Reuters © February 26, 2015

By David Alexander and Andrea Shalal

U.S. military officials seeking a big boost in defense spending received little encouragement on Thursday from a House panel reviewing their bid for more funds, with one lawmaker saying the extra money would have to be cut "with you or ... without you." Representative Rodney Frelinghuysen, a senior member of the Appropriations Committee in the House of Representatives, chided President Barack Obama for proposing a $534 billion Pentagon base budget that "ignores the law" by exceeding federal spending caps by nearly $35 billion. Frelinghuysen told Navy and Marine Corps leaders to submit specific lists of programs that could be cut if Congress failed to approve the Democratic president's request for more funding…….
John McHugh: Sequestration would endanger IS fight

http://www.militarytimes.com/story/military/2015/02/26/mchughisil/24023153/

Military Times © February 26, 2015

By Matthew L. Schehl

As drumbeats for war against the Islamic State group intensify, the Army may face a reality check in putting "boots on ground" in the Middle East if sequestration returns in 2016. "If we've learned anything in the last 13 years, this Army can do just about anything," Army Secretary John McHugh told Army Times Wednesday during a meeting with defense writers in Washington, D.C., but "slipping into sequestration would significantly damage or erode our ability to answer the bell." Last week, President Obama submitted to Congress a draft Authorization for the Use of Military Force against ISIL, and Congress returned Monday to begin debate on how to expand the conflict against the extremists........

McCain vows 'one hell of a fight' on sequestration


The Hill © February 26, 2015

By Kristina Wong

Sen. John McCain, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, declared war on sequestration earlier this week. "Next week, [Defense Secretary] Ash Carter is going to come over with a budget and then we're going to have one hell of a fight over sequestration," McCain said at a New America Foundation conference on Wednesday. "I will not vote for a budget in the United States Senate that has sequestration in it. I can't do that to the men and women who are serving," he said. McCain said he didn't know how many people were with him. "I've never been very good at counting votes but I do know that there is real unease out there about continuing the sequestration," he said. Although the White House has proposed a 2016 defense base budget of $535 billion, budget caps imposed by sequestration would limit the budget to $500 billion and force the military to cut things like weapons systems, training and manpower........

House GOP Splits On Defense Sequestration

http://breakingdefense.com/2015/02/house-gop-splits-on-defense-sequestration/
Tensions within the GOP over the mandatory budget caps set by the Budget Control Act burst into the open today. The chairman of the House Appropriations defense subcommittee repeatedly warned colleagues and the leaders of the Air Force this morning that they had no choice and must live within the Budget Control Act’s spending limits. Then, this afternoon, Rep. Mac Thornberry, the chairman of the House Armed Services Committee — and 30 of his fellow Republicans — wrote a 13-page letter to the House Budget committee chairman urging him to bust the budget caps in the interest of national security. Rep. Rodney Frelinghuysen, HAC-D chairman, warned Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James and Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Welsh quite sternly that: “We do have to cut $10 billion [from the Air Force budget request] with you, or we will cut $10 billion without you.” He’d said almost the same words to Navy Secretary Ray Mabus and Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Jonatan Greenert the day before. Those cuts, he reminded the Pentagon leaders and his members, would be required to comply with Budget Control Act, which is the law of the land, he noted……...
EDC receives grant funding for UAV center, other initiatives

http://www.nwfdailynews.com/business/local-business-news/edc-receives-grant-funding-for-uav-center-other-initiatives-1.441889

Northwest Florida Daily News © February 23, 2015

By DUSTY RICKETTS | Daily News

The Okaloosa County Economic Development Council has been awarded a state grant that will partially be used to fund further study of the proposed unmanned aerial vehicle test center. The EDC has partnered with the University of Florida for the past five years to develop the Autonomous Vehicle Center test facility just south of the college's Research and Engineering Education Facility (REEF) on Lewis Turner Boulevard. The EDC was recently awarded a $285,000 Florida Defense Support Taskforce grant, which will used to help fund three major initiatives the EDC is undertaking. "(The Autonomous Vehicle Center) continues to slowly but surely progress," said Nathan Sparks, executive director of the Okaloosa County EDC.

Eglin opens housing to military retirees, civil service


Pensacola News-Journal © February 27, 2015

By Marketta Davis

Military retirees and federal civil service workers will soon be eligible to live on Eglin Air Force Base as part of a housing expansion. The Tennant Waterfall Project, as announced by Eglin AFB and Corvias Military Living, comes as a result of a decrease in active duty families utilizing base housing. "While this isn't a new initiative in privatization, it's the first time Eglin AFB will undergo the expansion," said Brandon Masters, regional public affairs manager for Corvias Military Living. Masters said the expansion serves to protect the investments of housing developers in order to sustain long-term development of their projects.
Hurlburt overpass taking shape

http://www.nwfdailynews.com/local/hurlburt-overpass-taking-shape-1.441364

Northwest Florida Daily News © February 22, 2015

By KARI C. BARLOW | Daily News

Construction of the flyover at Cody Avenue and U.S. Highway 98 is scheduled to be completed by August, Air Force and state Department of Transportation officials said Friday. Work crews have set the final two of 11 precast concrete beams that will support the elevated lanes of U.S. 98. “Now that the bridge beams are set, passers-by will notice more activity up on the bridge itself,” said Dan Wilcoxen of the 1st Special Operations Civil Engineer Squadron. “The vast majority of large-scale utility work has been completed, allowing for the recent rapid vertical progress.” The $13.9 million project – which started in February 2013 – is expected to ease traffic woes on U.S. 98 where major delays are commonplace.

Tyndall AFB –

Tyndall Revises Waterway Proposal to Try and Meet the Needs of the Public


WJHG © February 26, 2015

Tyndall's waterway proposal has faced public backlash since it was introduced, but Tyndall has recently revised the draft and has been working to meet the needs of the public. Tyndall Air Force Base is surrounded by 129 miles of coastline, which could be subject to periodic closures if Tyndall has its way. "There's areas around the base, in particular Shell Island, and some of the bayous out there where people fish that conceivably could be off limits during a time that the base determines that there's a security threat. So that's the concern from the public that we've been hearing," Bay County Manager Dan Shaw said. But Tuesday Shaw and Commissioner Guy Tunnell met with Tyndall officials. Shaw says Tyndall representatives presented them with a second draft of their plan.
Naval Air Station Pensacola –

**USS Independence docks at Pensacola Naval Air Station**

[Link](http://www.pnj.com/story/news/military/2015/02/20/uss-independence-docked-nas-pensacola/23770915/)

Pensacola News-Journal © February 21, 2015

By Marketta Davis

The USS Independence docked at Allegheny Pier aboard Pensacola Naval Air Station on Friday. The warship is the first ship of the Independence variant of Littoral Combat Ship Class (LCS), a high-speed, shallow draft multi-mission ship designed to operate independently or with an associated strike group. The Independence will be testing its mine warfare capabilities docking between sorties in the Gulf of Mexico at NAS Pensacola. The USS Independence (LCS-2) is the first ship of the Independence variant of littoral combat ship class. The Independence features high speeds, shallow draft and multi mission capabilities that allow it to operate independently or as part of a strike package. The Independence will be testing its mine warfare capabilities docking between sorties in the Gulf of Mexico at Naval Air Station Pensacola. The Independence class is also designed for surface warfare and anti-submarine warfare. LCSs are made to defeat growing littoral threats, or those close to the shore, and provide access and dominance in coastal waters. They provide war-fighting capabilities and operational flexibility to execute focused missions including surface, mine and anti-submarine warfare.

**Commissioner Underhill wants to tackle NAS traffic**

[Link](http://www.pnj.com/story/news/2015/03/01/escambia-county-commissioner-doug-underhill-wants-tackle-base-traffic/24223443/)

Pensacola News Journal © March 1, 2015

By Mark Abramson

Escambia County Commissioner Doug Underhill wants to find ways to ease traffic and help business take off near Pensacola Naval Air Station. Underhill, who represents District 2, where Pensacola NAS is located, sat down earlier this week with Rear Adm. Mary Jackson, the
commander for Navy Region Southeast, and one of the issues they talked about was traffic around the base. The commissioner said traffic in and out of the base when sailors go to work and get off is one reason he has directed the county staff to look at the issue. According to Pensacola NAS officials, 9,000 vehicles on average go through the base's main gate on Navy Boulevard each weekday and another 3,500 use the west gate on Blue Angel Parkway. More than 21,000 civilians and Navy personnel work on Navy installations in the area, which also includes Saufley Field and Pensacola Corry Station.

NAS Whiting Field –

**Economics close Whiting Field golf course**


Pensacola News-Journal © February 26, 2015

Local golfers will lose another course in June when the Frank W. Dahlinger Golf Course aboard Whiting Field Naval Air Station shuts its gates for the last time. "The decision to close didn't come as a surprise," said Whiting Field's Morale, Welfare and Recreation Director Joe Vukovcan. "We'd operate for a while, then expenses would catch up. Then there would be recapitalization and large expenditures that would put us back under. It's really been a roller coaster." MWR funds are subject to review under the Navy's MWR Red Flag System, in which MWR activities must operate at least on a break-even net income basis.

**Whiting Aviation Park could bring hundreds of jobs**


By Kaycee Lagarde

Santa Rosa County is eyeing major developments at Naval Air Station Whiting Field in Milton that could bring hundreds or potentially thousands of aviation-industry jobs to the county, requesting nearly $5 million from the state this year in hopes of making the project a reality. As part of the state funding request, the Santa Rosa County Board of County Commissioners hosted a legislative delegation tour Monday to showcase the county's plans for developing Whiting Aviation Park, an aviation-focused industrial park connected to Whiting Field.
Lawmakers Asked To Help Make Whiting Field Aviation A Reality

http://wuwf.org/post/lawmakers-asked-help-make-whiting-field-aviation-reality

WUWF © February 26, 2015

By Dave Dunwoody

Hundreds, or perhaps thousands, of jobs could be created through construction of Whiting Field Aviation Park. That’s what Santa Rosa County officials are telling the area’s legislative delegation. County Commission Chairman Don Salter Monday hosted a tour of the county-owned site: 269 acres adjacent to NAS Whiting Field, in search of $8 million from the state to move the project forward. The funds likely would be delivered in two, $4 million increments. “We’re asking for that to help with the infrastructure,” Salter said. “They seem to be very committed to it, they seem to think it can be done this year with Gov. Rick Scott and his commitment to ‘jobs, jobs, jobs.’ And this has the potential to produce a lot of jobs, not just for Santa Rosa County but throughout the region as well.”

Patrick AFB –

CSAF and CMSAF visit Cape


Patrick AFB © February 25, 2015

by 1st Lt Alicia Wallace, 45th Space Wing Public Affairs

Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Welsh III and Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force James Cody visited the Morrell Operations Center at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, Fla., Feb. 8 for the scheduled launch of the SpaceX Falcon 9 Deep Space Climate Observatory. During their visit, they had the opportunity of interacting with range, weather and launch teams at work before the launch. While at the Morrell Operations Center, Welsh spoke with Capt. Marcianna Pease, Operations Flight and Range Operations Commander, 45th Operations Support Squadron. "I know many Airmen have been touched by Gen. Welsh's speeches, but two of my lieutenants wanted me to thank him specifically for the speech he gave at the Air Force Academy in 2011," said Pease.
Avon Park –

Avon Park: Florida's most popular target for 70 years

http://www.myfoxtampabay.com/story/28199946/avon-park-floridas-most-popular-target-for-70-years

My Fox Tampa Bay.com © February 25, 2015

By: Lloyd Sowers

The massive Avon Park bombing range covers over 105,000 acres in parts of four Florida counties: Polk, Osceola, Highlands, and Glades. "I think we do it as well as any range in the world," said Charles "Buck" MacLaughlin, operations director, who turns military surplus into targets for pilots to hit with bullets and bombs. The range was established in 1942 and at the peak of World War II, 10,000 people were stationed here. Over 100,000 bombs were dropped on the range during that war alone. All these years later, pilots from all branches of the military continue to train here. So if you see a jet fighter in the skies over Tampa Bay, chances are it's headed for Avon Park………..

Defense Industry –

Craig Technologies CEO named military liaison for Enterprise Florida


Orlando Business Journal © February 26, 2015

By Cindy Barth

Craig Technologies CEO Carol Craig has been tapped to serve as Enterprise Florida's liaison for defense and military affairs as a member of its board of directors. In that role, Craig will help monitor defense and military issues as they relate to statewide economic development, and will provide reports to the board of directors at regularly scheduled meetings. "The board is comprised of tremendous leaders from diverse industries across the state. Carol's background in
the defense industry, both as a military officer and now as CEO, is a perfect fit for her role with the executive committee and we look forward to her leadership," said Enterprise Florida board Chair Alan Becker of Becker & Poliakoff PA…….

### Defense Firms Expect Increased Spending from Republicans as Republicans Decry Increased Spending


First Look © February 27, 2015

By Lee Fang

Despite campaign rhetoric promising a smaller government, defense contractors are confident that the new Republican congressional majority will boost spending on their industry. "Friends, this experiment with big government has lasted long enough," Mitch McConnell, the Republican majority leader, said on election night last November, echoing a common theme among GOP candidates. McConnell’s party won control of the U.S. Senate and increased its ranks in the House of Representatives in the midterm elections. For voters promised a leaner federal budget, certain areas, such as food stamps, are already in the crosshairs of legislators. But for the nation’s cyberspying companies and military contractors, "some measure of relief," is on the way…….

### Other Items of Interest –

**UK Leads the Way in Employing Public-Private Partnerships to Improve Military’s Efficiency**


Defense Communities 360 © February 23, 2015

The Department of Defense has taken advantage of public-private partnerships (P3s) to upgrade its infrastructure for family housing and utilities, and to develop new on-base sources of
renewable energy, but there are a host of other areas for the department to leverage private sector investment, according to a recent commentary in Government Executive. Nick Greenwood, managing director of the infrastructure advisory group for KPMG LLP, points to the United Kingdom, where its Ministry of Defence has relied on P3s for a variety of infrastructure needs along with an array of military and support services. P3s have been used to refurbish the ministry’s main building in Whitehall, consolidate its real estate in London and rebuild the government’s communications headquarters…….

Texas Lawmakers Advance Measure to Bolster Support for Defense Communities

http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/texas-lawmakers-advance-measure-to-bolster-support-for-defense-communities/?utm_source=dc360&utm_campaign=8dbc57e288-RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_04f8ff45e8-8dbc57e288-55784537&ct=t%28RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN%29#

Defense Communities 360 © February 26, 2015

Texas would be able to provide more financial assistance to communities trying to support a neighboring military installation or cope with a downsizing, under legislation moving in the state Senate. On Wednesday, the Veterans Affairs and Military Installations Committee passed a bill raising the cap on grants from the Defense Economic Adjustment Assistance Grant program from $2 million to $5 million, reported the San Antonio Express-News. Senate Bill 318 now heads to the full Senate for consideration. The cap needs to be higher because of Texas’ population growth since the program was created in 1997, said state Sen. Juan “Chuy” Hinojosa (D), the bill’s author. It also would help Texas compete with other states fighting to preserve their military bases…….

Virginia Lawmakers to Consider Funding Encroachment Efforts at Hampton Roads Bases

http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/virginia-lawmakers-to-consider-funding-encroachment-efforts-at-hampton-roads-bases/?utm_source=dc360&utm_campaign=4cc693a7e0-RSS_dc360_daily_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_04f8ff45e8-4cc693a7e0-55781089&ct=t%28RSS_dc360_daily_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN%29#

Defense Communities 360 © February 26, 2015
Virginia lawmakers are considering adding $2.4 million to the state budget to protect the Navy’s Fentress Auxiliary Landing Field in Chesapeake and Langley Air Force Base in Hampton from urban encroachment. Fentress would receive $2.1 million and Langley $250,000 under the budget amendments. Chesapeake and Langley have committed to matching the funds, reported the Virginian-Pilot. Chesapeake approved its program last year but has not yet started buying properties, said Deputy City Attorney Andrew Fox. The city plans to spend $2.5 million in municipal funds on the initiative. Officials now are evaluating about 6,000 acres, and likely will target property that could be used for high-density development, Fox said. Hampton intends to purchase about 230 acres in the clear zone surrounding Langley, Bruce Sturk, the city’s director of federal facilities support, told the paper. The city already has purchased about 107 acres for $6 million, with the city and the state splitting the cost. The programs are modeled after Virginia Beach’s effort to reduce encroachment around Naval Air Station Oceana following the last round of base closures.

N.Y. lawmakers promote Niagara Falls as KC-46 base


Air Force Times © February 25, 2015

New York lawmakers are promoting Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station to be the third main operating base for the new KC-46A Pegasus tanker, which is expected to begin replacing the nearly six-decade old KC-135 Stratotanker in 2016. The base, already equipped with many of the components needed to hold the refueling aircraft, would be a cost-effective choice, the lawmakers, including Democratic Sens. Charles Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand, said in a Feb. 24 letter to Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Welsh and Lt. Gen. James Jackson, head of Air Force Reserve Command. The Niagara Falls station once supported KC-135R missions, the lawmakers said in a news release. Its existing tanker infrastructure could be altered at a lower cost than completely rebuilding at another station, they said……..

Building Homes for F-35s

http://www.airforcemag.com/MagazineArchive/Pages/2015/March%202015/Building-Homes-for-F-35s.aspx

Air Force Magazine © March 2, 2015

By Michael C. Sirak

It will take decades to bed down 1,763 F-35As. As the F-35A strike fighter begins to enter the inventory in significant numbers, the Air Force is already hard at work establishing homes for all
1,763 of the advanced stealth jets it plans to buy. The massive undertaking requires the Air Force to plan decades into the future, accommodating the aircraft, the support facilities, and gear they'll need and the airmen who will fly and maintain the F-35s at bases worldwide. In January, the Pentagon announced that RAF Lakenheath, UK, will be the first European base to permanently host Air Force F-35s, starting in 2020. The base is home to F-15C and F-15E fighters today………. 
March 9, 2015 – FDSTF Update

TF members --

1. **Next Task Force Meeting on March 19th** – The next meeting of the Florida Defense Support Task Force will be on Thursday, **March 19, 2015 at the Doubletree Hotel, 101 S. Adams St., Tallahassee, FL** beginning at 9:00 AM.

2. **Revised Task Force Strategic Plan Ready for Review** – Later today, members will be receiving a revised version of the Strategic Plan that incorporates all changes/edits/inputs provided by members. This revised version will be discussed at the upcoming Task Force meeting.

3. **Attachments** –
   - FDSTF Legislative Tracker – As of March 9, 2015.
   - TPG monthly report
   - NCSAF Report
   - TPG analysis of NCSAF Report
   - DRAFT Task Force Meeting Agenda
   - Veterans Legislative Tracker
   - Task Force Grant Extension Letter – Okaloosa County

Regards,  BG.

**Bruce Grant**
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In a letter urging the Senate Budget Committee to break the statutory spending cap in its fiscal 2016 budget resolution, the leadership of the Senate Armed Services Committee endorses management reforms — that could reduce or consolidate military headquarters, commands and infrastructure.” The letter from Chairman John McCain (R-Ariz.) and ranking member Jack Reed (D-R.I.) lists multiple initiatives needed to ensure DOD uses its funding more efficiently — including acquisition reform and slowing the rate of growth of military compensation — but it does not mention approving the department’s request for a new BRAC round. Savings from such cost-cutting reforms should be reinvested to provide more funding for the warfighter, they say. The lion’s share of the letter is used to justify the senators’ recommendation to spend $577 billion for national security in FY 2016, a level which surpasses both President Obama’s $561 billion budget request and the $523 billion cap mandated in the Budget Control Act.

The military’s installation chiefs made an impassioned plea to lawmakers on Tuesday for permission to hold a BRAC round in 2017, fine tuning their previous arguments and making clear the consequences if Congress rejects the Pentagon’s request for a new round of base closures for the fourth year in a row. Two of the witnesses came to the House Armed Services’ Readiness Subcommittee hearing with new estimates of the amount of excess infrastructure capacity their services are saddled with. An analysis based on fiscal 2013 data concluded the Army has an 18 percent facility excess, said Katherine Hammack, assistant secretary for installations, energy and environment. That figure was based on an active-duty end strength of 490,000, which the Army will reach by the end of the year, Hammack said. The Army plans to
shrink its force to a level of 450,000, or even lower, in the coming years to accommodate the Budget Control Act spending caps. As a result, the service will have more excess capacity, she said……………

**Conger Looks to Congress for Input on BRAC Process**


Defense Communities 360 © March 3, 2015

The Pentagon’s installations chief tackled head-on the latest criticism from lawmakers toward the administration’s request for a new BRAC round at Tuesday’s House Armed Services’ Readiness Subcommittee hearing. John Conger, acting assistant secretary of defense for energy, installations and environment, acknowledged that even though defense officials have pledged to conduct a new BRAC with a different emphasis than the last one, unless the department updates the legislation authorizing a new round, lawmakers may continue to be wary. “Let me be clear,” Conger said. “We’re open to a discussion on this point. I would like to solicit your suggestions as to specific changes in the BRAC legislation that would make it more acceptable.”

**Reed Joins Carter in Supporting BRAC Request**


Defense Communities 360 © March 3, 2015

Jack Reed (D-R.I.), ranking member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, indicated at a hearing Tuesday that he may support another round of base closures. “I do believe that we need to consider efforts to allow the Defense Department to shed what may be as much as 25 percent in excess infrastructure it does not necessarily need, and use these resources for the best and higher priorities,” Reed said in his opening statement. The hearing on President Obama’s fiscal 2016 budget request featured Ashton Carter’s first opportunity to testify on Capitol Hill as defense secretary. When asked by Mike Lee (R-Utah) how the department planned to improve the BRAC process to avoid the cost overruns experienced in the last round, Carter contrasted the 2005 round with previous BRACs.  

**Pentagon: Another BRAC will save money**

Military Times © March 3, 2015

By Leo Shane III

Pentagon planners have a new pitch to lawmakers skeptical of a fresh round of base closings: We promise we'll save money this time. In recent years, White House and defense officials repeatedly have broached the idea of launching another base closing process to dump excess military facility space. And most lawmakers repeatedly and angrily have rejected the idea, calling the process divisive and costly. But that perception is the fault of the last base realignment and closing process, according to John Conger, acting assistant secretary of defense for installations. He told members of the House Appropriations Committee on Tuesday that the much-reviled 2005 round had many recommendations "not designed to save any money" and was more about rebalancing the force than cutting costs. He also said defense officials are focused on not taking that approach again. ...........

New BRAC Round Would Generate Savings, Conger Says


Defense Communities 360 © March 4, 2015

The Pentagon’s senior installations official told lawmakers Tuesday that the BRAC round DOD is requesting would realize savings much more quickly than the 2005 round. “We look at the next round as an efficiency-driven one,” John Conger, acting assistant secretary of defense for energy, installations and environment, told the House Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Subcommittee. “In such a budget environment as we have today, it only makes sense to avoid spending money on excess,” he said. Cutting infrastructure by just 5 percent could save about $2 billion annually in reduced upkeep costs, reported Military Times. Conger acknowledged that the 2005 round was unpopular because of the high upfront costs and longer payback period. “The recommendations from that round were not all designed to save money, and that’s what drove up the cost,” he said ........

Carter Testimony Highlights BRAC Successes

http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/carter-testimony-highlights-brac-successes/#

Defense Communities 360 © March 8, 2015

The 19-page testimony on DOD’s fiscal 2016 budget request that Secretary Ashton Carter submitted to two congressional committees last week argued for a BRAC round in 2017, but it also included a nod to several communities that have successfully recovered from a base closure.
The justification for a new round is clear, Carter says. “Simply put, we have more bases in more places than we need. We estimate DOD has about 25 percent more infrastructure capacity than necessary,” according to his written testimony. “We must be permitted to divest surplus infrastructure as we reduce and renew force structure. With projected recurring savings from a new BRAC round totaling some $2 billion a year, it would be irresponsible to cut tooth without also cutting tail,” Carter states. But, a closure needn’t devastate a local economy, he says……..

DOD Budget–

**Thornberry to Price: At Least $566B for DoD**


Defense News © February 27, 2015

By John T. Bennett

House Armed Services Committee Chairman Mac Thornberry wants the House GOP budget resolution to propose a $566 billion national defense account and a separate $50.9 billion war fund. In a [Friday letter](http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/policy-budget/congress/2015/02/27/military-spending-caps-resolution/24117447/) the Texas Republican sent House Budget Committee Chairman Tom Price, R-Ga., Thornberry pushes for raising defense spending caps put in place by the 2011 Budget Control Act. "In light of the threats facing the nation, as well as the resource shortfall facing the military discussed in greater detail below, the [HASC] recommends a restoration to the pre-sequestration BCA caps of $566.0 billion for national defense and $50.9 billion in the Overseas Contingency Operations account."……..

**Brass urge lawmakers to approve full Navy budget**


Navy Times © March 1, 2015

By Lance M. Bacon

If the Navy doesn't get the money it needs this year, the results could be dire, the service's brass warned lawmakers in late February hearings. The need to build a 300-ship Navy by decade's end was the top goal stressed by officials testifying on Feb. 25 before the House Armed Service Committee's Subcommittee on Seapower and Projection Forces. The fleet cannot maintain the wear and tear seen in recent years, and the demand for naval forces will only increase. "We need
these ships. Their demand overseas is not going to go down," said Sean Stackley, assistant secretary of the Navy for research, development and acquisition. He explained that 10 years ago the Navy had more than 300 ships but only about 70 deployed. Today, 100 out of 280 ships are deployed, and it's "only going to increase when you look on the 2020 timeframe. We're not looking at the hundred ships being deployed. We're looking at 115 ships deployed and the greatest challenge, the greatest threat we have to that today is the threat of sequestration."…..

**Republican Support to Exceed Defense Budget Cap Extends beyond Armed Services Panel**


Defense Communities 360 © March 3, 2015

The aim of House Republicans to provide the Pentagon relief from the stringent Budget Control Act spending cap for fiscal 2016 goes beyond Republican members of the House Armed Services Committee, and signals a sharp split between defense hawks and fiscal conservatives. This week it was learned that 70 House Republicans wrote Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio) on Feb. 26 to recommend allocating at least $561 billion for national security next year, a level equivalent to the president’s budget request. The letter echoes the sentiment of defense hawks that adhering to the statutory cap for defense spending threatens national security. On Feb. 27, House Armed Services Committee Chairman Mac Thornberry (R-Texas) urged the chamber’s Budget Committee to set funding for national security at $577 billion in FY 2016, a much higher level that exceeds the cap by $54 billion. That letter was signed by 31 of 36 Republicans on the House Armed Services Committee……..

**Lifting Defense Spending Cap to Wait, Graham Says**


Defense Communities 360 © March 3, 2015

The fiscal 2016 budget resolution passed by the Senate most likely will not adjust spending caps imposed by the Budget Control Act (BCA), despite a push by defense hawks to lift the ceiling on national security spending, according to Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.), who sits on the Budget and Armed Services committees. Graham said he favors sticking with the caps in the budget resolution, and then attempting to strike a bipartisan deal to lift the defense cap later in the session. “I don’t mind starting with the BCA number, but I’m going to be working with Democrats and Republicans to do a mini-Simpson-Bowles to replace it,” he told CQ……..
McCain, Reed Want $577B Plus War Funding

http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/policy-budget/congress/2015/03/02/military-spending-deficit-debt/24261269/

Defense News © March 2, 2015

By John T. Bennett

Senate Armed Services Committee leaders are urging congressional budget writers to clear the Pentagon to spend $577 billion next year, $54 billion above existing spending caps. The Obama administration's 2016 budget request seeks $561 billion for defense, which is $38 billion over the caps. On Friday, House Armed Services Committee Chairman Mac Thornberry, R-Texas, sent a letter to House Budget Committee Chair Tom Price, R-Ga., requesting at $566 billion in base 2016 funds, $43 billion more than the caps. Pro-military lawmakers' efforts to persuade the chairs of the House and Senate Budget committees to give the Defense Department more annual funds continued Monday with a letter from SASC Chairman John McCain, R-Ariz., and Ranking Member Jack Reed, D-R.I., to Senate Budget panel leaders……..

Carter: Budget Cuts Threaten US Interests

http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/policy-budget/congress/2015/03/03/isis-ukraine-pentagon-budget/24330491/


By John T. Bennett

US Defense Secretary Ash Carter pleaded with senators Tuesday to roll back planned cuts to the military's annual budget, saying US interests around the globe are at risk. The Obama administration last month sent Congress a 2016 budget request that seeks $561 billion in baseline national defense funds, $38 billion over existing federal spending caps. Unless Congress acts, the Pentagon would get just under $500 billion in fiscal 2016 after sequestration's ax does its work. That amount of funding, Carter and Joint Chiefs Chairman Gen. Martin Dempsey told the Senate Armed Services Committee, means the military would be unable to carry out the current national defense strategy……..

House Dem: No Path To More DoD Spending
A senior US House appropriator doubts Congress will address pending military budget cuts any time soon. House Appropriations Defense subcommittee Ranking Member Rep. Pete Visclosky, D-Ind., told Pentagon brass on Wednesday that there are "insurmountable" political roadblocks for any plan to raise defense spending caps or get rid of sequestration. To raise caps set in legal stone by the 2011 Budget Control Act or end the cuts put in place under the same law, members would have to approve legislation with other deficit-cutting measures. But Visclosky sees something "blocking every path forward." Defense Secretary Ash Carter told the subcommittee that "avoiding sequestration" is a major component of defense officials and lawmakers living "up to our responsibility of defending this country and the global order……

Cyber Leaders: Sequestration Would Stop Progress

The leaders of the military cyber forces told House legislators they have made progress in building their mission teams and capabilities against a growing threat, but they warned that a return to sequestration funding levels would slow or stop that progress. "Our military networks are probed for vulnerability a million times a day," and the US capabilities in cyber "is precisely the reason why the adversaries’ threats and our vulnerabilities are compounding,” Adm. Michael Rogers, commander of US Cyber Command and the National Security Agency, told members of the House Armed Services emerging threats and capabilities subcommittee on Wednesday……

Bob Hale: Targeted Pentagon Budget Cuts Likely

Defense One © March 4, 2015
Ashton Carter is the fourth defense secretary to lobby against sequestration, but former Pentagon comptroller Robert Hale says budget cuts are more likely. The Pentagon is not likely to get the $535 billion President Barack Obama has requested for fiscal 2016, but that does not mean every Defense Department project will get hit with spending cuts like in 2013. Robert Hale, who retired last June after more than five years as the Pentagon’s comptroller, believes lawmakers could strike a short-term budget deal that would trim below Obama’s request but still come in higher than the $500 billion defense spending cap………

**Appropriations Panel Tells Carter to Live within the Spending Cap**

http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/appropriations-panel-tells-carter-to-live-within-the-spending-cap/#

Defense Communities 360 © March 4, 2015

Forcing the Defense Department to live within the statutory budget caps would be detrimental to the nation’s security, new Defense Secretary Ashton Carter told the House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee on Wednesday, but the panel delivered the sobering message that the spending limits very likely are here to stay. “I completely agree that the BCA [Budget Control Act] needs to be modified to avoid dramatic, immediate and long-term negative impacts on our military capabilities,” said Chairman Rodney Frelinghuysen (R-N.J.). “But unless and until the law is changed, this committee has no choice but to draft our bill to comply with the BCA caps,” he said, reported the Hill………

**Fiscal Constraints are Degrading Navy Readiness, Greenert Testifies**

http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/fiscal-constraints-are-degrading-navy-readiness-greenert-testifies/?utm_source=dc360&utm_campaign=efd1cce7aa-RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_04f8ff45e8-efd1cce7aa-55784537&ct=t%28RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN%29#

Defense Communities 360 © March 6, 2015

The Navy’s readiness and capabilities have suffered after three consecutive years of budget constraints, Adm. Jonathan Greenert, chief of naval operations, told lawmakers Wednesday. “Navy readiness is at its lowest point in many years,” Greenert told the Senate Defense Appropriations Subcommittee. “The budget reductions have forced us to cut afloat and ashore operations, it has generated a ship and aircraft maintenance backlog, and it has compelled us to extend unit deployments,” Greenert stated, reported DOD News. While praising the resilience of
more than 600,000 active and reserve sailors, Navy civilians and their families, Greenert said he worries about the burden placed on personnel and equipment…….

**Strong Push by Defense Hawks Could Force Compromise over Raising Budget Caps**


Defense Communities 360 © March 6, 2015

The lack of a consensus within the Republican Party over whether to stick with or adjust the statutory spending caps is placing heightened attention on the fiscal 2016 budget resolution each chamber is required to draft. With markups of the resolutions by the House and Senate Budget committees only two weeks away, battle lines between defense hawks and fiscal hawks in the party are becoming increasingly clear. Defense hawks are insisting the Obama administration’s $534 billion base DOD budget proposal for FY 2016 is not high enough — even though it exceeds the Budget Control Act (BCA) cap by $35 billion — while fiscal conservatives favor sticking with the spending limits as the best way to trim the deficit. Several defense experts interviewed by Politico underscored the heightened support among Republicans for raising the defense cap, but said at this point it’s still too soon to say how congressional leaders will settle on topline spending levels……..

**Sequestration budget cuts could be back soon**


Standard Examiner © March 7, 2015

Sequestration-level funding for the military could come back in just over 200 days, and top defense officials and Utah lawmakers warn that if it does, the country will be less secure. Testifying before the Senate Armed Services Committee last week, Defense Secretary Ash Carter said a return to sequestration funding would decrease overall force size of the military, reduce the power of air and naval fleets, and jeopardize readiness — with all of those factors combining to put the United States, as well as the lives of the nation’s servicemen and women, at risk. Carter said that for fiscal year 2016, which begins in October, the DoD’s base budget totals nearly $600 billion, but that figure doesn’t take sequestration into account…….
MacDill AFB –

**MacDill hosts first ever joint port security exercise**


Air Mobility Command © March 2, 2015

by Senior Airman Ned T. Johnston, 6th Air Mobility Wing Public Affairs

The 6th Air Mobility Wing hosted two Coast Guard exercises for the Port Security Unit 309 from Feb. 18 through March 1, 2015, at MacDill Air Force Base, Florida. The PSU 309, out of Port Clinton, Ohio, is an elite Coast Guard Reserve task force with the unique mission of maintaining readiness to deploy within 96 hours of activation to active-duty status. They provide sustained force protection and port security anywhere in the world. "The Great Lakes freeze over during the winter months making training difficult," said Coast Guard Lt. Faith Schultz, PSU 309 force protection officer. "By coming to MacDill, we not only maintain proficiency and keep certifications current, but it gives us the opportunity to conduct joint, inter-service training with the Air Force."\

Eglin AFB –

**Transitioning CAS Culture and Weapons**

http://www.airforcemag.com/DRArchive/Pages/2015/March%202015/March%2009%202015/Transitioning-CAS-Culture-and-Weapons.aspx

Air Force Magazine © March 9, 2015

By Marc V. Schanz

The Air Force will transition its close air support –ulture” to its fourth generation fighters and the F-35 fleet, eventually equipping it with more effective weapons for close combat, Air Combat Command boss Gen. Hawk Carlisle told reporters at the Pentagon Friday. As USAF slowly divests the A-10 fleet, he wants to make sure the experienced pilots in those aircraft are placed in specially trained and equipped –CAS squadrons” of F-15Es, F-16s, and F-35s. “We want that expertise to go to those squadrons,” he said, noting a third of the F-35 squadron standing up at the Weapons School at Nellis AFB, Nev., is composed of former A-10 fliers. The
F-35, which will hit initial operational capability in 2016, will be “basic CAS capable” he said, but as it improves towards Block IV it will add more mature sensors, weapons such as the small diameter bomb II, a synthetic aperture radar, and other improvements. USAF and the other services also want to examine what are the best weapons for the close fight of the future, Carlisle said. “Even the A-10 only gives you 15 seconds of trigger pull,” he said, and the services want to explore weapons with high magazines, and controlled yields for close-in fights. Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Welsh has already directed the Air Armament Center at Eglin AFB, Fla., to “get the way forward on this,” Carlisle told reporters, and coordinate with entities such as the Office of Naval Research and the Air Force Research Laboratory.

Volunteers sought for Eglin restoration board


Northwest Florida Daily News © February 24, 2015

By KELLY HUMPHREY

Decades ago, the people who lived and worked in the area now called the Eglin reservation weren't exactly tree-huggers. Without modern knowledge of the environmental impact of chemicals and other hazardous materials, they left behind some dangerous reminders for the base's environmental office to identify and attempt to mitigate. “It wasn't just the military,” said Mike Spaits, the base's environmental spokesman. “Years ago, there was a tick infestation with cattle, and the owners solved the problem by dipping the entire herd in arsenic. It killed the ticks, but it also left behind some toxic waste.” To aid in the effort to restore these sites, the base works with its Restoration Advisory Board. Made up of residents of Santa Rosa, Okaloosa and Walton counties, the board serves as a conduit between base officials and the community when it comes to environmental matters.

US Southern Command –

US SOUTHCOM commander visits JTF-GTMO

https://www.dvidshub.net/news/155886/us-southcom-commander-visits-jtf-gtmo#.VPdZvS4bgQs

DVIDS © March 4, 2015
By U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Daryl T. Madrid

The commander of U.S. Southern Command, Gen. John F. Kelly, visited Joint Task Force Guantanamo Feb. 19. The continuing mission of JTF-GTMO is to provide the safe, humane, legal and transparent care and custody of detainees here. Kelly often visits the base to ensure the high level of dedication and professionalism of JTF personnel continues to exceed SOUTHCOM’s high standards. He said it’s part of his job to interact with young service members, as opposed to being in Washington with the older crowd………..

VP-26, Coast Guard team chalks up $17 million drug interdiction


Florida Times-Union © March 4, 2015

U.S. Navy Combat Aircrew (CAC) 9, flying a P-3C assigned to VP-26 and aided by the experience of embarked members from VP-10, in cooperation with U.S. Coast Guard and Canadian forces, intercepted approximately 530 kilograms of cocaine during a maritime interdiction on Feb. 2. Operating in international airspace over the Eastern Pacific Ocean off the coast of Guatemala, the aircrew noticed a suspicious small vessel traveling at a high rate of speed through rough seas. The P-3C aircrew tracked the vessel and remained on station until a Canadian CP-140 aircraft relieved them. The Coast Guard Cutter Bertholf was vectored in to board and search the vessel. Upon inspection, more than 530 kilograms of cocaine worth an estimated $17 million was seized. The seizure comes at the beginning of a seven-month deployment for the “Tridents.” CAC-9 was flying the mission as part of an orientation and theater indoctrination mission in conjunction with VP-10 aircrew when the suspected smuggling boat was spotted………..

NS Mayport –

NS Mayport's USS Farragut, 2 local helicopter squadrons head to Middle East


Florida Times-Union © March 6, 2015

By Clifford Davis
The Mayport-based USS Farragut and two local helicopter squadrons will deploy to waters around the Middle East on Monday as part of the USS Roosevelt carrier strike group. The Farragut will be joined by helicopter squadron 46, also based at Mayport and Jacksonville Naval Air Station’s “Dragonslayers” of helicopter squadron 11. The strike group honed its skills off the coast of Jacksonville in late January and early February in an enormous training exercise. The exercise was the “graduate exam” before deployment, said Cmdr. Fred Pyle, commander of Destroyer Squadron 2 of which the Farragut is a part.

Tyndall AFB –

**Raptors Versus Vipers**

[http://www.southdadenewsleader.com/news/raptors-versus-vipers/article_100aeaea-c37a-11e4-87b7-db0d45ca49fc.html](http://www.southdadenewsleader.com/news/raptors-versus-vipers/article_100aeaea-c37a-11e4-87b7-db0d45ca49fc.html)

South Dade News Leader © March 6, 2015

By Staff Sgt. Jaimi L. Upthegrove 482nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

The 482nd Fighter Wing held a large force exercise, CHUMEX, bringing together multiple units and aircraft for training focused on teamwork and real-world combat scenarios. While the training wrapped-up Wednesday, members from Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla., ventured to the base for the exercise. Airframes participating in the exercise included T-38s, F-22s, and Homestead's own F-16s. Maintenance and air crew operators were brought together to practice various combat scenarios. "Our temporary duty assignment here has been a great training opportunity for everyone involved in the maintenance and fighter squadrons," said Maj. Bryan Dick, 301st Fighter Squadron assistant director of operations at Tyndall AFB. "Exercises like CHUMEX allow us to train exactly how we will fight in combat, as an integrated fourth and fifth generation fighter package with active duty and Reserve fighting side-by-side."………..

Florida National Guard –

**Army National Guard stands up cyber protection teams**
The Army National Guard will activate three cyber protection teams in five states in fiscal year 2016, with seven more teams to follow, officials announced Tuesday. In all, the Army Guard plans to stand up 10 cyber protection teams over the next three fiscal years. The first three teams, slated to be established in 2016, will be hosted by five states. The first team will be in Michigan, Indiana and Ohio. There will be another team in Georgia and one in California, according to the Guard. Officials have not announced the stationing plan for the remaining seven Army Guard cyber protection teams.

Budget request includes moves to beef up Guard, Reserves

By Brian Everstine

Recommendations from a congressionally mandated commission on Air Force structure has already translated to requests for more tails on Air Force flight lines, and more changes can be expected over the next few years. The National Commission on the Structure of the Air Force, created in the fiscal 2014 National Defense Authorization Act, called on the Air Force to make dozens of changes to its force structure mix, largely focused on increasing the role of the Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve. The Air Force on Wednesday released its first report to Congress on its implementation of the recommendations, a few of which are in the fiscal 2016 budget request. "Our service will continue to improve inclusiveness as we continue to build our total force," the Air Force's report states. "We will continue an agile approach to our organizations and training of the force, education of our airmen, and the way we employ our capabilities. We will continue to seek ways to use the strength of each component while preserving their individual characteristics with proven value to the nation."
The Air Force disagreed with just one of the 42 recommendations made by the National Commission on the Structure of the Air Force, saying the elimination of Air Force Reserve Command would not reap the savings outlined by the commission, according to a March 4 release. However, the service is in the process of implementing 25 of the recommendations and developing plans or pilot programs for 16 more, states the release. "No one is more invested in Total Force Integration than the Air Force," said Lt. Gen. JJ Jackson, Air Force Reserve chief. "Going forward, there is no doubt that our Air Force is going to rely more, not less, on our Reserve and National Guard forces. It is essential to leverage our reserve components more effectively in the current global security environment." 

Defense Industry –

**OEA Providing Assistance to Communities Coping with Defense Industry Cutbacks**

http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/oea-providing-assistance-to-communities-coping-with-defense-industry-cutbacks/#

Defense Communities 360 © March 8, 2015

Communities responding to the cancellation of a defense contract or a major reduction in DOD spending that results in a significant economic impact can apply to DOD’s Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA) for planning assistance to carry out community adjustment and economic diversification activities, according to an announcement scheduled to be published Monday in the Federal Register. To be eligible, state or local governments, or regional entities need to have experienced one of the following circumstances:

- a publicly announced planned major reduction in DOD spending;
- the cancellation or termination of a DOD contract; or
- the failure to proceed with an approved major weapons system program.

Other Items of Interest –

**Jacksonville VA clinic worst among major facilities in country for wait times**
More patients wait 30 days or longer for appointments at the Jacksonville Veterans Administration Outpatient Clinic than at any other major facility in the country, according to data the VA began making public on individual clinics in November. The Jacksonville clinic, at any given time, has a pending appointment load of just over 30,000. From clinics with less than half its scheduled appointments to the largest VA medical centers in the country, the Jacksonville facility falls far behind them all with roughly a quarter of its patients waiting more than 30 days after the “preferred date” — and hundreds for more than four months and beyond.

Bill may mean more business loans for veterans

A bill introduced into the U.S. House of Representatives could make it easier for veterans who have served on active duty to get business loans. Authored by Rep. Jeff Miller, R-Chumuckla, HR 1133 would exempt loans to veterans from counting against a credit union's member business loans cap. The cap prevents the credit unions from making loans in excess of 12.25 percent of their total assets and applies to all business loans above $50,000. "This bill would make the decision to offer military veterans access to capital much easier," Miller said in an emailed statement. "It will enable many more veterans an opportunity."

Army Can’t Keep up with Failing Facilities

Army facilities deteriorated significantly following the first two years of mandatory budget caps, fiscal 2013 and 2014. Katherine Hammack, assistant secretary for installations, energy, and environment, told lawmakers this week. Currently, 7 percent of the service’s facilities are failing
— including ones housing operating units — and 24 percent are in poor condition, Hammack told the House Armed Services’ Readiness Subcommittee on Tuesday. “The challenge is that facilities are failing at a rate faster than we’re being funded,” she said. The Army now faces a $3 billion maintenance backlog. “We are underfunded and we have more requirements than the budget is allowing us to fix,” Hammack told the panel.

Navy Plans to Expand, Speed-Up LCS Modifications

http://www.military.com/daily-news/2015/03/04/navy-plans-to-expand-speed-up-lcs-modifications.html?comp=1198882887570&rank=1

Military.com © March 4, 2015
by Kris Osborn

Navy Secretary Ray Mabus told lawmakers Wednesday that the service hopes to expand and speed up modifications to its fleet of Littoral Combat Ships so that technological upgrades slated for a new variant of the ship are retrofitted onto the existing fleet before 2019. The Navy plans to begin procurement of a new up-gunned, more survivable LCS variant, called a Frigate or FF, by 2019 — so that the last 20 ships in a planned fleet of 52 LCS are equipped with additional lethality and survivability technologies. Now, as directed by former Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel, the Navy is preparing to unveil its acquisition strategy for the new vessel by May of this year. Part of this new strategy includes speeding up the upgrades to begin prior to the previously

Navy Ups Its Fleet Size Goal to 308 Ships By Fiscal Year 2020


USNI News © March 4, 2015

By: Megan Eckstein

Adm. Jonathan Greenert - The Navy has increased its force structure goal by two ships, saying it would like to have 308 ships in Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 instead of the 306 it stated last year. The increase reflects the addition of a third Afloat Forward Staging Base and a 12th amphibious transport dock, Navy spokesman Capt. Danny Hernandez told USNI News. The Navy added the additional AFSB to its plans last year, and Congress pushed the LPD on the Navy over the past two budget cycles. Navy acquisition chief Sean Stackley first cited the higher figure in testimony last week to the House Armed Services Seapower and Projection Forces Subcommittee, and Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Jonathan Greenert echoed that number in testimony to the Senate Appropriations Defense Subcommittee today.
Pentagon Gets Authority To Hire 3,000 Cyber Pros


By Aliya Sternstein

The military has been given the go-ahead to fast-track the hiring of 3,000 computer whiz civilians, in part, to flesh out the half-staffed U.S. Cyber Command, federal officials announced Thursday. Yesterday, command leaders told Congress they need to be able to quicker make compensation deals with prospective employees, as threats from nation state hackers mount. The permission slip the Office of Personnel Management signed applies to the entire Defense Department, including the command, according to a notice posted in the Federal Register……….

Condition of Facilities Remains at High Risk, Installation Officials Say

http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/condition-of-facilities-remains-at-high-risk-installation-officials-say/?utm_source=dc360&utm_campaign=0cf1792962-RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_04f8ff45e8-0cf1792962-55784537&ct=t%28RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN%29#

By Defense Communities 360 © March 8, 2015

DOD’s fiscal 2016 budget request would help the services restore some of the backlog in facility maintenance caused by previous years’ spending cuts, but it still would leave installations scrambling to keep pace with building maintenance requirements. The proposal would cover only 81 percent of the funds the services need to adequately maintain their infrastructure, reported Federal News Radio. And that’s assuming Congress comes up with a way to pay for the administration’s request to exceed the Budget Control Act (BCA) spending caps by $35 billion next year……….
March 13, 2015 -- FDSTF Update

TF members --

1. **Task Force Meeting Next Week on March 19th** – The next meeting of the Florida Defense Support Task Force will be on Thursday, **March 19, 2015 at the Doubletree Hotel, 101 S. Adams St., Tallahassee, FL** beginning at 9:00 AM. Agenda attached. Please note the meeting will not be in the normal ballroom, but will be in a conference room on the second floor. Signage will be posted to assist non-aviators with navigation. Saved some money on a smaller room.


3. **Linkages and Best Practices Studies** – Both studies have been posted to the Task Force web site at:  [http://www.enterpriseflorida.com/fdstf/resources/](http://www.enterpriseflorida.com/fdstf/resources/)

4. **Governor’s Base Commanders Meeting** – Staff attended the Base Commanders Meeting at NSA Orlando yesterday. The slides from this meeting will be available for members to review at next week’s meeting. A number of base commanders made favorable comments about the Task Force and TF grants during their comments.

5. **Association of Defense Communities (ADC) conference next week** – Staff will be attending the ADC conference next week March 15-17 in Monterey, California. The subject of the conference is Installation Innovation and will provide an opportunity for staff to gain insights from other states and bases, particularly in the area of partnerships with supportive communities. Rocky will be participating in a four state panel and sharing Florida’s military and defense organization with other states. The presentation will be provided as a handout at the March 19th TF meeting.

6. **Third District Federal Court of Appeals Ruling** – Attached is this week’s ruling from the Third District Court of Appeals upholding the previous ruling that privatized military housing on military installations is not subject to local ad valorem tax. Because property owned by the United States is immune from state taxation, the court ruled that the properties are immune from Florida ad valorem taxes."

7. **Attachments** –
   - FDSTF Legislative Tracker – As of March 13, 2015.
   - Task Force Meeting Agenda
   - Veterans Legislative Tracker – As of March 13, 2015
Third District Court of Appeal Ruling – Key West Housing and Ad Valorem Taxes
ADC Presentation

Regards, BG.

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Articles of Interest:

BRAC –

Senate Panel Fails to Embrace Pentagon’s BRAC Request

http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/senate-panel-fails-to-embrace-pentagons-brac-request/?utm_source=dc360&utm_campaign=1a70eb99fe-RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_04f8ff45e8-1a70eb99fe-55784537&ct=t%28RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN%29#

Defense Communities 360 © March 12, 2015

Kelly Ayotte (R-N.H.), chairman of the Senate Armed Services‘ Readiness and Management Support Subcommittee, reiterated her staunch opposition to a new BRAC round at her panel‘s hearing Wednesday, a sentiment that was generally shared by the handful of members in attendance. “Even after acknowledging the shortcomings of the 2005 round, the department continues to request the same legislative framework,” Ayotte said at the outset of the hearing. “I remain opposed to BRAC and do not want to give the department the open-ended authority to pursue another BRAC round that has the potential to incur significant upfront costs, when we do
not have room in our budget in the next few years to afford many of the fundamental readiness issues that we need to address,” she said. Mike Rounds (R-S.D.), who was governor of South Dakota when Ellsworth Air Force Base was targeted in the 2005 round, similarly came out against authorizing a new base closure round. 

No Avoiding BRAC under Budget Constraints, Graham Says

Defense Communities 360 © March 11, 2015

A new round of base closures will be needed if lawmakers keep the statutory caps on defense spending in place,” Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) said at a hearing of the Senate Defense Appropriations Subcommittee on Wednesday. “At the end of the day, as much as we all love our bases, we’re going to have to address this problem,” Graham said, reported CQ. “And if we want to insist upon sequestration,” he said, “then we’d better be willing to go back home and tell people, ‘You can’t get there from here and every base that’s open today is not going to survive.’”

While Graham has been one of the leading defense hawks pushing to relax the Budget Control Act caps on defense spending, his comments stand out as a rare example of a lawmaker willing to accept the Obama administration’s request for a BRAC round as a necessary response to the budget limits. Graham’s remarks followed a plea from Army Secretary John McHugh for a new round. McHugh said the service had roughly 20 percent excess capacity in its infrastructure, forcing it to spend about $500 million a year to maintain underused or unused facilities.

Deficit Hawks Have Advantage in Budget Battle

Defense News © March 6, 2015

By John T. Bennett
Congressional deficit hawks, and their big-money donors, won the first match. Defense hawks stole the second. And all signs point to the spending hawks taking the next round. Since the tea party — backed by Koch Brothers cash — swept into office in 2010, the US defense sector has been battling conservative lawmakers' penchant for deep spending cuts and smaller federal deficits. "There is a struggle that's ongoing between the fiscal conservatives and hawks," one GOP source said. "Defense hawks could bring down the [coming 2016] budget resolution on the floor because members like [Reps. Randy Forbes, R-Va., and Mike Turner, R-Ohio, both House Armed Services subcommittee chairs] say they won't vote for the budget if it breaks with the Ryan level." He was referring to the 2014 House Republican budget plan crafted by then-Budget Committee Chairman Rep. Paul Ryan of Wisconsin. That blueprint called for $585.5 billion in base national defense spending………..

**GOP Factions Already Waging 'Budget War'**


Defense News © March 6, 2015

By John T. Bennett

The 114th Congress is shaping up to be a battle of wills among various factions of the Republican Party with the US defense sector caught in the middle. The GOP controls 245 seats in the 435-member House and 54 in the 100-seat Senate. And while the Senate's rules give Democrats plenty of ways to block bills, many of the most important fights will pit Republicans against Republicans. In the days and weeks immediately after last November's midterm elections, political scholars and analysts predicted congressional Republicans would enact an agenda that would challenge President Barack Obama's policies. But so far, in doing so, GOP factions have set off several intraparty fights. "There are certainly blocks within the Republican Party, but you also have to include the Democratic minority in the Senate as a factor," said Josh Holly, a principal at the Podesta Group and former communications director at the House Armed Services Committee. "These factions create very little room for error for leadership in getting enough votes. When you need 218 to pass legislation in the House, and 60 in the Senate, there's little room for error."………..

**Lawmakers: Sequestration is here to stay**

http://www.militarytimes.com/story/military/capitol-hill/2015/03/05/sequestration-testimony/24425625/

Military Times © March 5, 2015
Several influential Republicans and Democrats have bluntly told top Pentagon officials that the budget caps known as sequestration are unlikely to change anytime soon, suggesting that the painful across-the-board budget cuts may hit the military again this fall. "Even though I believe in miracles, it is becoming very clear to me that … the Budget Control Act funding levels will be the law of the land," Rep. Betty McCollum, D-Minn., said. McCollum was referring to the formal name of the 2011 law that established sequestration, a concept that military planners detest because it automatically lops a certain arbitrary percentage of funding from every defense budget account, with no flexibility allowed, in an effort to reduce government spending.

Reserve Fund Plan May Draw Necessary Support for Budget Resolution

http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/reserve-fund-plan-may-draw-necessary-support-for-budget-resolution/?utm_source=dc360&utm_campaign=36478d5a15-RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_04f8ff45e8-36478d5a15-55784537&ct=t%28RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN%29#

Republican lawmakers have come up with a maneuver that may satisfy both defense and fiscal hawks as the House and Senate Budget committees craft a fiscal 2016 budget resolution, but it wouldn’t solve the underlying dispute over whether Congress will raise the $523 billion national security spending cap. Under the idea that has been discussed, the Budget committees would establish a reserve fund, which would allow the discretionary spending limits in the budget resolution to be raised later in the year as long as the new spending is offset by either other spending cuts or revenue increases, reported CQ. The resolution still would set FY 2016 spending at the Budget Control Act limits.

Graham Pushes for Solution to Sequestration

http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/graham-pushes-for-solution-to-sequestration/#

A small group of senators, led by Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.), is hard at work looking for a way out of the mandatory caps on defense and non-defense spending. “What we need to do is buy back sequestration. What we’re trying to do is put together a mini Simpson-Bowles deal,” Graham said in reference to the deficit reduction package offered by former Sen. Alan Simpson (R-Wyo.) and former White House chief of staff Erskine Bowles. As with that plan, Graham said he would be willing to consider a combination of tax hikes and entitlement cuts, reported the Hill. The prospective candidate to run for president in 2016 said he would offer to close tax
loopholes in exchange for reforms to entitlement programs. —That's the ideological problem for some Republicans, but not for me. I would generate some revenue by capping deductions in the tax code if Democrats help me make some small entitlement changes that buy it back … a mini Simpson-Bowles,” he said……..

McCain: 'A Lot' of Members in Sequester Talks

http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/policy-budget/congress/2015/03/10/sequestration-military-budget-mccain/24707007/

Defense News © March 10, 2015

By John T. Bennett

Sen. John McCain says a large group of senators are discussing plans to avert additional across-the-board Pentagon budget cuts. Among senators, there are "all kinds of negotiations," the Arizona Republican, chairman of the Armed Services Committee, told reporters Tuesday. "There is a group of members — Republican and Democrat — on the Armed Services Committee that are coming and meeting and talking about it," he said. "There's a whole lot of people who are discussing it."……..

Senate Budget Resolution Will Retain Budget Caps

http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/senate-budget-resolution-will-retain-budget-caps/?utm_source=dc360&utm_campaign=1a70eb99fe-RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_04f8ff45e8-1a70eb99fe-55784537&ct=t%28RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN%29#

Defense Communities 360 © March 11, 2015

The fiscal 2016 budget resolution the Senate Budget Committee is crafting will retain the statutory caps on defense and non-defense spending but include a reserve fund allowing the discretionary spending limits to be raised later in the year. To take advantage of the higher spending afforded by the reserve fund, Congress and the White House would need to strike a deficit reduction agreement ensuring the extra spending is offset either by other spending cuts or revenue increases. The committee also is considering ways to provide much-needed relief to the Pentagon budget, including a plan from Senate Armed Services Chairman John McCain (R-Ariz.) to raise defense spending in FY 2016 and 2017, reported CQ. The increase would be offset by slowing defense spending later in the decade. The 2011 Budget Control Act (BCA) limits discretionary spending on national security to $523 billion and on non-defense programs to $493.5 billion next year……..
Sequestration will literally hit Congress where it lives. If implemented, Army officials and a key senator said this morning, the Budget Control Act spending caps will require cutbacks or outright closures at bases across the country. “At the end of the day, as much as we all love our bases, we’re going to have to address this problem,” Sen. Lindsey Graham said at this morning’s Senate Appropriations hearing on the Army budget. “If we want to insist on sequestration, we’d better be willing to go back home and tell people [that] every base that’s open today is not going to survive.” Graham can be combative. A former Air Force lawyer, he tends to tackle witnesses with leading yes-or-no questions as if conducting a trial. But his style makes him well-suited to delivering ugly truths that many more genial legislators avoid. His fellow senators, by contrast, spent much of their time saying sequestration was terrible but declaring their local base was wonderful, so the Army should spend more in their state. Army Secretary John McHugh and Chief of Staff Gen. Ray Odierno spent much of the hearing patiently repeating that they loved everybody’s bases but they just don’t have the money.........

Base closure proposal meets resistance in Senate

If the Pentagon wants to convene another round of military base closings, it must clear a congressional subcommittee chaired by Rep. Rob Wittman, R-Westmoreland. A Senate panel on Wednesday said it will not back the Defense Department on another round of military base closures, despite warnings that excess properties will squeeze budgets and could hurt readiness in the future. Members of a Senate Armed Services subcommittee were urged by defense officials to allow the closures but said an earlier round in 2005 did not save as much as promised and was a difficult experience for military communities across the country.........
Dems won't support DoD-only sequestration repeal


Military Times © March 11, 2015

By Leo Shane III

Senate Democrats will not support plans to exempt defense accounts from mandatory spending caps while squeezing nondefense spending, the Senate Budget Committee's senior Democrat vowed Wednesday. Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., decried looming sequestration spending limits to military and nondefense accounts as shortsighted, unnecessary and devastating to American families. But he also said he believes the entire spectrum of budget trims should be dropped, not just the looming Defense Department spending caps that have drawn warnings of weakened national security from Pentagon leaders. "We're not going to end sequestration just for defense and not for working-class Americans," Sanders told reporters. ……..

MacDill AFB –

News: MacDill hosts first ever joint port security exercise


DVIDS © March 4, 2015

By Senior Airman Ned T. Johnston

The 6th Air Mobility Wing hosted two Coast Guard exercises for the Port Security Unit 309 from Feb. 18 through March 1, 2015, at MacDill Air Force Base, Florida. The PSU 309, out of Port Clinton, Ohio, is an elite Coast Guard Reserve task force with the unique mission of maintaining readiness to deploy within 96 hours of activation to active-duty status. They provide sustained force protection and port security anywhere in the world. "The Great Lakes freeze over during the winter months making training difficult," said Coast Guard Lt. Faith Schultz, PSU 309 force protection officer. "By coming to MacDill, we not only maintain proficiency and keep certifications current, but it gives us the opportunity to conduct joint, interservice training with the Air Force." ……..
Federal civil service employees, retirees eligible to live on Eglin AFB


Crestview Bulletin © March 9, 2015

Military retirees and federal civil service employees are now eligible to live on Eglin Air Force Base. More than 780 military families live on Eglin AFB in one- and two-story homes. The decision to open eligibility to more groups was made to ensure the housing partnership between Eglin and Corvias Military Living can reinvest in future home construction, modernization, upgrades and repairs on the installation. The 50-year partnership began in 2013………..

Eglin responds to aircraft recovery


Eglin AFB © March 11, 2015

Eglin search and rescue crews on scene are recovering debris of an aircraft accident near Eglin range site A-17. Two UH-60 aircraft assigned to the Army National Guard, Hammond, La., were participating in a training exercise over night March 10. One aircraft with four aircrew and seven Marines assigned to Camp LaJeune, N.C, was involved in an accident near Eglin range site A-17, east of the Navarre Bridge. Heavy fog is having an impact on search and recovery efforts. Multiple agencies are on scene including the Coast Guard who have secured waterways. The helicopter was reported missing at about 8:30 p.m. March 10. Debris from the aircraft was located by search and rescue team at about 2 a.m. this morning. Search and rescue efforts are underway at the accident site currently. The second helicopter and its personnel on board have returned and are accounted for at this time. The aircraft are assigned to the 1-244th Assault Helicopter Battalion in Hammond, Louisiana. They were participating in a routine training mission involving the Marine Special Operations Regiment from Camp LeJeune. Names of the aircrew and Marines on board are being withheld pending NOK notification. The accident is under investigation. Additional details will be provided as they become available.

Threat Data Biggest Worry For F-35A’s IOC; But It ‘Will Be On Time’
The F-35’s highly sensitive sensors suffer a basic problem right now: They often aren’t sure what they are detecting. That results in a high rate of false alarms. The key to fixing this lies in building highly complex data files — what we can colloquially call the threat library — and integrating them with the Joint Strike Fighter’s software. “I think the probably the biggest concern is with these mission data files [threat library],” Maj. Gen. Jeffrey Harrigian told me in his first interview since being named at the end of January to coordinate procurement and integration of the F-35A into the Air Force. “With any detection systems, it’s always a chore to work through what the sensor is actually seeing.” Creating those threat files is complex enough.

The data on missile launches, frequencies, opponents’ weapons and their sensors come from the Intelligence Community (IC). The Office of Secretary of Defense’s Intelligence Mission Data Center gathers the data from across the IC. A lab at Nellis Air Force Base turns that information into threat data for the Air Force’s weapons.

7 Marines, 4 Soldiers Presumed Dead After Helicopter Crashes Near Eglin Air Force Base

Searchers struggled Wednesday to find the seven Marines and four soldiers killed when a helicopter crashed, hampered by the same fog that plagued a nighttime training mission. A second helicopter turned back safely shortly before the wreck, which left debris washing ashore along the Florida coast, officials said. Military officials haven’t said what caused the crash of the UH-60 Black Hawk, but the weather was bad enough for the other crew to return to land, said Maj. Gen. Glenn H. Curtis, adjutant general of the Louisiana National Guard.

NS Mayport –

Vessel Combating Illegal Narcotics Returns Home
The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter *Bertholf*, one of the Coast Guard’s newest vessels, is scheduled to arrive at Naval Station Mayport at 8 a.m., Sunday. The crew of the Alameda-based Coast Guard Cutter seized nearly $40 million worth of illegal narcotics in the Eastern Pacific Ocean early in their recent counter-drug deployment. The crew of the Cutter *Bertholf* has finished a deployment off the coast of Central and South America in support of Joint Interagency Task Force South counter-narcotics operations. During the deployment, *Bertholf*‘s crew detected and boarded a number of suspicious vessels, locating and seizing more than 2,600 pounds of illegal narcotics and detaining a number of individuals suspected of smuggling. *Bertholf*‘s boarding teams had their first seizure within a week of arriving off the coast of Central America. Members of the ship’s engineering department were also recently commended for their dedication in providing an exceptional level of support crucial to maintaining readiness of the ship’s engines early in the deployment

**SOUTHCOM –**

**SOUTHCOM chief: Sequestration will bring 'defeat'**

http://www.militarytimes.com/story/military/capitol-hill/2015/03/12/southcom-sequestration-defeat/70205242/

Military Times © March 12, 2015

By Leo Shane III

The offensive launched by defense leaders against the automatic budget cuts known as sequestration continued Thursday, with the four-star chief of U.S. Southern Command predicting "defeat" in his missions if the budget trims go into effect later this year. Marine Corps Gen. John Kelly told senators that he is already short-staffed and under-resourced for anti-narcotic operations and broader security missions in his command. Capping spending under sequestration, he said, would pull more service members and ships away from that effort and disrupt partnerships with countries in the region. "It will be a catastrophe. It will put me out of business," he said. "We could be talking not about higher risk or severe risk, but defeat." Kelly's warnings are just the latest dire predictions delivered to Congress in recent months, as lawmakers debate how to avoid looming sequestration spending caps set to again take effect this fall after a two-year hiatus
Tyndall AFB –

**Tunnell: Tyndall says no random waterway closures**


News Herald © March 3, 2015

By JOHN HENDERSON

Tyndall Air Force Base officials have assured county leaders fishermen and recreational boaters need not worry about being randomly shut out of area waters in and around the base, Commissioner Guy Tunnell said Tuesday. The base has put forth a proposal that would only shut out recreational boaters or fishermen on waters near and around the base in the event of a serious security threat, and that would happen only in designated zones, Tunnell said during a Bay County Commission meeting. The zones would be off limits to boaters for 48-hour periods that would have to be renewed by the base based on a security review. Tunnell, who serves as the liaison between the commission and the base, recently met with Tyndall’s Col. Derek France to discuss concerns raised by citizens, who said Tyndall police have overstepped their authority........

Florida National Guard –

**Museum prepares for anniversary**


Clay Today © March 12, 2015

By Weston Williams

One of Clay County’s most historic sites is finally of age. The Camp Blanding Military Museum, home to a collection of artifacts from Camp Blanding’s history during WWII, will be celebrating its 25th anniversary in November. In an effort to raise awareness of the base’s role in
the war, officials hope to expand the museum before the birthday celebration comes around. "Most people don't realize what went on here and how big a role Camp Blanding had in WWII training troops for the war," said Gregory Parsons, museum curator. "Most people are pleasantly surprised by that, they didn't realize how big and important camp Blanding was."


NAS Whiting Field –

Santa Rosa considers 10 RESTORE projects


Pensacola Today © March 9, 2015

by Louis Cooper

The Santa Rosa County Commission is set to discuss 10 potential projects that the county could submit for consideration in the first round of RESTORE Act funding when commissioners meet this morning. The RESTORE Act is federal legislation intended to direct a portion of the fines paid by BP as a result of its 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill to help restore the communities impacted by the spill. Santa Rosa County expects to be eligible for up to $4.3 million in funding during the first round of projects, according to Public Information Officer Joy Tsubooka. The deadline for submittals had been March 13, but has been extended to April 3. Projects to be discussed include: Navarre Beach Beach Berm and Dune Restoration, Bagdad Mill Site Passive Park Coastal Access Improvements, Milton/Bagdad Pedestrian Connector Project, Navarre Park Water Quality Enhancement Program Phase 1, Floridatown Park Water Quality Enhancement Project, Holley-By-The-Sea Stormwater Project Implementation, Dirt Road Paving on Navarre/Gulf Breeze Peninsula, South End Health Department Mitigation, Marketing and promotion for Sand Sculpting Festival, Beaches to Woodlands Tour and Navarre Fishing Rodeo and Whiting Aviation Park Construction Plan Development……..


Other Items of Interest –


Air Force Rejects Commission’s Call to Eliminate Reserve Command
The Air Force has no plans to carry out the recommendation made last year by a congressionally established panel to disestablish Air Force Reserve Command (AFRC). That proposal was the only one of the National Commission on the Structure of the Air Force’s 42 recommendations that the Air Force disagreed with, officials said last week. —Elimination of the AFRC would not result in substantial savings, as nine different major commands would have to assume the roles and responsibilities currently accomplished by the Headquarters AFRC. Additionally, the current structure allows the chief of the Air Force Reserve to manage authorized and appropriated Reserve resources as required by key statutory obligations,” according to a written statement from Air Force Public Affairs.

McCain Pledges to Shield A-10s from Air Force’s Retirement Plans

Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) on Friday vowed to reverse the Air Force’s recent decision to place nine A-10 close air support aircraft based at Davis-Monthan AFB in Tucson into backup status. Officials last year proposed retiring the entire fleet of nearly 300 A-10s to save about $4 billion. Lawmakers rejected that plan in the fiscal 2015 defense authorization bill but included language permitting the Air Force to place up to 36 A-10s this fiscal year into backup status, reported the Arizona Daily Star. —That was a compromise that was made last year in response to the Air Force’s misguided attempt to retire all the A-10s,” said McCain, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee. He said he would use the new defense authorization bill to force the Air Force to return the aircraft to active status.

F-35 Will Not Reach Full Close-Air-Support Potential Until 2022

Military.com © March 9, 2015

by Kris Osborn
F-35 Joint Strike Fighter pilots will have to wait until 2022 to fire the U.S. military's top close-air-support bomb after the Small Diameter Bomb II enters service in 2017, JSF officials explained. The Small Diameter Bomb II (SDB II) is an upgrade from previous precision-guided air-dropped weapons because of its ability to track and hit moving targets from up to 40 miles. However, the F-35 will not have the software package required to operate the bomb loaded onto the fifth generation fighter until 2022, officials said. The delay in getting the SDBII onto the F-35 will reduce the aircraft's ability to provide close-air support to ground troops. It plays a role in the debate over the aircraft's ability to adequately fulfill the mission of the A-10 Warthog if Air Force officials are allowed by Congress to retire the close-air-support aircraft. Air Force leaders renewed their intent to retire the A-10 by 2019 in February with its budget proposal. Officials said the Air Force needs to transfer resources being used to support the A-10 over to the development of the Joint Strike Fighter. Air Force leaders have said the F-35 will be one of many aircraft that will backfill the A-10………

McCain Warns Navy On LCS Upgrade
http://breakingdefense.com/2015/03/mccain-warns-navy-on-lcs-upgrade/

Breaking Defense © March 10, 2015

By Sydney J. Freedberg Jr.

The war over the Navy's Littoral Combat Ship is far from over. This morning, Senate Armed Services Committee chairman John McCain warned Navy leaders that their drive towards an upgraded LCS frigate may be repeating the mistakes that resulted in the original, much-criticized LCS design. “Without a clear capabilities-based assessment, it is not clear what operational requirements the upgraded LCS is designed to meet,” McCain said. “The Navy must demonstrate what problem the upgraded LCS is trying to solve. We must not make this mistake again.” The biggest controversy over the Littoral Combat Ship has been its inability to survive in combat. At this morning's hearing, Navy Secretary Ray Mabus acknowledged a small ship would never be as tough as a full-size destroyer but that survivability — for a small surface combatant, particularly with the upgrades — meets our fleet requirements.”………

North Carolina Crafts Plan to Support Military Installations
Defense Communities 360 © March 13, 2015

The state of North Carolina is developing a strategic plan to shore up its installations ahead of looming budget cuts, troop drawdowns and a possible BRAC round. Most of the issues the states plans to focus on involve host communities, including the quality of public schools,
transportation infrastructure and encroachment, Cornell Wilson, the governor’s military adviser, told state lawmakers on Thursday. Another concern is the condition of training ranges, reported the Fayetteville Observer. Officials are even considering moving the red-cockaded woodpecker from Camp Lejeune to state lands to open up additional training areas at the installation. Protections afforded the habitat of the endangered bird can place forested areas off limits to training. Fort Bragg also is home to the red-cockaded woodpecker, but the post has successfully managed the situation, Wilson said. He added that the state is looking at ways to assist Fort Bragg with transportation issues and to fund a 911 call center. Another avenue the state is exploring is using bonds to fund projects at its installations, according to the story.......
March 23, 2015 – FDSTF Update

TF members --

1. **Next Task Force Meeting April 16th** – The next meeting of the Florida Defense Support Task Force will be on Thursday, **April 16, 2015 at the Doubletree Hotel, 101 S. Adams St., Tallahassee, FL** beginning at 9:00 AM.

2. **Updated Task Force Strategic Plan** – The Task Force Strategic Plan has been updated and will be posted to the web site this week. A copy is attached.

3. **FY 2015-2016 Task Force Grant Application Released** – The FY 2015-2016 Task Force Grant Application was released last week and will be posted to the web site this week. Deadline for submissions is April 24, 2015.

4. **Linkages and Best Practices Studies** – Both studies have been posted to the Task Force web site at: [http://www.enterpriseflorida.com/fdstf/resources/](http://www.enterpriseflorida.com/fdstf/resources/)

5. **Attachment** –

   - Updated Strategic Plan

Regards, BG.

**Bruce Grant**

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Now that the House and Senate panels responsible for BRAC have held their hearings on the administration’s fiscal 2016 budget request, it’s clear that the two subcommittee chairs are no less opposed to green lighting the Pentagon’s request to hold a new BRAC round than they have been in the past. Last Wednesday, Kelly Ayotte (R-N.H.), chairman of the Senate Armed Services’ Readiness and Management Support Subcommittee, was upfront about her views on the matter, telling the installation chiefs for DOD and each of the services that her “going-in position” was that she is opposed to BRAC. At the previous week’s House Armed Services’ Readiness Subcommittee hearing, Chairman Rob Wittman (R-Va.) never stated his opposition to the department’s BRAC proposal but asked questions designed to bolster arguments against the request………..

Mac Thornberry (R-Texas), chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, has no plans to include a base closure round in the fiscal 2016 defense authorization bill his panel is slated to mark up next month, he told reporters Monday. “I’m not sure we can afford another BRAC,” Thornberry said in echoing many of the same arguments Rob Wittman (R-Va.), chairman of the committee’s Readiness panel, employed at a March 3 hearing. “Remember, BRAC costs more in the early years than it saves,” Thornberry said, reported the Hill. “We have not yet broken
even from the 2005 BRAC.” The chairman also argued that DOD’s estimate that at least 20 percent of its infrastructure is excess to its needs is out-of-date. “That’s more than 10 years old,” he said. “I’m not sure our members are persuaded that we should embark upon another BRAC … with so much uncertainty about what’s happening in the world with what our force structure ought to be, and what bases, training ranges and so forth, are required to support that force structure,” Thornberry stated. ………

**Senator to DoD: Explore alternatives before launching BRAC**


Military Times © March 12, 2015

By Karen Jowers

The Pentagon should consider other ways of shedding unnecessary infrastructure without resorting to the formal Base Realignment and Closure process, one senator told defense officials Wednesday. At a hearing Wednesday on the Defense Department's request for another BRAC round, members of the Senate Armed Services Committee made clear they are not keen to reprise that potentially rancorous process for a variety of reasons, including the considerable up-front costs required. Sen. Tim Kaine, D-Va., said he understands the need to periodically assess base infrastructure, but added: "I've had questions about the BRAC process, whether it's the best way to do that. We've all expressed our concerns about BRAC, but we also understand that excess capacity has costs, and if you have to pay for those costs, it has to come from something else." Kaine said he is not aware of any law that prevents DoD from doing its own study, apart from BRAC, about what portions of a particular installation's infrastructure is no longer needed, and then making recommendations to get rid of that infrastructure without necessarily closing down the entire base………

**Defense Cuts Harming Readiness; Service Leaders Call for New BRAC Round**


Defense Communities 360 © March 18, 2015
Service infrastructure officials told the Senate Appropriations Committee’s military construction and veterans affairs subcommittee Tuesday that budget cuts have harmed mission readiness by delaying repairs and improvements to infrastructure. Each cited a need for a new BRAC round to eliminate excess infrastructure. “We believe BRAC will provide the most comprehensive, transparent and collaborative way to align infrastructure capacity with mission requirements,” said Air Force Brig. Gen. Timothy S. Green, deputy chief of staff for logistics, installations and mission support and Air Force director of civil engineers, reported DoD News. The alternative to a new round of base closures is to make up for funding shortages in ways that will increase risk, said Army Lt. Gen. David D. Halverson, assistant chief of staff for installation management and commander of the U.S. Army Installation Management Command. Testifying before the subcommittee with Green and Halverson were officials from the Navy and Marine Corps………

DOD Budget–

**DoD's sequestration warnings fall flat in Congress**


Military Times © March 17, 2015

By Leo Shane III

Pentagon planners have built a strong coalition among defense lawmakers against keeping sequestration spending caps on the military next year. But their firepower doesn't seem to stretch far past a small handful of Capitol Hill hearing rooms. On Tuesday, as the military service secretaries and chiefs railed against the dangers of sequestration to anxious House Armed Services Committee lawmakers, Republicans from the House Budget Committee unveiled their fiscal 2016 spending plans — which keep the caps in place. The juxtaposition showed that for all the dire warnings coming from defense officials and supporters, congressional leaders appear content to move ahead with reapplying the unpopular federal budget caps, which would spark spending trims that could stretch across every military base and unit………

**4-star: Budget cuts will force global strategy changes**


Military Times © March 17, 2015
One of the Pentagon's top officers warned that the military's fundamental strategy for how it would confront two simultaneous crises in different parts of the world will have to change if Capitol Hill rejects the Obama administration's 2016 defense budget request. Adm. James "Sandy" Winnefeld, vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs, said the nation faces a "pivotal" moment as lawmakers decide whether to lift the budget caps and the sequestration mechanism that was passed into law in 2011. "There is no free lunch," Winnefeld said Tuesday at a conference of defense business leaders in Washington. President Obama formally requested $534 billion for the Pentagon's base budget next fiscal year, about 7 percent above the $499 cap that was written into law a few years ago with the Budget Control Act. Winnefeld said anything below $534 will trigger massive changes in the military's strategy and its footprint of forward-deployed forces around the world.

**USAF leaders again warn against return of sequestration**

http://www.airforcetimes.com/story/military/capitol-hill/2015/03/17/air-force-leaders-sequestration-testimony/24898511/

Air Force Times © March 17, 2015

By Brian Everstine

Air Force leaders again this week are urging Congress to protect their budget from the possible return of sequestration budget caps. "The fundamental issue is going to be that the American people cannot expect their military to do what we've been asked to do in the past if we stay at this funding level," Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Welsh told the House Armed Services Committee on Tuesday. The Defense Department's fiscal 2016 budget request calls for $534 billion in base funding, about $35 billion above the sequestration-imposed budget caps. If the caps are imposed, the Air Force would have to cut the U-2, block 40 RQ-4 Global Hawks and KC-10 Extenders, reduce F-35 purchases and reduce flying hours, Air Force leaders have said. "The [request] preserves the minimum requirement to meet current strategy," Welsh and Secretary Deborah Lee James said in testimony to the committee. "But even at [this] level, the Air Force remains stressed and shortfalls exist. Reversion to sequestration-level funding will carry great risk for American airmen, and for America itself." 

**Base facilities deteriorating under budget squeeze**
Facilities on military installations are deteriorating at an ever-increasing rate, a visible result of ongoing budget constraints, service installation officials told lawmakers Wednesday. "Our facilities are degrading and our maintenance backlog is increasing," said Erin Kern, director of the Navy's Shore Readiness Division, at a hearing of the Senate Appropriations Committee's military construction panel. "We understand this backlog must eventually be addressed, but we think we can't afford to do so at this time." The Army "is at a critical point in installation readiness," said Lt. Gen. David Halverson, commanding general of that service's Installation Management Command. The budget caps known as sequestration are affecting the Army's ability to provide facilities that soldiers and their families rely and depend on to sustain readiness and maintain their quality of life, Halverson said, with the Army's military construction budget request for next year focusing only on "minimum essential requirements."………

Senate GOP Budget Sticks to Spending Caps

Senate Republicans on Wednesday unveiled a 2016 budget blueprint that contains a defense plan in stark contrast with a proposal crafted by their House counterparts. The GOP-run Senate Budget Committee's spending resolution would keep the military's base funding at existing budget caps. That means congressional defense authorizers and appropriators would have $499 billion to work with. The Senate panel also is proposing $58 billion for the overseas contingency operations (OCO) fund, a controversial war-funding account many in Washington consider something of a "slush fund." "We hope the committees will pursue a legislative agenda consistent with this budget resolution," a Republican Budget Committee aide, speaking on condition of anonymity, told reporters Wednesday………

Carter supports veto of any budget with sequestration
Defense Secretary Ash Carter on Wednesday offered support for a presidential veto of any congressional budget plans that leave sequestration caps in place — even if the Defense Department gets everything it's asking for. The statement, during a House Armed Services Committee hearing, drew immediate criticism from Republicans, several of whom have pushed for ways to boost military spending in fiscal 2016 while leaving the budget caps in place for non-defense spending. Carter argued that exempting only defense spending is "no way to run the government" and argued that cuts to State Department and Homeland Security programs would have ripple effects on military operations and national security. "We need the end of sequestration across the board," he said. "What we need for defense … is stability." ……..

McCain endorses House plan to boost defense spending

Sen. John McCain (R-Ari.), an influential voice on national security matters, on Wednesday endorsed a House Republican plan to increase defense spending by tapping into an emergency war fund. McCain, the chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, earlier in the week dismissed using the Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) fund to increase defense spending as —gimmick.” He explained his change of mind by arguing the House path is preferable to the Senate Budget Committee’s proposal to create a defense reserve fund as a placeholder for a future debate over defense spending levels. “I am with some reluctance endorsing the idea of the OCO,” he told reporters. “I don’t like OCOs. I think they should have gone away some time ago. But if that’s the only way to get the required level of defense spending, I would support what the House did. I will reluctantly endorse a proposal such as the House enacted,” he said…….
Defense News © March 19, 2015

By John T. Bennett

The US House Budget Committee approved a spending plan that would clear the way for $613 billion for national defense in 2016. The panel's 22-13 vote sends the GOP-crafted measure to the House floor. But first, it will land in the powerful Rules Committee, where it is expected to be amended to include even more in Pentagon spending. Lawmakers explained the complicated "steps," as House Armed Services Committee Chairman Rep. Mac Thornberry, R-Texas put it, to reporters. When the resolution lands in Rules, its $90 billion overseas contingency operations (OCO) account could end up closer to $100 billion. What's more, defense hawks want to keep a $20 billion Budget Committee-created "reserve fund" in the measure, which could be tapped for Defense Department spending in fiscal 2016.........

Defense Department officials take exception to House budget

The Hill © March 19, 2015

By Kristina Wong

The House Budget Committee passed a fiscal 2016 proposal Thursday that would boost defense spending by adding money to a wartime funding account, to make up for caps on the Pentagon's base budget, but defense leaders say that plan could run into problems. The plan would keep defense spending at $523 billion, under caps mandated by the 2011 Budget Control Act, which cut $500 billion from the Pentagon's budget over 10 years, and were put into place when lawmakers failed to agree on tax and spending reform by 2013. However, the plan would provide $90 billion in so-called war funding to the Pentagon's overseas contingency operations (OCO) account, which is not subject to BCA caps. But Pentagon comptroller Mike McCord said one problem is that the OCO funds could be unavailable for several months after the new fiscal year begins in October. ..........
Defense One © March 21, 2015

By Molly O'Toole Kedar Pavgi

Washington is really planning to avoid dealing with the budget caps, and boost defense spending anyway. The House and the Senate may have found a sweet spot for their budget strategies: they’re both planning on using the U.S. war chest to give the Pentagon the money the White House requested for defense, but outside the reach of sequestration’s spending caps. The White House hoped to force Congress to cancel sequestration by recommending $561 billion in base funding for national defense for fiscal 2016 — an extra $38 billion above the $523 billion cap put in place by the Budget Control Act. Congress is simply accounting for the $38 billion boost in the separate war chest known as Overseas Contingency Operations funding, or OCO, which isn’t restricted by the cap.

Space Coast –

U.S. Air Force leader eyes SpaceX launch certification by June

The U.S. Air Force hopes to certify privately-held Space Exploration Technologies, or SpaceX, to launch some U.S. military and intelligence satellites into space using its Falcon 9 rocket by June, a top official told Reuters on Tuesday. "I think we're still looking at ... June," Lieutenant General Ellen Pawlikowski, the top uniformed officer in charge of Air Force acquisition, told Reuters after a speech at the annual Women in Defense conference. Pawlikowski, nominated by President Barack Obama to head Air Force Materiel Command, said she was disappointed the Air Force had not been able to certify SpaceX for the launches by December, as initially hoped, but said she was "encouraged that we're close."

SpaceX says boosting output, on track for 13 rocket launches this year

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Space Exploration Technologies, or SpaceX, is rapidly increasing production of the engines that power its Falcon 9 rocket and expects to meet its target of 13 launches and two test flights this year, President Gwynne Shotwell told Reuters. SpaceX, the technology upstart founded by entrepreneur Elon Musk, is stepping up hiring of engineers and other workers to help boost production, including many from other sectors such as the automotive industry and the military, company officials said. This year, the company expects to produce at least 180 engines, with that number set to increase to 240 next year, and 400 in 2017, Shotwell told Reuters in an interview late last week. Shotwell said increasing production put the company on track to complete 13 launches this year. It fell short of its targets last year due to a number of factors. "Certainly from a manufacturing perspective, we should be able to meet those targets," said Shotwell, who is due to testify before the House Armed Service Committee on Tuesday about a drive to end U.S. reliance on a Russian-built engine that powers one of two rockets used by SpaceX rival United Launch Alliance (ULA)………

MacDill AFB –

**Unified voice could help keep MacDill from closing, officials say**


Tampa Tribune © March 19, 2015

By Howard Altman | Tribune Staff

MacDill Air Force Base plays a huge role in the regional economy, worth about $14 billion a year according to one study. But with a move to close military installations around the country gaining momentum, explaining MacDill’s value to Congressional and military leaders is the key to preventing MacDill from either being shut down all together or stripped of its flying missions. That concern is amplified in the absence of C.W. “Bill” Young, the late Pinellas Congressman whose position atop the all-powerful House Appropriations Committee’s Defense Subcommittee was instrumental in steering defense funds to the region. That’s the bottom line up front from Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) and the Tampa Bay Community,” a breakfast put on Thursday morning by the Tampa Bay Partnership and Deloitte LLP, featuring two retired Air Force general officers and a retired U.S. representative who all now work for financial consulting firm. —We have a great story in Tampa about the importance of MacDill Air Force Base,” said Jim Soligan, a retired Air Force lieutenant general who served as MacDill’s base commander in 1998 and 1999. But that story, said Soligan, now Deloitte’s defense sector director, “is poorly understood” by decision makers in Congress and the Pentagon………
Any notion that MacDill might close has to be taken seriously


Tampa Tribune © March 22, 2015

By Joe Henderson | Tribune Staff

In May 1939, Southeast Air Base opened in Tampa, but it wasn’t long before it was renamed MacDill Air Force Base. Among many other things, it’s where pilots for the B-17 Flying Fortress were trained, and it was later home to the Strategic Air Command. We know it today as a vital link in the U.S. war on global terror and the nation’s overall defense, and a $14 billion piece of Tampa’s economy. Repeat that: $14 billion. With a –b.” MacDill is as much a part of the city’s heartbeat as Cuban sandwiches and Gasparilla. Yet, whenever Congress considers closing military bases to save money, MacDill seems to be a target. The late congressman C.W. Bill Young would always answer the bell on MacDill’s behalf, keeping it open and saving thousands of jobs on the base and around the community………

US  Southern Command –

Southcom Chief Details Dangers of Sequestration


DOD News © March 12, 2015

By Cheryl Pellerin

In response to questions from the Senate Armed Services Committee, Kelly described the effects sequestration — severe spending cuts scheduled to continue in 2016, based on the Budget Control Act — would have on his command unless Congress takes steps to modify or stop it. –In Latin America, in Southern Command, [sequestration] will be, simply put, a catastrophe. It will essentially put me out of business,” Kelly told the panel. –I have very little to work with now. We do most of our work partnering with small groups of soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines, even law enforcement [officers] who go down and spend short periods of time advising and assisting,” he said, noting that if sequestration occurs it will critically limit Southcom’s partnering with nations the command works with every day………
NS Mayport –

CSCS Mayport Holds Change Of Charge


Florida Times-Union © March 18, 2015

Center for Surface Combat Systems Detachment Mayport held a change of charge ceremony on March 12 where Cmdr. Martin Robertson is taking charge of the detachment from CWO Kevin King. CSCS Commanding Officer, Capt. William McKinley, was guest speaker at the event. Cmdr. Martin Robertson, originally from Pa. enlisted in the Navy in 1988 as an Interior Communications Electrician. He served in USS Wainwright (CG 28), USS Nicholas (FFG 47), and Surface Combat Systems Center Wallops Island before being selected for commissioning via the Seaman to Admiral Program. Following graduation from Officer Candidate School, he completed Division Officer tours as Strike Warfare Officer in USS Normandy (CG 60) and Chief Engineer in USS Pioneer (MCM 9)……..

Tyndall AFB –

Tyndall AFB Asks to Restrict Surrounding Waterways during Emergencies

http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/tyndall-afb-asks-to-restrict-surrounding-waterways-during-emergencies-2/?utm_source=dc360&utm_campaign=a4d0673b8f-RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_04f8ff45e8-a4d0673b8f-55784537&ct=t%28RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN%29#

Defense Communities © March 16, 2015

The Bay Defense Alliance is urging the local business community to support a proposal from Tyndall Air Force Base that would allow it to restrict waterways surrounding the installation located on the Florida Panhandle if a security threat arises. The base faces a unique security threat because it is surrounded by water on three sides, Glen McDonald, a member of the Defense Alliance, told the Bay County Economic Development Alliance. Tyndall’s initial proposal generated significant opposition from residents, prompting officials to revise the plan, reported the News Herald. It now calls for Tyndall to review the waterway restrictions after 48 hours to see if they can be lifted. Day to day nothing will change — nobody will be boarded; nobody’s IDs will be checked,” McDonald said. Restricted areas would be shut only in the event
of a major threat, he said. Officials first introduced the security plan following the 9/11 attacks……….

NSA Panama City –

Diving in the Deep; Saturation Divers Train in Panama City

http://www.mypanhandle.com/story/d/story/diving-in-the-deep-saturation-divers-train-in-pana/22766/gaFc7e4ja0W8-Ek3_OxFcA

By Corey Dobridnia

Plane crashes and other catastrophes more often than not require extensive search and recovery. From a military standpoint that mission is a specialized one that requires a very special group of divers. The Flyaway Saturation Dive System at the Naval Surface Warfare Center is one of a kind. The complex system is rarely duplicated and takes days to put together. "Typically these types of systems are used out in the Gulf or the North Sea for oil field support,” said Paul McMurtrie, the Saturation Diving System Program Manager. “This is one of the few systems of its type that's used specifically for deep ocean salvage." Salvage in the event of the unexpected when the call could mean anything from a submarine recovery to airplane crashes both civilian and military. "To help recover the black box, to help learn why the plane crashed, and to be able to prevent that in the future,” said McMurtrie. ………

Florida National Guard –

Unit of Florida Army National Guard deployed to Afghanistan


By Kelly Joyce, Reporter

Family friends and elected officials, including Florida's governor, showed up for a warm send off for nearly 200 troops from the Florida Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 265th Air Defense
Artillery Regiment. These men and women departed Daytona Beach on Monday for Fort Bliss in Oklahoma for three months of training, then it's off to Afghanistan for six months.

"It's a real honor to be the commanding officer of the National Guard," said Gov. Rick Scott. "We are the most military friendly state in the nation. We've got the best national guard." "I'm excited, because every day people from DeLand and Deltona thank me for my support," said First lieutenant Eric Grant about his first deployment. "They buy me lunches, you know, and I feel like I haven't really done anything these nine years in the Guard. I know, once I get deployed, and we come home safely, that I've finally earned that meal."……..

**Lawmaker: Removal of Apache Helicopters from Guard ‘Devastating’**


DOD Buzz © March 17, 2015

By Bryant Jordan

A member of the House Appropriations Committee on Tuesday said the panel needs to take action to ensure it does not regret allowing the active-duty Army to take Apache helicopters away from the National Guard. Rep. Steve Womack, R-Arkansas, said the Army’s bid to swap more UH-60 Black Hawk missions for the AH-64 Apache attack helicopter is moving too quickly and more thought needs to go into it. Congress inserted language into the National Defense Authorization Act that postpones any significant change until after April 1, 2016. In my opinion the NDAA serves as a Band-Aid to what amounts to an open wound, and if the Army is allowed to transfer the aircraft after April next year they’ll probably be gone from the reserve component forever,” Womack said……..

Patrick AFB –

**Rescue reservists sharpen skills at Guardian Centers**


Air Force Reserve Command © March 13, 2015

By Staff Sgt. Kelly Goonan, 439th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

Partially collapsed buildings, dozens of Somalian role-players, flooded housing areas, and hundreds of charred and mangled vehicles scattered across 820 acres offered a uniquely realistic
training environment for pararescue jumpers and combat rescue officers from the 920th Rescue Wing from Patrick Air Force Base, Florida. The reservists endured the challenging environment to refine their search and rescue skills during an extensive four-day training exercise in March at the Guardian Centers in Perry, Georgia, about 20 miles south of Headquarters Air Force Reserve Command at Robins Air Force Base. “This facility was really like the Ritz Carlton,” said Capt. Ryan Ruddy of Patrick’s 308th Rescue Squadron. “We had everything we needed to conduct imperative real-world training in a controlled environment.” According to its website, Guardian Centers is America’s premier disaster preparedness and tactical training validation center. Its facilities enable realistic, large-scale disaster response exercises and kinetic military operations training…….

**Patrick AFB becomes National Weather Service StormReady site**


Patrick AFB © March 18, 2015

by 45th Space Wing Public Affairs

Brig. Gen. Nina Armagno, 45th Space Wing commander, and members of the 45th Civil Engineer Squadron Readiness and Emergency Management Flight, accept a StormReady certification certificate from members of the National Weather Service, March 11, 2015, at Patrick Air Force Base, Fla. National Weather Service officials recognized Patrick AFB as a StormReady site. The StormReady program helps community leaders and residents better prepare for hazardous weather and flooding. StormReady sites have made a strong commitment to implement the infrastructure and systems needed to save lives and protect property when severe weather strikes…….

MCSF Blount Island –

**U.S. Military lands fleet of helicopters at Jaxport before shipping overseas**


Jacksonville Business Journal © March 16, 2015
By Jensen Werley

The U.S. military landed more than 50 helicopters were landed at the Jacksonville Port Authority's Blount Island Marine Terminal by on Monday during a multi-day operation.

The 48 speciality Army helicopters and the Air Force helicopters are being handled by the U.S. Army's 832nd Transportation Battalion, headquartered at Blount Island, according to a statement. The Army helicopters will be shipped out over the next two weeks via a roll-on, roll-off ship to sites in Europe. Those helicopters arrived one at a time from Fort Campbell, Kentucky and the 101st Airborne Division. The three Air Force helicopters are designated to fly to an Air Force base in Northwest Florida.

Defense Industry –

**Army contract spending may drop $5 billion in 2015**


Federal Times © March 17, 2015

By Andy Medici

The Army may spend up to $5 billion less on goods, services and equipment in fiscal 2015 than it did last, year, according to a top Army official. The Army spent about $74.3 billion on contracts in fiscal 2014 but its fiscal 2015 contract spending will be $69 billion to $74 billion, Harry Hallock, deputy assistant secretary for procurement at the Army, told Federal Times March 16. Even with a $5 billion drop in contract spending it would not fall as far as it did from fiscal 2013 to 2014, when it dropped 17 percent - from 87.3 billion to $74.3 billion. Hallock said while fiscal 2015 might see some leveling off, Army contract spending has been falling every year since fiscal 2012. But the real concern within the Army is the automatic budget caps passed by Congress known as sequestration.

**F-35 Costs Stabilize, Army Program Breaches**
A number of the reforms in Pentagon acquisition and business practices over the past few years have started to pay dividends, a senior Pentagon official said. Pointing to the latest batch of Selected Acquisition Reports (SAR) released Thursday, the official said that the closer eye that chief weapons buyer Frank Kendall has insisted that the building keep on its acquisitions costs has led to a reduction in the number of programs that have shot past their initial cost estimates. "We have fewer programs than last year overrunning their unit costs," said a senior Pentagon official who asked to remain anonymous. "Sixty-nine percent of programs are underrunning their baseline for unit costs" as well.

Other Items of Interest –

The Military’s Cybersecurity Budget in 4 Charts

The White House is pitching $5.5 billion in cyber spending for FY 16. Here's what that money looks like. U.S. Cyber Command spending will rocket 92 percent this year to get mission troops up and rolling in 2016, according to Defense Department budget figures. Last year, the force was funded at $190 million, while 2015 figures project a $364 million purse. Money for the command — tasked with orchestrating network defense maneuvers and offensive cyberattacks — eventually will stabilize over the next five years, totaling out at $1 billion. About $500 million in 2016 would go toward compensating computer security whizzes department wide, according to budget materials provided to Nextgov. Earlier this month, Defense received the green light to fast-track the hiring of 3,000 civilian cyber pros, in part, to staff the half-full Cyber Command.
Court shields military housing from taxes


News4Jax © March 17, 2015

Rejecting arguments of the Monroe County property appraiser, an appeals court ruled Wednesday that privately operated rental housing that serves Naval Air Station Key West is not subject to property taxes. The ruling, by the 3rd District Court of Appeal, stems from a public-private partnership between the Navy and a private developer. A for-profit firm, Southeast Housing LLC, was created to lease land from the federal government, take title to improvements on the property and reconstruct and operate rental units, according to the ruling. Southeast Housing received a 50-year ground lease from the Navy for a nominal payment of $10. In 2012, the property appraiser issued tax liens for the years 2008 to 2011, with the tax issues involving buildings and other improvements on the property. Southeast Housing filed a lawsuit challenging the attempt to collect property taxes. Noting that since the "early years of the American Republic, it has been recognized that the property of the United States is immune from state taxation," a three-judge panel of the appeals court rejected the appraiser's arguments. "A review … reveals that the Navy retained equitable and beneficial ownership of the properties," said the ruling written by Judge Thomas Logue and joined by Chief Judge Frank Shepherd and Judge Kevin Emas. "Because property owned by the United States is immune from state taxation, we hold the properties are immune from Florida ad valorem (property) taxes."

Congress Must Match the Money to the Navy’s Strategy


Defense One © March 20, 2015

By Mark Seip Alex Clayton

How the nation’s strong naval ambition may be undermined by Congress’ weak resourcing. The top officers of the U.S. Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard last week released a new national maritime strategy that emphasizes “warfighting first” and “being where it matters, when it matters.” Strong in language and upbeat in tone, they confidently laid out the services’ roles in supporting the nation’s interests around the world. Just three days prior, however, their tone in front of the Senate Armed Services Committee was anything but upbeat. With equally strong language, the same leaders joined the Navy Secretary Ray Mabus in painting a grim picture of the effects of sequestration and the threat it poses to naval strategy if left unresolved. The nation’s new maritime strategy reflects Congress’ desire for strong US presence abroad in order to make the nation more secure at home. That strong presence requires ships. If Congress is going to require the level of ambition that is articulated in the strategy, then they must end sequestration and properly fund the ships and support the men and women who crew them……
TF members --

1. **Next Task Force Meeting April 16th** – The next meeting of the Florida Defense Support Task Force will be on Thursday, **April 16, 2015 at the Doubletree Hotel, 101 S. Adams St., Tallahassee, FL** beginning at 9:00 AM.


3. **FY 2015-2016 Task Force Grant Application Released** – The FY 2015-2016 Task Force Grant Application was released posted to the web site this week.. Deadline for submissions is April 24, 2015. Task Force members should expect to be contacted about sponsoring applications.

4. **Attachment** –

   - FDSTF Legislative Bill Tracker
   - Veterans Bill Tracker
   - TPG Monthly Report
   - DRAFT Meeting Agenda for April 16, 2015 Task Force meeting

Regards, BG.

Bruce Grant
Articles of Interest:

FDSTF –

Islamic State group cited as need for military privacy bill

http://www.militarytimes.com/story/military/2015/04/01/islamic-state-group-cited-as-need-for-records-exemption/70766008/

Military Times © April 1, 2015

By Brendan Farrington
A Florida state representative used the threat of the Islamic State group to advance a bill Wednesday that could make it harder for people to find addresses, phone numbers and other personal information of military service members, their spouses and children. Republican Rep. Matt Gaetz told the House Local and Federal Affairs Committee that recent news of the Islamic State group posting photos, names and addresses of 100 military members made his bill an even higher priority. He said the Department of Defense said the information was likely obtained through social media sites and public records. His bill (HB 185) would allow current and former military members who have served since Sept. 11, 2001, to petition government agencies to block the release of their addresses, phone numbers, birthdates and other personal information. It would also apply to their spouses and children. The committee unanimously approved the bill. It is now ready for a full House vote.

New effort in Florida to protect military identities


Air Force Times © April 4, 2015

By Jeff Schogol

A state representative in Florida has proposed legislation that would prevent any state agency from publicly releasing the names, addresses, birthdays and other personal information of service members and their families. Republican Rep. Matt Gaetz said the measure is meant to protect troops and their families from the Islamic State group, which recently posted the names, pictures and addresses of 100 service members, whom it called on its supporters to kill. While the bill only affects Florida, Gaetz hopes that other states and the federal government adopt the same public records exemptions that he has proposed…….

Public Private Partnerships –

DOD Intervention Needed to Fully Leverage Partnership Authorities, Paper Says
The military services are increasingly relying on public-private and public-public partnerships (P4s) to enhance the military value of bases and deliver many support services more efficiently, but the Defense Department will need to clarify its authorities and establish implementation procedures to fully promote P4s, according to a new paper published by the National Defense University. “While P4 is not a new concept, it has never received as much attention as it does today as a tool or technique to accomplish DOD missions,” writes author Samuel Bendett. “More practitioners are now being exposed to P4s, and it is expected they will consider them equal to or in lieu of traditional procurement.” When legislation was first enacted in January 2013 allowing DOD to enter into intergovernmental support agreements with local municipalities, confusion remained among some military stakeholders. DOD’s general counsel and legal opinions within each service created barriers to implementing the new authority effectively, Bendett says…….

DOD Budget—

Exclusive: Pentagon chief sends military wish lists to Congress with reservations

U.S. Defense Secretary Ash Carter on Monday sent Congress the military's annual "wish lists," including 12 Boeing Co F/A-18 fighter jets and 14 Lockheed Martin Corp F-35 fighter jets, but said he would not back any of the requests unless lawmakers passed a larger overall defense budget. "Any extra program inserted into our budget submission will come at the expense of
other programs we deemed more important, with ripple effects across the rest of the budget," Carter said in a letter, a copy of which was seen by Reuters. Carter told lawmakers he was sending the lists of "unfunded priorities" to Congress as required under the fiscal 2013 defense policy law, but registered his concerns about any moves by Congress to restructure the Pentagon's budget request……..

**Budgets Signal Spending Caps Here to Stay**


Defense News © March 30, 2015

By John T. Bennett

What to do about spending caps is one issue House and Senate negotiators can skip as they craft a compromise 2016 federal budget blueprint. That's because spending resolutions approved last week by the House and Senate both leave defense and domestic spending caps in place. "We know now ever since 2011 we have been living with sequestration," Armed Services Committee Chairman Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., said last week on the Senate floor. "While we have been dealing with sequestration, the world has turned into a place with enormous turmoil." Many of McCain's colleagues, Republican and Democrat, agree. Yet, both chambers' budget resolutions include the same amount for the Pentagon's base budget: $499 billion. That's the amount allowed under the 2011 Budget Control Act…….

**Latest deals offer few answers to budget anxiety**


Military Times © March 30, 2015

By Leo Shane III
The good news: During recent budget resolution debates, Congress went on record saying the military needs more funding. The bad news: That doesn't really fix anything. Under separate resolutions backed by the House and Senate, lawmakers offered no alternative to looming mandatory spending caps on defense programs, instead opting to work around the problem by boosting "off-the-books" overseas contingency funds by tens of billions of dollars. For Pentagon planners, that compromise has been greeted with disappointed shrugs. Officials have been intensely lobbying for an end to the spending caps for months, gaining support from defense hawks in Congress but little traction with fiscal conservatives. ……..

Budget Talks Underway During Recess


Defense News © March 31, 2015

By John T. Bennett

Senior members and aides are working on a compromise 2016 budget resolution even as the rest of Congress takes a two-week break. Before adjourning late last week until April 13, the House and Senate each passed federal spending plans that keep in place defense and domestic spending caps. Both measures also inflate the Pentagon's war account well above the Obama administration's $50.9 billion request. The House-passed resolution proposed a $96 billion war fund, while the Senate's version includes an $89 billion account. The final size of that account, the overseas contingency operations (OCO) fund, is just one issue House and Senate conferees must iron out. They are working toward a nominal April 15 deadline, but it is widely expected they will need more time………..

Budgets Only $1B Apart on DoD War-Fund Level


Defense News © April 3, 2015

By John T. Bennett
House and Senate budget negotiators have less to discuss than it might seem about the Pentagon's war-funding level as they craft a compromise 2016 spending blueprint. At first glance, it appears there is a $7 billion difference between the federal spending resolutions passed last week by the House and Senate. The House approved a version that would clear the way for a $96 billion overseas contingency operations (OCO) fund; the Senate's version calls for an $89 billion war account. But congressional sources say there's only a $1 billion difference in just how much the Defense Department could get in OCO dollars……..

**Experts: OCO Strangling Budget Reform Attempts**


Defense News © April 3, 2015

By Aaron Mehta

The presence of the overseas contingency operations (OCO) fund is preventing needed reforms to the defense budget, a panel of experts said April 3. The ability to push costs into the OCO fund, which exists in a quasi-independent state outside the budget, has removed a forcing function that could drive the Pentagon and Congress to make hard decisions, the experts said during a panel hosted jointly by the Stimson Center. Gordon Adams, a former top defense official at the Office of Management and Budget and now a distinguished fellow at Stimson, referred to OCO as "an infection" that has spread across the budgeting process, a "rampant virus where every single part of the American system has now discovered there is an extra way to play on the defense side." OCO, he continued, is "a budgetary disaster which leads you to expect resources to continue to be available when they probably will not be."……..

MacDill AFB –
MacDill to see more activity through April 16

http://tbo.com/list/military-news/macdill-to-see-more-activity-through-april-16-20150403/

Tampa Tribune © April 3, 2015

By Howard Altman

MacDill Air Force Base may be busier than usual over the next few days thanks to Jaded Thunder, a U.S. Special Operations Command Joint Firepower exercise. The exercise will take place at the Avon Park Air Force Range, according to Socom spokesman Ken McGraw, who said the bulk of the aircraft involved in Jaded Thunder will be based at MacDill. Tampa area residents may see “an elevated military air traffic presence” starting today and running through April 16, according to the 6th Air Mobility Wing, the base host unit. The most active times for aircraft traffic will be from 1 to 11 p.m., according to the wing. Among others, aircraft involved in the exercise include A-10s, F-18s, AC-130s, and CV-22s, according Lt. Patrick Gargan, a base spokesman. McGraw declined to elaborate on Jaded Thunder, which is closed to the media……

Eglin AFB –

Contractor breaks ground on new base housing

http://www.nwfdailynews.com/military/eglin/contractor-breaks-ground-on-new-base-housing-1.456253

Northwest Florida Daily News © March 26, 2015

By BRANDON MASTERS

Corvias Military Living, held a groundbreaking ceremony here March 20 to mark the start of construction of 747 new homes and a 12,000-square-foot state-of-the-art community center.
The new homes coming to Eglin will provide residents with dramatically increased connectivity to their community,” said Stan Morehead, business director for Corvias Military Living. “In addition to the improved accessibility, is the fact that many of the existing housing at Eglin are over 50 years old and new homes will provide modern comforts to create a more enjoyable living experience overall. We also want to bring more to that higher quality of life with the community center, which will bring residents together for relaxation that takes advantage of Florida’s beautiful climate.”

**Bombing Range Is National Example for Wildlife Conservation**

http://voices.nationalgeographic.com/2015/04/01/bombing-range-is-national-example-for-wildlife-conservation/

National Geographic © April 1, 2015

Walking through a wildlife underpass from Nokuse Plantation to Eglin Air Force base feels like traveling back in time. On the one side is Nokuse: a 54,000-acre private conservation property and site of the largest private longleaf pine restoration project in the world. While there are eight million newly planted longleaf pine trees here, they are mere saplings (only ten years old), so it requires some knowledge and imagination to envision what this place will be like in a few more decades. Joe Guthrie explores some of the 250,000 acres of Eglin Air Force Base that are open for public recreation. Here he hikes one of the more popular segments of the Florida National Scenic Trail which traverses the north portion of the base. Entering Eglin Air Force Base to the west paints a different picture. It is like stepping 200 years into the past, or from the perspective of Nokuse, fast-forwarding 200 years into the future. Eglin feels ancient. As the Florida Trail climbs out of creek bottom ravines to sandy rises, we are surrounded by the oldest trees we’ve encountered on our entire 1,000-mile Florida Wildlife Corridor expedition. It’s likely there are 300-year-old trees in sight. The Air Force Base is home to the last remaining old-growth longleaf pines in Florida. In the natural resources visitor center, there is a cross section from a 500-year-old tree found on Eglin……..

**Air Force drone successfully hits boat in training**

http://www.defensenews.com/story/military/2015/04/03/reaper-targets-boat-training-first/25233861/

Defense News © April 3, 2015
By Brian Everstine

The Air Force has successfully hit a boat with drone missile for the first time. An MQ-9 Reaper on March 17 successfully hit a sea-going target with an AGM-114 Hellfire missile during a training mission in the Gulf of Mexico, the service announced today. "It was the first time we had put live weapons into boats and participated in maritime (exercises)," Capt. Timothy Ford, 26th Weapons Squadron flight commander, said in an Air Force news release. "For our (RPA) community it's a big step forward, it's a mission set we had looked at for a long time." RPA pilots at Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada, controlled the Reaper on the mission. During the flight, the drone flew with A-10s, F-16s and F-35s, according to the Air Force…….

US Southern Command –

SOUTHCOM Members Rock Out With Kid Rock


CBS Miami © April 1, 2015

South Florida service members got to rock out during lunch on Wednesday. And they did it with Rock star Kid Rock himself who surprised the group with a free concert. U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) located in Doral hosted the event as a means to show support for service members. While they rocked out, service members were also treated to free lunch. "It was great. He rocked it out," said Sgt. Jonathan Machado who attended the concert. To some, the concert meant more than just a good time with colleagues. "It means a lot that Kid Rock came out today. We take it for granted that we are just working here day to day and he’s taking the time out to see us,” said Sgt. Machado…….

Southcom wants to expand its Doral headquarters, adding military-only housing


Miami Herald © April 3, 2015
By Carol Rosenberg

The Pentagon’s subsidiary in South Florida is quietly exploring whether to expand its office-style headquarters to function more like a traditional U.S. military base with a gated housing development across the street in a cow pasture in Doral. Call it Southcomville. The commander of Southern Command, Marine Gen. John F. Kelly, briefly hinted at the housing ambitions in testimony last month at the Senate. And his military outpost that oversees U.S. military operations in Latin America and the Caribbean has been short on details. But a series of sources contacted by the Miami Herald in recent weeks described the bid to have the first real base-style housing since Southcom quit the Panama Canal Zone in the mid-1990s and moved to South Florida. That starts with his headquarters quietly negotiating through the Army for a portion of Federal Aviation Administration land even before obtaining Congressional approval for the building project……..

NAS Jacksonville –

Don't Ask For A Light At Naval Hospital Jacksonville


Naval Hospital Jacksonville Public Affairs © March 31, 2015

Naval Hospital (NH) Jacksonville was awarded March 31 the first Ambassadors for Health Gold Star recognition for achieving the highest national standards for a tobacco-free workplace during a ceremony with Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs Dr. Jonathan Woodson and Prevention Partners. "Ensuring the health of our nation's heroes - past and present - and their families is not just an honor, it is our responsibility. This care does not stop at the battlefield, it continues in facilities like Naval Hospital Jacksonville where disease prevention and wellness must be prioritized to ensure our fighting force is healthy and able to support operational
contingencies," Dr. Woodson said. "Through programs like the Healthy Base Initiative and Ambassadors for Health, and through the long term strategy Operation Live Well, we support healthy lifestyles for not only our warfighters and their families, but the staff who care for them. As an Ambassador for Health Gold Star site, Naval Hospital Jacksonville is doing its part to support our national health strategy by setting the standard for workplace health."………

Environmental leaders check NAS Jacksonville accomplishments


Florida Times-Union © Apr 1, 2015

By Earle Bittner

Maureen Sullivan, director, Environment, Safety and Occupational Health in the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense and Karnig Ohannessian, deputy director, Energy and Environmental Readiness in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, visited the sites of some of the environmental and safety initiatives aboard Naval Air Station (NAS) Jacksonville and Naval Station (NS) Mayport, Fla., March 24. Captain Steve Hamer, commanding officer, Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC) Southeast; Camille Destafney, environmental director, NAVFAC Southeast; Kevin Gartland, NAS Jacksonville environmental director; Matt Schellhorn, NAS Jacksonville community planning and liaison officer and Max Bassett, NAS Jacksonville deputy safety officer, provided a tour and discussed the initiatives aboard NAS Jacksonville. ……. 

Florida National Guard –

Historic change of command

Clay Today © April 2, 2015

By Eric Cravey

With 570 soldiers and airmen and 350 invited guests looking on from across a green field, the Florida National Guard made history March 29 at Camp Blanding. Maj. Gen. Michael A. Calhoun assumed duties as Adjutant General of Florida heading up the Florida National Guard. Calhoun becomes the first African-American to head the military organization comprised of more than 12,000 citizen soldiers and airmen. He takes over command from retiring Maj. Gen. Emmett R. Titshaw Jr., a 45-year career military man who has served in the role for the past five years. Calhoun thanked the standing guard members for their service. "Men and women of the Florida National Guard – you look great and you are truly remarkable. The Florida National Guard, both army and air, has earned a great reputation throughout the National Guard and, in fact, throughout the nation. This recognition is a result of both the outstanding leadership of Maj. Gen. Titshaw and the hard work you have contributed by building and sustaining a culture of excellence," Calhoun said. ........

Guard F-15 training unit lands in Europe for Atlantic Resolve mission


Stars and Stripes © April 3, 2015

By Jennifer H. Svan

One day, the Air National Guard’s F-15C pilots were providing air defense for the United States. The next, they were jetting off to Europe to help deter Russian aggression. The Florida- and Oregon-based guard units touched down on the Continent earlier this week to take part in the U.S. military’s Operation Atlantic Resolve. The unit will stay at the Netherland’s Leeuwarden Air Base for about a month, where it will conduct training with the Dutch air force, before moving on to Bulgaria. While at Leeuwarden, the pilots will participate in the annual Frisian Flag exercise, with a range of aircraft from other European countries, including Finnish and Spanish F-18s, German Eurofighters, and Polish and Dutch F-16s, said Col. Gerbe Verhaaf, the base commander of Leeuwarden........
New sailors welcomed at Pensacola NAS


Pensacola Today © April 1, 2015

by Ed Barker

The Chief of Naval Operations held an all-hands call for area sailors at the Naval Air Technical Training Center at Pensacola Naval Air Station. Adm. Jonathan Greenert entered NATTC’s main hangar on Tuesday to a rousing welcome by nearly 4,000 sailors from area commands. Before addressing the crowd Greenert reenlisted six sailors; two staff members from NAS Pensacola, Information Technology Technician 3rd Class Kaitlin Carter and Master-at-Arms 3rd Class Andrew Livasy; two instructors from the Center for Information Dominance, Cryptologic Technicians Technical 1st Class Benjamin Mold and Bobby Bruno; and two instructors from NATTC, Chief Aviation Electrician Mate Kenny Stone and Naval Air crewman 2nd Class Steven Gabby. Greenert said he was glad to be back at NATTC to speak with some of the Navy’s newest sailors and talk with them about what the future holds……..

CNO recognizes NATTC as Training Chapter of the Year


Pensacola News-Journal © April 5, 2015

Chief of Naval Operations (CNO), Adm. Jonathan W. Greenert, met with members of a Coalition of Sailors Against Destructive Decisions (CSADD) group April 1, recognizing them as the 2014 CSADD Training the Chapter of the Year. "The first time I heard of CSADD, I was amazed and excited about the idea of people like you coming together," said Greenert. "This is an outstanding example of your generation and we are all impressed that you are willing to take charge, working together to keep bad things from happening." After presenting the Training Chapter of the Year plaque to the Naval Air Technical Training Center (NATTC) CSADD
chapter's board members, the CNO opened the floor for questions. Air Traffic Controller 2nd class Michael Rivellette asked the CNO about expectations, since CSADD became an independent organization in October 2014.

NAS Whiting Field –

**Santa Rosa courthouse state funds elusive**


By Kaycee Lagarde

Although Santa Rosa County is poised to receive about $8 million in state funding next year for local projects, so far the county's $12 million request to help fund a new judicial facility is nowhere to be found in Florida's budget. But at least some of the county's funding requests appear promising as the House and Senate finalize spending plans for the next fiscal year, with less than a month remaining to bridge a $4.2 billion gap between the two proposed budgets. The House has set aside about $6 million for Navarre Beach renourishment, with another $2 million budgeted by the Senate for development of Whiting Aviation Park in Milton — two of the county's top funding priorities for 2015.

Patrick AFB –

**Patrick AFB seeks OK for rock fortification**


Florida Today © March 31, 2015
Rescue Road needed a quick rescue, so the military deployed boulders and concrete to fend off a natural enemy: the Banana River Lagoon. Cold fronts had sent the lagoon lapping up along the only route in and out of Patrick Family Campground, encroaching on the road and sewer lines just beyond a runway at the northwest corner of Patrick Air Force Base. Undermined sewer lines threatened to spill 100,000 gallons or more of raw and/or treated sewage into a lagoon already languishing from pollution. This month, Patrick applied for a permit to approve permanently the rock fortification they installed late last year under a temporary emergency permit. Their "hardened" solution echoes a common scenario along the lagoon. The decline in mangroves and other native vegetation along some barren lagoon.......
Pentagon shifts approach to speed up commercial buying

http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/03/31/us-usa-military-commercial-idUSKBN0MR2ND20150331?feedType=RSS&feedName=everything&virtualBrandChannel=11563

Reuters © March 31, 2015

By Andrea Shalal

The U.S. Defense Department is revamping its rules to speed up purchases of commercial items, part of a larger drive to attract new suppliers to the U.S. weapons market and drive down acquisition costs, the Pentagon's pricing czar told Reuters. The Pentagon has set a new target of 10 business days for deciding whether items such as cockpit displays and other aerospace components are truly commercial, or if they need a more rigorous cost analysis used for items exclusive to the military, according to a previously unreported memorandum dated Feb. 4. Director of Defense Pricing Shay Assad shared the memo and outlined the changes in an interview with Reuters, conceding that some reviews were taking "far too long," ranging as long as nine months in some cases………

Analysts: Stable Outlook for Defense Sector


Defense News © April 1, 2015

By Andrew Clevenger

Modest improvements to the defense spending climate, buoyed by strong commercial sales, creates a stable environment in the defense sector, the credit rating agency Moody's said in its monthly outlook for the global aerospace and defense industry published Wednesday. Continuing demand for commercial aircraft will help offset the pressure of tight Pentagon budgets, allowing overall operating profit growth of between 2 and 4 percent over the next 12 to 18 months, Moody's projected. "Our more optimistic view of profit growth reflects an improving (albeit still pressured) defense budgetary climate, ongoing cost reduction initiatives and related improvements in operating efficiencies," the outlook states. "The recovering US
economy and elevated geopolitical risk appear to be fueling support in Washington for an increase in fiscal 2016 defense spending above sequestration caps."………

Several Florida companies — including one in Jacksonville — win Air Force contracts


Jacksonville Business Journal © April 2, 2015

By Jensen Werley

Several Florida companies — including one out of Jacksonville — were awarded a $150 million contract for design-build construction projects at two state Air Force facilities. ABBA Construction Inc. of Jacksonville, along with Nelson Construction from Palm Harbor; Bay Area Building Solutions from Clearwater; R.M. Williams Construction Inc. and Danner Construction Co. of Tampa; and EMR Inc. from Lawrence, Kansas, were all granted contracts under a multiple-award construction contract system. Each company will be given projects via individual task orders. The work, which will include a range of maintenance, repair and minor construction, will be performed at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa and Avon Park Air Force Range in Avon Park, Florida………

Flurry of Contracts Spark US Navy Shipbuilding

http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/2015/04/03/navy-shipbuilding-contracts/25249469/

Defense News © April 6, 2015

By Christopher P. Cavas

The past few days have been good for a number of the US Navy's shipbuilders. The service issued building contracts for two new destroyers, three littoral combat ships (LCS) and two new landing craft. Long-lead funding was issued for another LCS, and even the Coast Guard got in on
the action, ordering another large National Security Cutter. A destroyer was launched, a new amphibious ship christened, and a high-speed catamaran vessel successfully completed sea trials. Down at Ingalls Shipbuilding in Pascagoula, Mississippi, the DDG 51 Arleigh Burke-class destroyer John Finn (DDG 113) was launched on March 28. The ship is the first of the DDG 51 restarts, the result of a 2008 Navy decision to cap production of DDG 1000 Zumwalt-class destroyers at three ships and return to building Burkes. Two yards build DDG 51s – Ingalls, and the General Dynamics Bath Iron Works yard in Bath, Maine. Before 2008, the Navy's plan was to stop buying Burkes after the Michael Murphy (DDG 112), delivered in 2012. The John Finn will be christened May 2, and is expected to be delivered in 2016........

Other Items of Interest –

**White House Endorses Recommendations to Overhaul Military Compensation**

[link](http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/white-house-endo...RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN%29#)

Defense Communities 360 © March 30, 2015

President Obama said Monday he will support the broad package of reforms to military pay and benefits proposed earlier this year by a congressionally chartered panel. “I believe the recommendations are an important step forward in protecting the long-term viability of the all-volunteer force, improving quality-of-life for service members and their families, and ensuring the fiscal sustainability of the military compensation and retirement systems,” Obama wrote in a letter to Congress. The president said the administration will send Congress by April 30 a set of legislative proposals based on the recommendations of the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission, reported Stars and Stripes. The most sweeping changes proposed by the committee would affect retirement and health care benefits, including replacing the 20-year retirement benefit with other options to offer benefits to personnel who separate from
the military before reaching the traditional retirement milestone, and replacing Tricare health
coverage with a wide variety of private insurance plans………

**Services Cite Installation Support as Priority in ‘Wish Lists’**


Defense Communities 360 © March 31, 2015

The Pentagon’s list of priorities that failed to make the fiscal 2016 budget request is heavy on
weapons modernization and readiness needs, but it also includes installation support and quality-of-life programs. In his letter to the congressional defense committees accompanying the
department’s “wish list,” Defense Secretary Ashton Carter warned lawmakers that these items —
costing more than $20 billion — should not be funded unless Congress matches the amount requested in in the president’s regular budget proposal. “Any extra program inserted into our budget submission will come at the expense of other programs we deemed more important, with
ripple effects across the rest of the budget,” Carter stated, according to Defense News……

**Meet the most fascinating part of the F-35: The $400,000 helmet**


Washington Post © April 1, 2015

By Christian Davenport

The F-35 Lightning II is one of the most complicated weapons systems ever developed, a sleek
and stealthy fighter jet years in the making that is often called a flying computer because of its
more than 8 million lines of code. The Joint Strike Fighter comes in three versions, including one
that is designed to take off and land on an aircraft carrier and another that lands vertically, as if it
were a helicopter. But to truly understand the most expensive weapons program in the history of
the Pentagon, forget the plane for a minute. Consider the helmet. It’s designed to protect the
pilot’s head, of course. But compared to everything the helmet does, protection becomes
something of an afterthought. The helmet sees through the plane. Or rather it helps the pilot see through the plane. When the pilots look down, they don’t see the floor of the plane; they see the world below them. If the pilots look back, they see the sky behind them. Embedded in the skin of the aircraft are six cameras, and when the pilots move their heads to look in a particular direction, they are actually seeing through the corresponding camera, which sends an image to projectors inside the helmet that beam an image of the outside world on the helmet’s visor…….

**Odierno: Readiness at historically low levels**


Defense News © April 2, 2015

By Kathleen Curthoys

The Army is "only generating enough readiness for immediate consumption" while grappling with cuts that have left only a third of the service's brigades ready, the chief of staff said Wednesday. "It's incumbent on all of us to understand that further reductions simply will put us into a place we simply cannot go," Army Chief of Staff Gen. Ray Odierno said at the AUSA Institute of Land Warfare Global Force Symposium and Exposition here. He amplified the dangers he sees now and ahead, particularly with the effects of sequestration. "Today our nation is facing enormous challenges. I believe we are at a strategic inflection point," Odierno said. "Our nation is facing determined enemies across the globe that have the desire, the capabilities and with increasing capacity to threaten not only our security, but the security of our allies. We continue to witness change in velocity of instability, unforeseen just a few years ago."…….
TF members --

1. **Task Force Meeting This Week** – The next meeting of the Florida Defense Support Task Force will be this week on Thursday, **April 16, 2015 at the Doubletree Hotel, 101 S. Adams St., Tallahassee, FL** beginning at 9:00 AM.


3. **FY 2015-2016 Task Force Grant Application Released** – The FY 2015-2016 Task Force Grant Application was released and posted to the web site. Deadline for submissions is April 24, 2015. Task Force members should expect to be contacted about sponsoring applications. The Task Force meeting on May 21, 2015 will consider and decide on the grant proposals.

4. **Highlighted 2015 Military/Defense Legislation** -- **SB 7028/HB 35 - Relating to Out-of-State Fee Waivers for Veterans and Dependents** – 2015. SB 7028 and HB 0035 passed through all committees and are now headed to the floor of both chambers. Expect both to pass. This bill amends the Congressman C.W. “Bill” Young Veteran Tuition Waiver Program to allow additional persons to be eligible for the out-of-state tuition fee waiver currently afforded to honorably discharged veterans residing in Florida and enrolled in a state university, Florida College System institution, career center operated by a school district, or charter technical career center. The bill requires a state university, Florida College System institution, career center operated by a school district, or charter technical career center to waive out-of-state fees for any person who is receiving educational assistance through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and who physically resides in Florida while enrolled in the institution. **This addition allows individuals, such as a spouse or child of a veteran or servicemember using GI Bill benefits, to qualify for in-state tuition rates.**

5. **Attachments** –
Regards, BG.

Bruce Grant
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, FLORIDA DEFENSE SUPPORT TASK FORCE

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Articles of Interest:
BRAC –

Not Clear What Hoops DOD Needs to Jump through to Gain BRAC Approval


Defense Communities 360 © April 8, 2015

It’s no secret that most lawmakers are adamantly opposed to additional base closures and even after the Obama administration in February made its fourth request since 2012 for permission to hold a new BRAC round, it’s not clear that the Pentagon has made any headway with Congress. In fact, it’s difficult to find any lawmaker who will stand up for BRAC. In a story about the growing imbalance between DOD’s infrastructure and its force structure, Federal News Radio contacted six lawmakers who previously had said they would consider the department’s request to consolidate its infrastructure. None, however, agreed to comment for the story. During Capitol Hill hearings last month, John Conger, acting assistant secretary of defense for energy, installations and environment, acknowledged that Congress likely wouldn’t green light a new round unless the department updates the legislation authorizing a new round. “I think it goes without saying that there were a sufficient number of criticisms about the last BRAC round that Congress will want to have different authorizing legislation if they’re going to give us BRAC authority again,” Conger told the web site…….

DOD Budget–

Reliance on War Funding Account Allows Congress, DOD to Postpone Defense Reforms

http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/reliance-on-war-funding-account-allows-congress-dod-to-postpone-defense-reforms/#

Defense Communities 360 © April 6, 2015

The ability of Congress and the Pentagon to stash spending in the military’s war funding account and sidestep the statutory spending limits sabotages the budget caps’ role in forcing officials to confront difficult decisions, a panel of experts said Friday at an event hosted by the Stimson Center. The department’s overseas operations account (OCO) is —budgetary disaster which
leads you to expect resources to continue to be available when they probably will not be,” said Gordon Adams, who managed national security budgets at the Office of Management and Budget during the Clinton administration…….

House Panel to Mark up Milcon Spending Bill Next Week


Defense Communities 360 © April 9, 2015

House Appropriations subcommittees are expected to mark up two fiscal 2016 spending bills next week including military construction-veterans affairs, reported CQ. With the FY 2016 budget resolutions passed last month by the House and Senate sticking to the Budget Control Act caps for defense and non-defense spending, a combined $1.017 trillion, the allocation for the milcon spending measure shouldn’t vary much from the current year’s level. Both chambers‘ resolutions stuffed $38 billion in extra funds into DOD’s war funding account as a way to sidestep the statutory spending caps, though, so appropriators could opt to allocate some of the additional funds to military construction needs. By moving the milcon spending measure early, House Republicans could be confronting President Obama to veto a popular bill. The White House has indicated the president would not sign any appropriations bills that don’t exceed the mandated budget caps, putting the president on a collision course with the GOP. In the absence of a spending deal between congressional Republicans and the White House, the FY 2016 appropriations process could be easily derailed, according to the story. The other spending measure expected to be taken up next week is energy-water. Both spending bills could reach the House floor before the end of the month.

House set for 'open mic' on military


The Hill © April 12, 2015

By Martin Matishak
Think of it as the "open mic night" of defense spending. Every member of the House will have the chance on Tuesday to make recommendations for what should be in this year's defense policy bill, which is produced by members of the House Armed Services Committee. The annual "Member Day," which is held like a regular, multi-panel hearing, gives lawmakers who do not sit on the panel the opportunity to advocate for military concerns back in their districts, such as supporting a base or keeping funding for a weapons program. The event was started so that every lawmaker would have a chance to make the case for "why they wanted things in the bill. And we would listen to them as long as they came," said former Armed Services chairman Buck McKeon (R-Calif.), who began the tradition and retired at the end of the last Congress. Likewise, panel members know they had "better pay attention because sometime in the future, the tables could be reversed," McKeon told The Hill.

Kendall Reviewing Thornberry Reform Bill


Defense News © April 10, 2015

By John T. Bennett And Aaron Mehta

The Pentagon's top weapons buyer supports most of a House acquisition-reform bill, but he hopes to convince its sponsor to alter a section that would give military officials more power. Defense Department officials submitted a number of ideas about changing the military's acquisition process to House Armed Services Committee Chairman Mac Thornberry, R-Texas, said Frank Kendall, undersecretary of defense for acquisition. And "the vast majority of which were included in the bill that he proposed," Kendall said of the HASC chairman's legislation. "He's got a lot of other things in there that we're in the process of reviewing," Kendall said of Thornberry's reform bill, which was introduced late last month. "We're going to give him some comments........
Ve have had an extremely busy month, most recently returning home from a successful Florida Spa
irrounding Florida’s Space Industry was both refreshing and promising for our state. Following the I
cieved from Florida and Israeli companies and are currently being evaluated by Space Florida and I:
of key projects, events and launches for our industry. We are ramping up for our 6thAnnual Planetz
ant High School in Plant City, Florida. This is always a fun event that gets our future Florida-based s
ient pursuits at the largest space conference in the world, the 31st Annual Space Symposium in Col
I would like to congratulate everyone at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, the 45th Space Wing and
unches in April and we are excited to have Space Florida-enabled launch infrastructures rapidly ap
busiest spaceport.

Team Orlando –

**NSA hosts meeting for Florida’s Governor and base commanders**


Base commanders representing military installations throughout Florida met with Governor Rick Scott at Naval Support Activity Orlando on March 12. Demonstrating the unique partnership between the military services’ modeling and simulation agencies and the University of Central Florida, NSA Orlando Commanding Officer, Capt. Wes Naylor hosted the periodic meeting in the Partnership III Building adjacent to NSA Orlando. Governor Rick Scott is welcomed to Orlando by Capt. Wes Naylor; Florida Air National Guard Maj. Gen. Emmett Titshaw (Florida Adjutant General); and Florida National Guard Maj. Gen. Michael Calhoun. Governor Rick Scott, and the Adjutant General of Florida, Major General Emmett R. Titshaw Jr., hold base commanders meetings approximately three times a year, giving military leaders direct access to
Florida’s governor and leaders from key state agencies. Each meeting is held on a different installation and covers items of interest to Florida’s military community. During his remarks, Scott said he wants to make Florida as military friendly as possible. Reflecting upon his Navy service as an enlisted Sailor during the early 1970’s, Scott said that where he was stationed—there were signs that said “dogs and Sailors keep off the grass”. It was not a time that people were happy with the war (in Vietnam) or people in military service.”

MacDill AFB –

Congressional delegation reviews strategy at MacDill AFB

http://tbo.com/list/military-news/congressional-delegation-reviews-strategy-at-macdill-20150406/?page=1

Tampa Tribune © April 7, 2015

By Howard Altman

Two members of the Tampa area’s congressional delegation held a “strategy session” with officials at MacDill Air Force Base today with an eye toward adding more aircraft and infrastructure. U.S. Reps. Kathy Castor (D-Tampa) and David Jolly (R-Pinellas) met with wing commanders at MacDill to talk about on base requirements like infrastructure updates needed for the new KC-135 tanker aircraft scheduled to arrive at MacDill starting in 2017, as well as expanded base housing and relocated Army Reserve helicopter units, according to a release from Castor’s office. —A year ago, the Tampa Bay community learned that the MacDill Means Mobility bipartisan initiative launched years ago was successful in elevating our base’s profile and as a result, eight refueling tanker aircraft, attendant jobs and infrastructure are on course for our base,” Castor said. —Since that announcement, my congressional colleagues in Tampa Bay and I have had multiple meetings and discussions with military commanders and leaders in Washington, D.C. as well as in Tampa to ensure MacDill is in the best position to serve these additional aircraft and grow a talented workforce. Today’s visit provided an opportunity for Rep. Jolly and I to hear and view firsthand the needs of the base to ensure that we are advocating in the most effective way possible in Washington.”
Eglin AFB –

Pratt & Whitney Rolls Out Engine Fix to F-35 Fighter Fleet


Aviation News © April 6, 2015

By Bill Carey

Pratt & Whitney is installing a retrofit in its F135 engine to repair the problem that prevented the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter from making its international debut last summer. It expects to complete the fix fleetwide by early next year. An engine fire in an F-35A that was preparing to take off for a training mission at Eglin Air Force Base, Fla., last June caused the Pentagon to ground the entire fleet, preventing the F-35’s planned international debut the following month at both the Royal International Air Tattoo and the Farnborough Airshow in the UK. The new time and place of that debut remain unannounced. Speaking with reporters in Washington, D.C., on March 24, show organizers said they do not expect the F-35 to appear at the Paris Air Show in June………

NS Mayport –

New Captain For USS Gettysburg

Capt. John Schmidt relieved Capt. Brad Cooper as Commanding Officer of the Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Gettysburg (CG 64) in a ceremony held at Naval Station Mayport on March 27. During Capt. Cooper's tour, Gettysburg was deployed for nine months to the Fifth and Sixth Fleet areas of responsibility as the Air and Missile Defense Commander for the Harry S. Truman Carrier Strike Group. During this period, the crew performed magnificently and was recognized with both the 2013 and 2014 "Battle E" awards, as well as all five Command Excellence Awards. The crew was also recognized with the Retention Excellence Award and the Unit Tactics Award in back-to-back years; the 2014 CNO Project Good Neighbor Award for top community service program in the Navy; and, the 2014 award for Best Workforce Development Program in the U.S. government.

Researcher awarded for chronicle of modern-day Mayport


Lyn Corley set out to uncover the truth of Jean Ribault's long-ago visit to Jacksonville, but what she found far outweighed her expectations. Instead, she discovered a community anchored by its past and still struggling to navigate the unruly waters of its future. A community, she said, comprised of men and women who stood up and fought for their piece of Duval County and, in essence, their way of life. The people she met were more than willing to accept her as one of their own, and even more willing to share with her the everyday struggles and joys of life on the St. Johns River. Her detailed records, "Conversations from Mayport," now sit in the Florida Historical Society archives.

Tyndall AFB –
2015 Gulf Coast Salute features Thunderbirds, Army Golden Knights


The News-Herald © April 9, 2015

By JAN WADDY

The U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds, U.S. Air Force F-22 Raptor Aerial Demo Team, and the U.S. Army Golden Knights are taking flight over Tyndall Air Force Base this weekend during the Gulf Coast Salute, and you are invited to see — and hear — the spectacular display of strength. The Air Show and Open House at Tyndall, home to more than 5,000 Airmen, will feature aerial maneuvers, as well as a ground demonstration of a weapons load onto an aircraft twice daily. The Thunderbirds, the U.S. Air Force’s premier air demonstration squadron and main recruiting team, will perform aerobatic formations in six F-16C Fighting Falcons. “It’s good to see the main recruiting team and pride of the Air Force and the U.S. Army Golden Knights. It’s a unique opportunity to see both of them together,” said 2015 Gulf Coast Salute Chairman Maj. Gregory Preisser……..

Thousands Attend Gulf Coast Salute Air Show

http://www.wjhg.com/home/headlines/Gulf-Coast-Salute-Takes-off--299464931.html

WJHG © April 11, 2015

By: Samantha Read

Saturday was the first day of the long awaited Gulf Coast Salute, which took place at Tyndall Air Force Base. It has been four years since the last air show. Thousands of community members, and dozens of vendors were set up inside the base. Even though the weather was a little wet, that didn't dampen anyone's spirits. There was a 90 minute delay, but once the weather cleared up, everyone enjoyed the show. Two of the popular acts were the Thunderbird's and the F-22 Raptor Aerial Demo team……..
Avon Park Air Force Range –

**AP Air Force Range involved in $150 million construction contract**


Highlands Today © April 13, 2015

By Gary Pinnell

The Avon Park Bombing Range and MacDill Air Force Base have been awarded a $150 million contract by the Department of Defense, but don’t expect to see massive construction projects. “It provides a vehicle for us and MacDill to complete maintenance, repair and minor construction requirements,” said Buck MacLaughlin, director of operations. “The $150 million figure defines the scope of the entire contract, and does not represent actual funding or the cost of any particular project.” Six construction companies, including ABBA Construction in Jacksonville, Nelson Construction in Palm Harbor, R.M. Williams Construction in Tampa, Bay Area Building solutions in Clearwater, and Danner Construction in Tampa, were pre-approved to design and build as-needed construction projects until April 2020. “No funds are being obligated at the time of award,” the DOD said……..

NAS Pensacola –

**Katie Higgins, first female Blue Angels pilot, takes to the sky in C-130 ‘Fat Albert’**


Pensacola Today © April 12, 2015

by Ron Stallcup
Captain Katie Higgins is a native of Severna Park, Maryland, and graduated from W.T. Woodson High School in 2004. She attended the U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland, graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Political Science in 2008, and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the U.S. Marine Corps. Katie then attended Georgetown University, Washington, D.C., and graduated with a Masters of Arts in International Security in 2009. Katie reported to Naval Air Station (NAS) Pensacola, Florida, for aviation indoctrination in November 2009. She completed primary flight training in the T-6B Texan II at NAS Whiting Field, Florida, and completed intermediate and advanced training in the T-44 Pegasus while assigned to Training Squadron 31 (VT-31) at NAS Corpus Christi, Texas. She received her wings of gold in October 2011………

NAS Whiting Field –

Santa Rosa expands Whiting Field buffer


Pensacola News-Journal © April 9,2015

By Kaycee Lagarde,

With more than 1,300 acres acquired around Whiting Field Naval Air Station since 2001, Santa Rosa County has no plans to slow down its quest for land to protect operations at the base — the busiest air station in the world. On Thursday the county approved adding about 330 acres of conservation easements adjacent to the base — a $650,000, 249-acre parcel and a $200,000, 80-acre parcel, funded through Florida Defense Infrastructure Grants. Another 2,000 or so acres are also being sought pending negotiations with landowners. And with up to 10,000 available acres surrounding the Milton complex, there's no end in sight for increasing the land buffer to safeguard one of the county's greatest assets, which brings in about a $1.1 billion economic impact annually………..
Other Items of Interest –

Texas Communities Await Verdict on Sequestration, Army Downsizing

http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/texas-communities-await-verdict-on-sequestration-army-downsizing/?utm_source=dc360&utm_campaign=5c7ad61019-RSS_dc360EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_04f8ff45e8-5c7ad61019-55784537&ct=t%28RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN%29#

Defense Communities 360 © April 6, 2015

Local officials throughout Texas are increasingly alarmed about the prospect that stringent caps on Pentagon spending first imposed in 2013 will remain in place through the end of the decade. Already, defense communities in Texas have been hurt by the furlough of civilian workers, the loss of active-duty personnel and attrition in civilian personnel, reported the San Antonio Express-News. On the immediate horizon is an Army determination expected this summer on how it will allocate the elimination of up to 70,000 active-duty troops by fiscal 2020. Forts Hood and Bliss, and Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston potentially could lose thousands of soldiers and civilian workers, but advocates for each of those posts believe the strong level of support provided by their host communities should shield them from the worst cuts……..

New US Navy Fleet Goal: 308 Ships


Defense News © April 5, 2015

By Christopher P. Cavas

The US Navy is now building towards a fleet goal of 308 ships, according to the latest 30-year shipbuilding plan — a small evolution from the previously-cited 306-ship target. The two ships added to the fleet total are a 12th LPD 17-class amphibious transport dock and a third Afloat Forward Staging Base (AFSB). The addition of the LPD and AFSB to the fleet objectives mean the number of amphibious warfare ships has grown from 33 to 34 ships, along with the same
growth in the number of support vessels — 33 to 34 ships. The changes are detailed in the annual
30-year shipbuilding report — formally called the "annual long-range plan for construction of
naval vessels" — that was sent to Congress April 2. Prepared by the Navy, the report was signed
out to Congress by Deputy Defense Secretary Robert Work……..

This single Pentagon program is going to upend the combat jet industry

http://fortune.com/2015/03/05/long-range-strike-bomber/

Fortune © March 5, 2015

By Clay Dillow

If you only watch one thing in the defense sector this year, watch the U.S. Department of
Defense’s Long Range Strike Bomber competition. For all the talk of shrinking global defense
budgets and sequestration, the U.S. military’s three prime combat aircraft contractors—
Lockheed Martin, Boeing, and Northrop Grumman—have enjoyed a good run of late, with each
company’s stock currently bumping up against its 52-week high. But don’t expect the smooth
sailing to last, says one prominent industry analyst. A U.S. Air Force contract set to be awarded
this summer is set to upend the status quo, likely leading to a major move by one of the top three
contractors to acquire a piece of another, says Richard Aboulafia, vice president for analysis at
aerospace and defense consultancy Teal Group. In other words, if you only pay attention to one
thing in the defense space this year, keep a watchful eye on the Pentagon’s Long Range Strike-
Bomber (LRS-B) decision………..

Army’s McMaster talks about the human domain of war at USF conference

http://tbo.com/list/military-news/armys-mcmaster-talks-about-the-human-domain-of-war-at-usf-
conference-20150407/

Tampa Tribune © April 7, 2015

By Howard Altman

Assigned the task of helping the Army divine future wars and how to win them, Lt. Gen. H.R.
McMaster, who sports a doctorate degree in military history, likes to quote authors and
academics to explain his job. Director of the Army Capabilities and Integration Center and
Deputy Commanding General at the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, McMaster
quotes Ray Bradbury to make a point about military deterrence. He quotes C. Vann Woodward to explain the precarious situation the U.S. finds itself in these days in a very complex world. And he quotes Sir Michael Howard to show why it is important to look ahead at conflicts yet to be. Bradbury, for instance, was not trying to predict the future with Fahrenheit 451, his novel about a totalitarian state, says McMaster, who will be in Tampa tomorrow to speak at the University of South Florida’s Global Initiative on Civil Society and Conflict. ―Hell no,‖ McMaster quotes the author. ―I'm trying to prevent it.”…….

Pentagon Begins Better Buying Power 3.0

http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/policy-budget/budget/2015/04/09/better-buying-power-3-launches/25519245/

Defense News © April 9, 2015

By Aaron Mehta

After months of expectation, Pentagon officials ordered the implementation of Better Buying Power 3.0 Thursday afternoon. Pentagon acquisition head Frank Kendall released the implementation instructions for the acquisition reform effort, which has the overarching theme of "achieving dominant capabilities through technical excellence and innovation." In real terms, that means BBP 3.0 is focused on maintaining the Pentagon's technological superiority over near-peer competitors such as China. As the introduction to the guidance states, "potential adversaries are challenging the US lead in conventional military capability in ways not seen since the Cold War. Our technological superiority is based on the effectiveness of our research and development efforts." .........

DoD pushing to consolidate military stores, sources say


Military Times © April 9, 2015

By Karen Jowers
Pentagon officials have called military resale officials to Washington next week to discuss consolidation of the commissary and exchange systems — and the emphasis seems to be more on "how" rather than "if," according to numerous sources. It is unclear just how far the consolidation idea has gone to date, but the sources said Defense Department leaders want to push forward on the concept, which was recently recommended by the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission. One source said his understanding is that exchange officials are being called to Washington to review DoD's plans for implementing the commission's recommendations for combining exchange and commissary operations………..

AF's unfunded list includes aircraft modernization, more Reapers

http://www.militarytimes.com/story/military/2015/04/10/air-force-unfunded-list-full/25470963/

Military Times © April 10, 2015

By Brian Everstine

The Air Force has released its full breakdown of unfunded priorities for 2016, with aircraft repairs and modernization making up most of the bill, including even funds for some aircraft the service is attempting to retire. The services on March 27 provided a cost breakdown of programs that didn't make their budget requests, which lawmakers can attempt to include in the defense authorization bill. Defense Secretary Ash Carter, in a letter to lawmakers, said the budget request includes programs deemed more important than those in the unfunded list. Carter said he "does not endorse any of these additional priorities unless enacted funding exceeds the amount requested in the president's budget for 2016."………..

N.C. Communities Request State Funding to Support Military Facilities

http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/n-c-communities-request-state-funding-to-support-military-facilities/?utm_source=dc360&utm_campaign=3f0a4fbba9-RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_04f8ff45e8-3f0a4fbba9-55784537&ct=t%28RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN%29#

Defense Communities 360 © April 12, 2015
Five defense communities in North Carolina have joined forces to pursue $1 million from Gov. Pat McCrory (R) to support their efforts to combat encroachment, invest in regional infrastructure and form partnerships with neighboring installations. Havelock Mayor Will Lewis spearheaded the collaboration, which includes Jacksonville, home to Camp Lejeune and Marine Corps Air Station New River; Goldsboro, home to Seymour Johnson AFB; Fayetteville, home to Fort Bragg/Pope Field; and Elizabeth City, home to the U.S. Coast Guard. “Every municipality that is next to an installation has things that they spend money on to support the citizens on that installation that we don’t really get a tax base from,” Lewis told Havelock News. “We’d do it no matter what, but it would be nice if the state would recognize that and participate with us to make sure we’re doing what we need to around the installations,” he said……

Nuclear Navy boss seen as a top CNO candidate


Defense News © April 12, 2015

By David Larter

The Navy's top nuke could switch to its top officer. Seen until recently as a dark-horse candidate, Adm. John Richardson, director of Naval Reactors, has emerged as a leading candidate to become the chief of naval operations when fellow submariner Adm. Jon Greenert's term ends later this year. Four sources with ties to senior leaders say that Greenert is supportive of Richardson becoming CNO, though it would be the first time a Naval Reactors director switched to the CNO job. The eight-year NR billet is unlike any other in the military. Its longevity is designed to ensure continuity and exacting oversight the nuclear reactors that power submarines and aircraft carriers and the sailors who operate them………
TF members --

1. **Next Task Force Meeting** – The next meeting of the Florida Defense Support Task Force will be on Thursday, **May 21, 2015 at the Doubletree Hotel, 101 S. Adams St., Tallahassee, FL** beginning at 9:00 AM.

2. **FY 2015-2016 Task Force Grants** – The FY 2015-2016 Task Force Grant Application has been released and the deadline for submissions is April 24, 2015. Task Force members should expect to be contacted about sponsoring applications. The Task Force meeting on May 21, 2015 will consider and decide on the grant proposals.

3. **Attachments** –
   - Highlights of State Support for Defense Installations (Nationwide)
   - Public Private Partnerships – Five Principles
   - Notes from Congresswoman Graham’s remarks to the HASC – re: Gulf Ranges

Regards, BG.

**Bruce Grant**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, FLORIDA DEFENSE SUPPORT TASK FORCE

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Articles of Interest:

BRAC –

O’Rourke: Explore options before troop cuts

http://www.elpasoinc.com/news/local_news/article_5a0bb62a-e1ec-11e4-a17f-6f1a6c5d6217.html#.VSwZn4JnXDO.twitter

El Paso, Inc. © April 13, 2015

By Robert Gray

For years, U.S. defense officials have asked lawmakers to give them permission to conduct a new round of base closures in 2017, saying the Pentagon could save billions by shedding empty facilities and unnecessary real estate. But closing facilities could also mean money and job losses in lawmakers’ home districts. So each time the Pentagon has asked, Congress has responded the same way: No. Yet U.S. Rep. Beto O’Rourke, a Democrat whose district includes El Paso and Fort Bliss, is among the few lawmakers who think it’s time for the Pentagon to launch another round of Base Realignment and Closure, or BRAC. “It is hugely unpopular in Congress because everyone runs a risk in a BRAC round of losing,” O’Rourke said. ………
Nation Can’t Afford to Punt on BRAC, Texas Lawmaker Says


Defense Communities 360 © April 13, 2015

Count Texas Rep. Beto O’Rourke (D) as one of the few lawmakers willing to let the Pentagon launch a sixth round of base closures. For the second-term lawmaker, the logic is relatively simple — with new threats emerging across the globe, DOD should be allowed to save money from weapons and installations it no longer needs so it can afford to preserve its existing end strength. —What you shouldn’t cut are personnel,” O’Rourke, a member of the House Armed Services Committee, told El Paso Inc. He certainly understands why BRAC is hugely unpopular in Congress, but lawmakers can’t afford to ignore officials saying the military has about 20 percent excess infrastructure capacity. —I don’t want to continue to subsidize bases and installations that are not performing,” he said……..

House Milcon Panel Calls for BRAC Justification Study

http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/house-milcon-panel-calls-for-brac-justification-study/?utm_source=dc360&utm_campaign=29ff1f189f-RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_04f8ff45e8-29ff1f189f-55784537&ct=t%28RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN%29#

Defense Communities 360 © April 21, 2015

The House Military Construction-Veterans Affairs Appropriations Subcommittee is directing the Defense Department to conduct a study to determine whether a new round of base closures is necessary, as part of its fiscal 2016 spending bill. The panel directs DOD to report by the end of the year its —initial assessment of excess inventory and cost personnel associated with that,” reported the Tampa Tribune. Florida Rep. David Jolly (R) told the paper he supports the provision calling for a BRAC justification study and isn’t hesitant to consider the administration’s request to hold a base closure round in 2017. —We have too much cement,” he said citing the department’s assessment that it has a surplus of capacity of more than 20 percent. Jolly said he believes that MacDill Air Force Base and the Tampa area would benefit from another BRAC round. The installation hosts Special Operations Command, Central Command and other joint commands, along with two refueling wings, putting it in a favorable position to gain additional missions. The $94 million in construction projects at MacDill included in the
milcon spending bill is another good sign for the installation, he said. The full Appropriations Committee is scheduled to mark up the milcon bill on Wednesday.

FDSTF –

In Memoriam: Retired Rear Admiral Kevin Francis Delaney


Florida Times-Union © April 15, 2015

From Staff

Retired Rear Adm. Kevin Francis Delaney, 68, of Jacksonville passed away on April 7, 2015, following a lengthy illness. He is the son of Mildred Keyo Delaney and John V. Delaney. He is survived by his wife Pat, to whom he was married for 46 years; daughters Kelly Delaney (Laird), Diana Delaney McNulty (Barry) and Seana Delaney McAfee (Matthew) as well as five grandsons Stuart Delaney McAfee, Connor Delaney McNulty, Kevin Coleman McAfee, Sean Delaney McNulty and Robert Patrick McAfee. A native of Wolcott, Conn., Delaney received a congressional appointment to the U.S. Naval Academy and reported immediately after graduation from Wolcott High School in June 1964.

He graduated in June 1968, with a Bachelor’s of Science in Engineering, as a member of the 9th Company, and three days later married his wife, Pat, in Philadelphia, Pa. He reported to NAS Pensacola in July 1968, to commence flight training and received his wings of gold as a naval aviator in August 1969. In December 1969, Delaney reported to his first operational assignment with the famed Navy –Seawolves” of Helicopter Attack (Light) Squadron Three in the Republic of Vietnam where he flew helicopter gunships on 686 combat missions in support of Navy riverine forces and SEAL units in the Mekong Delta.

Delaney served in a total of six operational aircraft squadrons, had multiple major staff assignments and was air boss on USS Guadacanal off the coast of Beirut. Delaney had six command tours including two aviation squadrons, an aircraft wing and NAS Jacksonville. Under his command, NAS Jacksonville was selected as the Navy’s top shore installation in 1991. He
also served as Commander, Naval Shore Activities, U.S. Atlantic Fleet and was the first Director of Shore Installation Management on the CNO’s staff.

Just prior to his retirement, he served as the Navy’s Regional Commander for the Southeastern United States and the Caribbean where he was responsible for over 40 commands, including 14 major naval installations.

Of the 98 awards and decorations he received over the course of his career, 64 were for combat action and include the Silver Star Medal, Distinguished Flying Cross, 11 Single Action Air Medals, 26 Strike/ Fight Air Medals and six Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Crosses. He was also awarded the Navy Distinguished Service Medal and four awards of the Legion of Merit.

Delaney earned a Master’s Degree in Business from George Washington University and graduated from the Armed Forces Staff College. He completed advanced post-graduate studies at MIT and Harvard. He was also a Federal Executive Fellow at the Brookings Institution.

After his navy retirement, he worked in the private sector for three years. He founded a consulting firm that specialized in assisting small and medium businesses, particularly those that were veteran owned.

Over the past 19 years, Delaney served on the boards of 19 area non-profit organizations in Northeast Florida. He was the past chairman of the Ronald McDonald House Advisory Board, past president of the Florida State College of Jacksonville Foundation, a two-term member of the Board of Trustees of both Jacksonville University and Florida State College, past president of the Rotary Club of Jacksonville and a Paul Harris Fellow.

He was the past chairman and past president of the Northeast Florida Safety Council, past chairman of the United Way of Northeast Florida and was chairman of the United Way of Northeast Florida’s 2001-2002 Campaign. In 2005, he served as chairman of the Jacksonville Beaches Chamber of Commerce.

Delaney was recognized by the Jacksonville Business Journal as one of Jacksonville’s 10 most influential business leaders of the decade (1990-2000).

In August 2008, he was appointed to a second two-year term on the U.S. Small Business Administration’s National Advisory Council. He was currently serving a third term on the National Board of Directors of The Wounded Warrior Project.

Delaney was appointed by the Governor of Florida to serve on the Florida Defense Support Task Force.

In 2014, he was honored by the Small Business Administration as the “Veteran Small Business Champion of the Year” for the State of Florida, and as the 2014 Veteran of Influence. Delaney was honored by the Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce in 2014, as the most influential veteran, and he was installed as the very first member of their Military Hall of Fame.
A memorial mass will be held at St. Edward’s Catholic Chapel aboard NAS Jacksonville on April 20, 2015 at 10 a.m. All guests are welcome to attend the memorial service.

Those attending the service at NAS Jacksonville should proceed via the Birmingham Gate – the gate closest to I-295. If you do not have a military ID card, you are kindly asked to register your attendance at 904.542.5588 or email: nasjaxpao@navy.mil, in order to expedite your access to the base. All personnel entering NAS Jacksonville are required to present a valid photo ID. Please plan on arriving 45 minutes early to avoid delays at the gate. In lieu of flowers, you are encouraged to make a contribution to K-9s for Warriors, 260 S. Roscoe Blvd, Ponte Vedra, Fla. 32082, The Wounded Warrior Project, or First Coast No More Homeless Pets, 6817 Norwood Ave, Jacksonville, Fla. 32208. A private family interment will be held at Jacksonville National Cemetery. Arrangements are under the care and direction of Hardage-Gidden’s Chapel Hills Funeral Home.

In death, retired NAS Jacksonville commanding officer remembered for more than military career


Jacksonville Business Journal © April 17, 2015

By Jensen Werley

Rear Admiral Kevin Delaney passed away on April 7. He will be remembered for his outstanding military career as commanding officer at Naval Air Station Jacksonville. When asked about Kevin Delaney, family friend Joey Walker ends nearly every anecdote with, “and that's my favorite memory of him.” Hearing the stories of Rear Admiral Delaney — who died April 7 at age 68 after a battle with cancer — it's easy to see how Walker can't just choose one. “I can't even begin to tell you how special a man he was,” Walker said, who is acting as spokesman for the Delaney family after the passing of the former Naval Air Station Jacksonville commanding officer. “He was a decorated naval aviator and his heart was huge for the city of Jacksonville. He was just a special man.”

DOD Budget—
The sequestration monster myth

http://www.politico.com/story/2015/04/sequestration-ash-carter-congress-defense-pentagon-116899.html#ixzz3XH5gaw8J

Politico © April 13, 2015

By Jeremy Herb

Defense Secretary Ash Carter warns that sequestration will make the nation “less secure.” Sen. John McCain says it will set the military “on a far more dangerous course.” And Joint Chiefs Chairman Gen. Martin Dempsey says it will prompt “a dramatic change in how we protect our nation.” There’s just one problem: The sequestration monster lurking around the corner isn’t really coming. Yes, the Pentagon is at risk of seeing its fiscal 2016 budget reduced by tens of billions of dollars as a result of the spending limits under the 2011 Budget Control Act. But the prospect of sequestration — across-the-board cuts reaching almost every nook and cranny of the Pentagon — is nearly as remote as the possibility of the Loch Ness monster showing up on the Senate floor. . . .

Under Budget Pressure, Sea Services Find Ways to Cut Costs

http://www.nationaldefensemagazine.org/blog/Lists/Posts/Post.aspx?List=7c996cd7-cbb4-4018-baf8-8825eada7aa2&ID=1797&RootFolder=%2Fblog%2FLists%2FPosts

National Defense Magazine © April 13, 2015

By Allyson Versprille

Budget pressures are forcing the sea services to get more creative. The Navy, Coast Guard and Marine Corps have curtailed modernization efforts and cut personnel. But there is an upside to austerity, service chiefs said April 13 at the Navy League’s 2015 Sea-Air-Space Exposition. One area of opportunity is recruitment. With smaller forces, the services can be more selective when enlisting new members. “We’re recruiting high quality people right now,” said Gen. Joseph Dunford, commandant of the Marine Corps.
“I think we’re actually going to be able to take advantage of the drawdown from 202,000 down to 182,000 to be a bit more selective.” ………..

This Week, House Will Spend A Low-Profile $96 Billion On Military Wish Lists of Unneeded Weapons


Forbes © April 12, 2015

By Charles Tiefer

Starting this week, the House of Representatives’ Armed Services Committee will write the FY2016 defense policy bill. Unleashed from past constraints, it has gotten a $96 billion “below-the-radar” fund for spending even beyond its quite generous $523 billion in regular money. Key source of items: the unneeded weapons on the military’s wish lists. Major media and the public do not follow this. The Congressional budget resolution, very recently worked out between House and Senate Republicans, seems too technical, and its execution seems far off. And, low-profile defense spending aspects are not “sexy.” However, the budget resolution gave the store away — not far off, but right now — to the eager-spending House Armed Services Committee………..

Compromise Budget Resolution Unlikely to Clarify Fate of Spending Caps

http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/compromise-budget-resolution-unlikely-to-clarify-fate-of-spending-caps/?utm_source=dc360&utm_campaign=72604c68bc-RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_04f8ff45e8-72604c68bc-55784537&ct=t%28RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN%29#

Defense Communities 360 © April 13, 2015

An amendment to the Senate version of the fiscal 2016 budget resolution calling for relief from the statutory spending caps for defense and non-defense spending over the next two years is unlikely to be included in the compromise resolution the two chambers are expected to hash out over the coming weeks. The amendment, introduced by Virginia Sen. Tim Kaine (D) and passed with the support of four Republicans, called for replacing $148 billion in spending cuts in fiscal 2016 and 2017 with alternative offsets not yet specified over the 10-year budget window,
reported CQ. As talks get under way over a compromise budget, conservative groups are pushing back against the provision because it would reverse the Budget Control Act spending caps. The fight over relaxing the caps is part of the larger budget battle between right wing champions of the spending limits and defense hawks……….

**Defense bill's lesser provisions may have big impact**


Military Times © April 14, 2015

By Leo Shane III

One lawmaker wants safer cockpit door locks for the civilian planes that transport troops. Another wants to let service members carry private weapons on base. Several others want easier regulations on small-business owners bidding on defense contracts. And they all want their proposals included in the upcoming 2016 National Defense Authorization Act, the massive annual budget legislation that is just starting to come into focus. Each year, the bill sets spending guidelines for thousands of critical Pentagon priorities, but also includes a host of smaller, sometimes controversial policy changes. The House Armed Services Committee will unveil its first drafts of the expected $600 billion-plus measure next week, outlining goals for annual endeavors such as setting the military basic pay raise, retiring and preserving various aircraft, and reforming the defense acquisition process. ………

**Medical Leaders Warn of 2016 Sequestration Effects**


DOD News © April 14, 2015

By Terri Moon Cronk

The president’s fiscal year 2016 defense budget proposal supports the Military Health Systems‘ core values, Air Force Lt. Gen. (Dr.) Douglas J. Robb, director of the Defense Health Agency, told the House Appropriations Committee’s defense subcommittee today. Joined by the Navy,
Army and Air Force surgeons general, Robb said the core values of the MHS strategy include improved readiness, better health, better care and a financially responsible stewardship. —The [budget proposal] assures the department will continue to provide one of the most comprehensive health benefits offered in this country,” Robb said. But while the three services‘ integrated medical practices that formed DHA have already saved the military $236 million in its first year of operation, Robb said, the return of sequestration in 2016 could cause significant harm……..

Providing for the Common Defense: The military needs relief from sequestration and reinvestment, not a short-term budget fix


US News © April 17, 2015

By Rachel Hoff

As Congress returned from recess this week, passing a budget was high on the to-do list – but the April 15 deadline to do so came and went. The last time Congress passed a full-fledged budget was 2009, when Democrats had the majority in the first year of the Obama administration. Now that Republicans control both chambers, they hope to lead Congress in doing its job again by passing a budget and appropriations bills. Since the House and Senate passed fairly similar budget resolutions last month, reconciling the two versions may seem to be an easy job. That has been far from true, however, as negotiators continue to face major problems over one important issue: defense spending. Both the House and Senate budget resolutions adhered to the spending caps mandated by the 2011 Budget Control Act, which restrict funding for the Department of Defense to $499 billion for fiscal year 2016, almost 15 percent less than the Pentagon’s budget five years ago. This base budget number fell $35 billion short of President Barack Obama’s request for Defense Department funding……..

Senate Defense hawks pressure Boehner on Pentagon spending

Senators from both parties who want to do away with a ceiling on Pentagon spending are coalescing around building to a strong vote in the Senate that might put pressure on the House to take action. Pro-defense lawmakers think there's a much better chance of getting the Senate to increase defense spending. A flurry of deal-making in the last few weeks has bolstered hopes, and reminded senators of their ability to reach across the aisle. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) also is viewed as willing to defer to his chairmen — if they have a deal. In stark contrast, raising spending caps is not seen as a priority for Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio), who also must watch out for a right flank that is passionate about cutting spending. –He says, "You got to cut spending, you got to cut spending." He's not only not enthusiastic, he's fundamentally opposed. That's a problem,” one Republican senator said of Boehner.

House Appropriators Plan to Allocate Extra War Funds

The House Appropriations Committee plans to allocate the $38 billion in funding added to DOD's overseas contingency operations (OCO) account in an effort to sidestep the statutory cap on defense spending, according to the committee's draft spending allocations. The committee's fiscal 2016 spending plan includes $96 billion for OCO, with $88.4 billion allocated for the defense spending measure, $532 million for military construction and $7.1 billion for the State Department's budget, reported CQ Roll Call. The Pentagon had requested only $58 billion in war funds for FY 2016, but with the OCO account not subject to the Budget Control Act limits, the Budget Committee stashed extra funds in the account in the FY 2016 budget resolution to shield DOD from the full impact of the spending caps.
Military Times © April 20, 2015
By Leo Shane III

The House Armed Services Committee begins marking up its version of the fiscal 2016 defense authorization bill this week, the first public statement on where the lawmakers will come down on pay raises, benefits reform and platform funding. Draft language will come from each of the panel's six subcommittees, Those partial authorization drafts — and ongoing appropriations drafts emerging from other House debates — will dominate most of the defense headlines this week. The Senate Armed Services Committee is still working on finalizing its early versions of the bill, but those details won't be made public for several more weeks……

Issue Tracker: NDAA Work Begins

Defense News © April 21, 2015
By John T. Bennett

The House Armed Services Committee (HASC) this week will kick off the annual mark-up season for the defense bills, beginning with two subcommittee mark-ups on April 22 and four more on April 23. The plan is to mark up the committee's full version of the 2016 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) on April 29, likely finishing up in the wee hours of April 30. In the Senate, a bipartisan bill could hit the floor establishing a process for Congress to review any deal over Iran's nuclear program……

Space Coast –

Pentagon officials see business opportunities in space sector
Top U.S. military officials on Tuesday said a new push to defend U.S. government satellites against potential attacks by China or other countries created promising new business opportunities for arms makers, non-traditional suppliers and international firms. Doug Loverro, deputy assistant defense secretary for space policy, said the Pentagon was seeking an initial $5.5 billion over the next five years to beef up protection of space assets and ground networks, and said that sum would grow in coming years. "It’s a great moment. The opportunities are not only endless but they are absolutely ripe to be exploited," Loverro told Reuters in an interview at the annual Space Symposium here. He said the U.S. government was looking at a range of new approaches for everything from rocket launch, communications, remote sensing, satellite control, and even sensors to increase the government's ability to monitor what was going on in space………

**Authorization Bill Would Allow Pentagon to Use Extra War Funds, Defense Chairs Say**

The heads of the House and Senate Armed Services committees plan to include language in the fiscal 2016 defense authorization bill that would allow defense officials to use funds in the department’s war funding account for base budget operations. The remarks of John McCain (R-Ariz.), Senate Armed Services chairman, and Mac Thornberry (R-Texas), House Armed Services chairman, address the question of whether congressional Republicans‘ plan to sidestep the statutory cap on defense spending by adding funds to DOD’s overseas contingency operations account (OCO) will achieve the desired result. The FY 2016 budget resolutions advanced in both chambers would allocate $38 billion more than the $58 billion requested for the OCO account by
the administration. Unlike the base budget, the war funding account is not covered by the Budget Control Act spending limits……….

MacDill AFB –

**Leaders working to bring displaced KC-135s to MacDill AFB**


Tampa Tribune © April 15, 2015

By Howard Altman

Though Tampa’s MacDill Air Force Base isn’t on the latest short list of installations that could receive the new KC-46A Pegasus aerial refueling tankers, the announcement Tuesday by the Air Force Reserve may ultimately prove to be a boon locally. That’s because MacDill, which is not an Air Force Reserve base and thus was never under consideration for the latest round of new tankers, could be in the running for the KC-135 tankers displaced by the new planes, say community leaders, who are pushing to make that happen. On Tuesday, the Air Force Reserve announced that Tinker Air Force Base, Oklahoma, Seymour-Johnson AFB, North Carolina, Westover Air Reserve Base, Massachusetts, and Grissom ARB, Indiana, are candidate bases for the first Air Force Reserve-led KC-46A Pegasus location. The Air Force hopes to whittle down the list by the summer……….

**My MacDill" Community Pride Campaign Takes Off!**


PRNewswire.com © April 16, 2015

Tampa Bay Defense Alliance (TBDA), President John Schueler and former MacDill AFB Commander Brig. Gen. Chip Diehl (USAF, Ret) announced today the launch of a broad
community-based challenge titled "My MacDill" to spark an exciting "Support Rally" to celebrate MacDill Air Force Base's 75 years of service. "We hope in the period from April 16 to September 18, 2015 (the Air Force's Birthday) to capture thousands of Tampa Bay residents and their stories, photos, and videos through social media; and of course their "likes"! We have been very busy over the past three months capturing personal 'My MacDill' stories from Tampa Bay Community Leaders ranging from sports teams, small businesses, local government and just about every type of organization you can imagine. Their unique stories and tributes are amazing, but we are even more anxious to see the all of Tampa Bay's stories," Schueler said………

**Tampa Leaders Look to Expand Tanker Mission at MacDill AFB**


Defense Communities 360 © April 16, 2015

Tampa leaders are working to bring KC-135 Stratotankers displaced from installations that receive the Air Force’s next generation aerial tanker to MacDill Air Force Base in an effort to demonstrate the base has the capacity to handle more aircraft. MacDill, which currently has 16 KC-135s, was passed over in 2013 to become one of the first bases to receive the KC-46A Pegasus. That competition would have brought 36 jets to MacDill, and local officials want to show that the base can support a greater number of aircraft, reported the Tampa Tribune. With MacDill already slated to receive eight additional tankers starting in 2017, base supporters are pushing to obtain 12 more. They are targeting the four bases in the running to host the first Reserve-led KC-46A unit — Tinker Air Force Base, Okla.; Seymour-Johnson AFB, N.C.; Westover Air Reserve Base, Mass.; and Grissom ARB, Ind. Additional KC-135s should become available from the installations that receive the newer aircraft. “When these bases get the KC-46, we want the KC-135s to continue to come here,” said Chip Diehl, a former MacDill base commander who now serves as vice president of the Tampa Bay Defense Alliance………

**U.S. House bill could bring $94 million to MacDill**

By Rachel Crosby

If U.S. Rep David Jolly gets his way, MacDill Air Force Base could see about $94 million more dollars next year. Jolly, R-Indian Shores, announced Monday he secured the money in a bill that the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs subcommittee approved. The bill allots $39 million for a new 36,600-square-foot Special Operations facility at the base. It also allots another $55 million for runway improvements, which will accommodate 23 incoming Army Reserve Black Hawk helicopters. Jolly said the bill needs to pass in the House Appropriations Committee on Wednesday before the House can consider it, but subcommittee approval gives the bill momentum………..

SUN 'n FUN Salutes MacDill AFB with Warbird Fly-Over


If you hear the skies over Tampa rumbling like never before, it won't be coming from MacDill Air Force Base! Next Wednesday morning around 8:00 am, the folks at SUN 'n FUN Fly-In & Expo have orchestrated a historic salute to kick-off the My MacDill Community Pride Campaign launched earlier today by The Tampa Bay Defense Alliance (TBDA). John Leenhouts, President & CEO of SUN 'n FUN said, "Flying in formation on Wednesday, April 22 is the Texas Flying Legends B-25 Mitchell followed by 4 T-6 Texas aircraft and 4 Yaks. SUN 'n FUN is thrilled to recognize the men and women in service around the world by sending vintage military aircraft over MacDill in a "salute to veterans" fly-by during our 41st Annual SUN 'n FUN International Fly-In & Expo. The Fly-In & Expo is Florida's largest annual convention and SUN 'n FUN's major fundraising event. We are pleased to bring awareness to the significant role MacDill plays in the stability of the nation's security. We are exceptionally proud of the esteemed role that MacDill has in the Aerospace Industry and the partnership that they offer student pilots being trained year-round at the Aerospace Center for Excellence on the SUN 'n FUN Convention Campus in Lakeland."………..

Historian tracks MacDill history to its roots
Growing up in Indiana, Denny Cole’s grandfather used to show him an album of pictures from back in the 1920s, when he was a member of the 6th Composite Group, a post-World War I military flying unit. Little did Cole know at the time that his grandfather's photo history would loop into his own future. Fast forward to 2015. Cole, now 59, is a retired Air Force master sergeant, who served at MacDill Air Force Base between 1974 and 1990, working on weapons systems for the F-4 Phantom IIs and F-16 Fighting Falcons when those jet fighters were based here. An insatiable history buff, Cole knows perhaps as much as anyone about MacDill and spends so much time and money collecting memorabilia from the base that he wants to start a MacDill-themed museum……..

**MyMacDill campaign launched as base approaches 75th birthday**

By Howard Altman

The Tampa Bay Defense Alliance on Thursday launched a campaign to promote MacDill Air Force Base's upcoming 75th anniversary, encouraging Tampa Bay residents to share their experiences and stories about the base. The campaign organizers are directing people to a website, MyMacDill.com, where they can upload stories, photos and videos about the base. John Schueler, president of the alliance, said the campaign is part of an effort to show support for MacDill that may come in handy should the Pentagon ever again consider closing the base, something that has been threatened several times in the base's history………..

**Tampa leaders learns what goes on at MacDill**

By Howard Altman

The Tampa Bay Defense Alliance on Thursday launched a campaign to promote MacDill Air Force Base's upcoming 75th anniversary, encouraging Tampa Bay residents to share their experiences and stories about the base. The campaign organizers are directing people to a website, MyMacDill.com, where they can upload stories, photos and videos about the base. John Schueler, president of the alliance, said the campaign is part of an effort to show support for MacDill that may come in handy should the Pentagon ever again consider closing the base, something that has been threatened several times in the base's history………..
By Tech. Sgt. Peter Dean, 927th Air Refueling Wing/Public Affairs

Absolutely incredible, I had no idea what went on behind the gates, you guys are amazing, each and every one of you" said Rafael Hernandez, Leadership Tampa Class of 2015 member. This was just one of the sentiments that were expressed throughout the day. Hernandez and his fellow 60 plus classmen were part of an educational tour of MacDill Air Force Base, April 15. Leadership Tampa is an organization dedicated to educating and growing ambassadors through a year-long exposure to Tampa's education, arts, transportation, tourism and government sectors. Members of Leadership Tampa represent the City of Tampa, the University of Tampa, the Tampa Bay Aquarium, Tampa General Hospital and dozens of other organizations………

Eglin AFB –

Soldiers recognized for bravery on and off the battlefield

http://m.nwfdailynews.com/Section/259/Article/1|464594

Northwest Florida Daily News © April 14, 2015

It isn't often that the 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) is able to host a medal ceremony at their home compound. –We usually don't have everyone here all at once,“ group spokesman Capt. Thomas Cieslak said of the frequently deployed outfit. On Tuesday, the group recognized 20 of its soldiers who displayed extraordinary valor on and off the battlefield. –The men we honor today don't realize they're exceptional, because everyone they work with is exceptional,” Major Gen. Clarence K.K. Chinn, deputy commander of the U.S. Army Special Operations Command, said at the start of the ceremony. –But you have made the extraordinary commonplace.” Many of the soldiers received medals for the heroism they displayed in a battle with insurgents in Helmand Province, Afghanistan, in September 2014. Sgt. 1st Class Andrew Weathers died from wounds he sustained in the firefight………

DoD revamping F-35 maintenance plan


FlightGlobal © April 14, 2015

By Stephen Trimble
The US Department of Defense is revamping a 14-year-old strategy for maintaining a global fleet of Lockheed Martin F-35 fighters that relies heavily on a currently dysfunctional automated system and a just-in-time logistics model managed by the contractor. The sustainment plan is "evolving" less than three months before the US Marine Corps is set to declare the first F-35B unit operational, says Sean Stackley, assistant secretary of the navy for research, development and acquisition, speaking on 14 April at a hearing of the House Armed Services Committee (HASC). The current concept for ordering spares for the F-35 relies on the autonomic logistics information system (ALIS). It was designed to receive downloaded information from the F-35 during and after each sortie, then automatically detect and troubleshoot all systems and parts failures and generate orders to Lockheed for any spares or replacement parts. US Air Force maintainers at Eglin AFB were visited recently by US lawmakers and voiced several concerns about ALIS, says Representative Michael Turner, the chairman of the HASC’s Tactical Air and Land Forces Subcommittee…….

Kids go through mock deployment process on Eglin AFB


Pensacola News-Journal © April 18, 2015

By Marketta Davis

Children aboard Eglin Air Force Base found themselves exploring the process of deploying Saturday during Operation Hero, a mock deployment line the base hosts to recognize April as being the Month of the Military Child. "Operation Hero is a mock deployment experience for military children and spouses," said event coordinator Master Sgt. Yakeem Jones, 96th Force Support Squadron. "It was created to give the children and spouses a glance at what their military loved ones go through." Yakeem said the Airman and Family Readiness Center does the entire deployment line, giving participants everything they need for deployment including ID cards and dog tags. "Then we bus them from the deployment line to a mock deployed location," he said……

U.S. Navy F-35C aircraft conduct first detachment visit at NAS Lemoore
By David Cenciotti

VFA-101, the U.S. Navy newest F-35 unit based at Eglin AFB, Florida, deployed to NAS Lemoore, California, for a six-day visit to the future basing site for the F-35C (the Carrier Variant version of the Joint Strike Fighter), that is scheduled to receive 10 JSFs by 2017. A former F-14 squadron, the VF-101 “Grim Reapers” was disbanded after the retirement of the Tomcat and was reactivated in 2012 to receive the controversial plane that is going to become the backbone of the U.S. carrier air wings strike capabilities: in fact, by 2025, the Navy’s aircraft carrier will operate a mix of F-35Cs, F/A-18E/F Super Hornets, EA-18G Growlers electronic attack aircraft, E-2D Hawkeye battle management and control aircraft, MH-60R/S helicopters and Osprey tilt-rotor Carrier Onboard Delivery aircraft. During the six-day visit, two F-35C Lightning II jets flew in formation over the Sierra Nevada mountain range with an F/A-18E and an F/A-18F belonging to VFA-122 from Naval Air Station (NAS) Lemoore.

Hurlburt Field –

Emerald Warrior exercise may cause noise

Air Force Special Operations Command aboard Hurlburt Field will host the annual Emerald Warrior exercise Monday through May 1, which may cause noise for residents in the surrounding areas. The exercise provides pre-deployment training for special operations forces, conventional, interagency and partner nation forces in combat scenarios. Events also leverage lessons learned from Operation Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom, providing trained and
ready forces to combatant commanders. Training will take place on ranges at the Southeast U.S. Hurlburt Field, Eglin Air Force Base and Apalachicola in Florida; Camp Shelby and Stennis in Mississippi; Pelham Range in Alabama; and Melrose Range in New Mexico………

NAS Jacksonville –

Ron Littlepage: Dredging proposal gets more complicated by the day


Florida Times-Union © April 17, 2015

By Ron Littlepage

A stumbling block has emerged in the push to deepen the St. Johns River shipping channel in addition to the environmental harm the dredging would cause. JaxPort and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers officials talked around the edges of the latest problem during a meeting of the port task force last week. It begins with what was once touted as a lock: getting the federal money needed to begin the $700 million project. That money hasn’t materialized, and it’s logical to assume that’s because the feds don’t believe the ultra-expensive deep dredge meets the cost/benefit ratio needed to justify it. And it’s worth noting that’s with the channel depth going from 40 feet to 45 feet, which the Corps has recommended, not the 47 feet JaxPort favors. JaxPort would be responsible for paying the entire cost of dredging the extra two feet……

NS Mayport –

Mayport's Farragut, NAS Jacksonville's Dragon Slayers deploy to troubled Arabian Peninsula
U.S. Navy officials say the aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt is steaming toward the waters off Yemen and will join other American ships prepared to intercept any Iranian vessels carrying weapons to the Houthi rebels fighting in Yemen. The Mayport-based USS Farragut and two local helicopter squadrons will deploy as part of the carrier strike group. The Farragut will be joined by Helicopter Squadron 46, also based at Mayport and Jacksonville Naval Air Station's "Dragon Slayers" of Helicopter Squadron 11. The strike group honed its skills off the coast of Jacksonville in late January and early February in an enormous training exercise.

Florida National Guard –

National Guard Seeks New Mission After War

The Army spent billions of dollars getting the National Guard ready for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. But now that the money has been spent and troops are coming home, there are questions about the Guard's mission. One place the Guard is fighting to prove its worth is at Camp Atterbury — home to the Indiana National Guard. Carved out of the corn fields and forests of southern Indiana, Camp Atterbury has been training troops since 1942. It became a quiet National Guard base and didn't see much action from the Army after the end of the Korean War. "I wouldn't call it sleepy hollow, but was a kind of a regional training area," says Adjutant Gen. R. Martin Umbarger. When he's not in uniform, he runs the family feed business, but most days he oversees the Indiana National Guard, which he's led since 2004.
NAS Pensacola –

**Gulf Power to build 120MW of solar at bases**

http://www.argusmedia.com/News/Article?id=1025054

Argus Media © April 17, 2015

The Florida Public Service Commission (PSC) yesterday approved requests by Gulf Power to build three solar projects totaling 120MW on military installations in the state. The decision gives Gulf Power clearance to build a 50MW solar farm at Pensacola Naval Air Station, a 40MW farm at Whiting Field Naval Air Station in Navarre and a 30MW facility at the Eglin Air Force Base in Fort Walton Beach. Once completed in 2016, the facilities will give Gulf Power the largest solar portfolio in the state, surpassing the 110MW built by Florida Power & Light. "We support this important partnership between Gulf Power and the US Air Force and the US Navy that will play a major role in Florida's energy future," PSC chairman Art Graham said. The three solar facilities will help the Navy and Air Force satisfy a Department of Defense mandate to procure 20pc of their energy consumption from renewables by 2020.........

**Pensacola Navy base confronts environmental clean-up**


Civilian and military environmental specialists will join forces in a massive clean-up of polluted sites on Pensacola Naval Air Station. As part of the Pentagon's Installation Restoration Program, six locations at PNAS will undergo remedial actions to reduce the levels of suspected toxic materials in groundwater and soil. "Most of the chemicals or contamination came from past industrial processes and operations," said environmental engineer Greg Campbell, project manager of the Pensacola NAS Restoration Program.........

NAS Whiting Field –
State Approves Gulf Power Solar Project

http://wuwf.org/post/state-approves-gulf-power-solar-project

WUWF © April 17, 2015

By Dave Dunwoody

Gulf Power Company is moving ahead with plans to build solar energy farms at three military bases in northwest Florida. The green light was provided this week by the state’s Public Service Commission. The PSC gave unanimous approval to all three projects, aboard Naval Air Stations Pensacola and Whiting Field, and at Eglin Air Force Base. Natalie Smith at the utility says the approval process was somewhat lengthy. “It takes months,” said Gulf Power spokeswoman Natalie Smith. “Our renewables team has worked on the project for several months to get everything in order and make sure we have our ducks in a row before they present it to the FPSC for their staff to go through it. And they make recommendations to the commissioners, and then they make their decision.”

Avon Park –

Polk County Commission: Land Buy Would Extend Avon Park Buffer

http://www.theledger.com/article/20150417/NEWSCHIEF/150419360

The Ledger © April 17, 2015

By Tom Palmer

Polk County commissioners on Tuesday will consider committing $40,000 in environmental lands funds to advance a plan to protect 4,480 acres between the Avon Park Air Force Range and Lake Weohyakapka east of Frostproof. The project is primarily funded by $600,000 in grants administered through Enterprise Florida as part of a program to buffer areas around military installations from incompatible development. In addition to providing a buffer for the 105,000-
acre military base, the proposal would protect three miles of shoreline on Lake Weohyakapka, which is Polk's largest lake, and land in the headwaters of the Kissimmee River……..

Citrus land prices declining


Highlands Today © April 19, 2015

By Gary Pinnell

Sales prices for Central Florida citrus acreages ranged from $5,300 to more than $16,500 per acre, depending on the health and production of the grove, Lakeland real estate broker Dean Saunders revealed last week in his Lay of the Land Report. But short-term prices are going down. “More than half of the area sales were under $10,000 per acre, compared to most sales the previous year being more than $10,000 per acre,” Saunders’ report said. “The strong housing real estate market has created underlying land values for Ridge citrus land in decline from greening disease and other factors,” the Lay of the Land reported. “However, as more growers quit caretaking due to greening, values are expected to decline.” Prospective buyers are not calling as much for citrus groves in this region, Saunders said. Also, Agriculture Commissioner Adam Putnam said the Legislature’s desire for Florida to purchase fewer parcels of land has declined, but they’ve placed more emphasis on conservation easements. The owners can continue to farm or ranch, but can’t develop houses, hotels or shopping centers. Putnam and Saunders spoke at the Omni Orlando Resort at ChampionsGate during a presentation on sales and value of agricultural lands. Similarly, the Lake Wales News Chief reported that Polk County commissioners will consider on Tuesday committing $40,000 in environmental lands funds to protect 4,480 acres between the Avon Park Air Force Range and Lake Weohyakapka. …….AP Air Force Range involved in $150 million construction contract


Highlands Today © April 13, 2015

By Gary Pinnell
The Avon Park Bombing Range and MacDill Air Force Base have been awarded a $150 million contract by the Department of Defense, but don't expect to see massive construction projects. “It provides a vehicle for us and MacDill to complete maintenance, repair and minor construction requirements,” said Buck MacLaughlin, director of operations. “The $150 million figure defines the scope of the entire contract, and does not represent actual funding or the cost of any particular project.” Six construction companies, including ABBA Construction in Jacksonville, Nelson Construction in Palm Harbor, R.M. Williams Construction in Tampa, Bay Area Building solutions in Clearwater, and Danner Construction in Tampa, were pre-approved to design and build as-needed construction projects until April 2020.

Air Force range brought extra noise to the skies


Highlands Today © April 20, 2015

From April 6 to April 16, the skies over Highlands County were abuzz with military activity. From northern to southern Highlands County, the sounds of jets could be heard soaring the skies coming from the Avon Park Air Force Range in what was called the “Jaded Thunder Exercise.” During those 11 days, units from the U.S. Air Force, Navy and Army, as well as Units from the U.S. Special Operations Command, conducted a fire-support exercise at the bombing range and surrounding areas. The training was coordinated with government and civilian authorities, according to U.S. Special Operations Command (SOCOM) in Tampa. In total, about 700 people were involved in the exercise, which represented some level of combat skills or mission enhancement.

Other Items of Interest –

Pentagon: We Can’t Afford to Replace Aging ICBMs, Bombers, Subs

By Marcus Weisgerber

Even if sequestration goes away, the Defense Department will need at least $10 billion more per year to modernize its nuclear arsenal, procurement chief says. The Defense Department cannot afford to replace its aging nuclear-missile submarines, ICBMs, and long-range strategic bombers unless it gets a funding boost or radical policy changes are made, according to a top Pentagon official. Even if Congress approves the White House's 2016 budget for the Pentagon, the Pentagon will find itself $10 billion to $12 short beginning in 2021, Frank Kendall, undersecretary for acquisition, technology and logistics, said Tuesday at the Navy League's Sea Air Space conference……..

DoD sets sights on weaponizing cyber


By Amber Corrin

The Defense Department appears to be preparing to make major moves in the military's cyber domain, with several components advancing their capabilities and policies, and the Defense secretary eyeing a specialized cyber corps. At the Defense Information Systems Agency, the sweeping Joint Regional Security Stack initiative to overhaul IT infrastructure across military bases also is serving as means for DoD to empower troops to act in cyberspace. DISA is helping to implement JRSS at dozens of sites in the U.S. and abroad, but the agency also is changing the way it trains in and conducts cyber operations, starting at Fort Meade, Maryland, where DISA, U.S. Cyber Command and the National Security Agency all are housed…………

SECNAV: F-35C should be Navy's last manned strike jet

The operational use of the carrier-based joint strike fighter could mark the beginning of the end of the Navy's manned bombing sorties, if the Navy secretary gets his way. The F-35C "should be, and almost certainly will be, the last manned strike fighter aircraft the Department of the Navy will ever buy or fly," Navy Secretary Ray Mabus said in a speech Wednesday at the annual Sea-Air-Space Exposition outside Washington, D.C. Fighter jocks would still be needed for dogfighting, but Mabus envisions a future when strike missions will be fulfilled by unmanned aircraft. Mabus announced the creation of the N99 Navy staff office for unmanned weapons systems and a new position for deputy assistant secretary of the Navy for unmanned systems.

Funding Needed to Alleviate Gridlock outside Bases, Washington Lawmaker Testifies

Many installations that experienced mission growth following the last BRAC round are still grappling with traffic congestion outside their gates, an urgent issue that requires dedicated funding from Congress, Washington Rep. Denny Heck (D) told the House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee during its annual “member day” hearing Wednesday. At the installation Heck represents, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, a disproportionate reliance on I-5 for access to the base has resulted in gridlock on a regular basis in South Puget Sound. The problem is not unique to the region as many installations, particularly in urban areas, are still coping with the aftermath of the 2005 round of BRAC and short-term mission growth, he said. “Bases have come up with innovative approaches to ease the pain. But the problem remains severe and unavoidable without more investment,” Heck told the panel.

Top cyber officials warn of limited capabilities
The military's current cyber capabilities remain limited and the Pentagon is mapping out a new strategy for boosting defenses and mounting offensive attacks, top cyber officials say. "Today I think we are, we could be, an easy target," Air Force Lt. Gen. James McLaughlin, deputy commander of U.S. Cyber Command, told lawmakers on Capitol Hill on April 14. The military services are about halfway through their effort to man, train and equip 133 operational teams and a total of about 6,200 cyber warriors by the end of 2016. And Defense Secretary Ash Carter is finalizing an updated cyber warfare strategy document, the first major revision since 2011, said Eric Rosenbach, Carter's top adviser for cyber issues........
TF members --

1. **Next Task Force Meeting** – The next meeting of the Florida Defense Support Task Force will be on Thursday, **May 21, 2015 at the Doubletree Hotel, 101 S. Adams St., Tallahassee, FL** beginning at 9:00 AM.

2. **FY 2015-2016 Task Force Grants** – The Task Force Grant Application deadline was Friday, April 24, 2015. Staff has received 8 grant requests and is currently reviewing them and preparing to send them out to members. Members should expect to receive a book with all grant applications no later than May 7, 2015.

3. **Attachments** –
   - FDSTF legislative Tracker
   - Veteran Bills Tracker
   - Military Construction (MILCON) for Florida

Regards, BG.

**Bruce Grant**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, FLORIDA DEFENSE SUPPORT TASK FORCE

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Articles of Interest:

BRAC –

House Armed Services rejects new round of base closures


The Hill © April 21, 2015

By Martin Matishak

Members of the House Armed Services Committee once again trashed a proposal by President Obama for a new round of military base closures. However, the mark by the panel’s Readiness subcommittee of its version of the fiscal 2016 national defense authorization act (NDAA) directs the Defense Department to conduct an assessment of “excess capacity” to better understand where exactly the agency feels operations can be streamlined. The Pentagon wanted the new round of military closures to begin in 2017. A base closure and realignment (BRAC) panel established by Congress would examine the department’s facilities and determine which should be shuttered. Congress has blocked the request to close bases in recent years, as lawmakers worry that a commission could axe facilities in their own districts.………..
Appropriations Committee Asks for Detailed Analysis of Infrastructure Needs in BRAC Study

http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/appropriations-committee-asks-for-detailed-analysis-of-infrastructure-needs-in-brac-study/?utm_source=dc360&utm_campaign=aa4d8eeea0-RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_04f8f45e8-aa4d8eeea0-55784537&ct=t%28RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN%29#

Defense Communities 360 © April 22, 2015

Citing its concern about the Pentagon’s repeated calls for a new BRAC round, the House Appropriations Committee directs DOD to provide a comprehensive assessment of its infrastructure needs. “Though the committee is not endorsing or precluding another BRAC round, it is interested in more detailed information that would help lead Congress to make an informed decision on that question,” states the committee report accompanying the fiscal 2016 military construction-veterans affairs spending measure that was released Tuesday. The committee requests DOD provide by Dec. 31, 2015, a comprehensive inventory of military installations as well as…..

House Readiness Panel Dismisses BRAC Request

http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/house-readiness-panel-dismisses-brac-request/#

Defense Communities 360 © April 22, 2015

The House Armed Services’ Readiness Subcommittee once again rejects the Obama administration’s request to hold a BRAC round in 2017, according to its portion of the fiscal 2016 defense authorization bill. The language in the draft bill stating that, “Nothing in this act shall be construed to authorize an additional Base Realignment and Closure round,” affirms the committee’s intent to reject DOD’s request to conduct a BRAC round in 2017, the panel states. The panel marks up its section of the annual policy bill today. The draft bill also calls for the department to prepare force structure plans and an infrastructure assessment that could be used to determine the level of excess capacity. The language, however, does not directly link the analysis to a justification for a new BRAC round…….
Ryan-Murray 2.0: The 2016 Defense Budget By The Numbers


Breaking Defense © April 22, 2015

By Mackenzie Eaglen

This week, the Republican Congress is expected to unveil its fiscal year 2016 budget resolution just as House defense authorizers start marking up their annual bill. What will that mean for the US military? Bottom line, the Pentagon should realistically expect no more than $569 billion from Congress in the final, enacted 2016 budget between base and wartime spending—well under the $585 billion the president requested for defense. Here's how we will get there. The final GOP budget resolution will keep base defense spending at the sequestration-level caps of $499 billion (function 051) with allowable Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) spending up to $90 billion for DoD (excluding State Department and other funding). While the Republican budget would ostensibly increase Pentagon OCO funding by $39 billion to $90 billion compared to the Obama administration’s 2016 request of roughly $51 billion, much of this increase is illusory……..

Seapower Markup Supports US Navy Programs


Defense News © April 22, 2015

By Christopher P. Cavas

The US Navy's fiscal 2016 budget submissions in general enjoy support on Capitol Hill, but questions remain about several programs and certain strategic direction aspects. With its markup
released Wednesday morning, the House Seapower and Projection Forces subcommittee provided several answers about how the debate could go, showing strong backing across the board for shipbuilding and war-fighting programs. Key among the issues was the provision of the full Navy request for littoral combat ships and a continued insistence to maintain and improve the fleet's surface combatant capabilities. The subcommittee approved the request for three LCS hulls, along with two destroyers and two attack submarines. The mark also would authorize money to complete LPD 28, the 12th San Antonio-class amphibious ship. Advanced funding is authorized for a third afloat forward staging base (AFSB) and the next-generation LX(R) amphibious ship………..

**White House Missives Reinforce Split with Congress over FY’16 Spending**

http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/white-house-missives-reinforce-split-with-congress-over-fy16-spending/?utm_source=dc360&utm_campaign=c795e99ad6-RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_04f8ff45e8-c795e99ad6-55784537&ct=t%28RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN%29#

Office of Management and Budget Chief Shaun Donovan on Tuesday criticized the first two fiscal 2016 spending bills moving through the House for adhering to the Budget Control Act spending limits, underscoring the potential for a divisive battle over spending this year, but also setting the path for a possible budget deal to relax the stringent caps. Donovan criticized the military construction-VA spending bill for shortchanging spending to upgrade military bases and veterans’ health care, reported CQ Roll Call. The milcon bill, along with the energy-water measure, is set to go to the House floor next week after gaining approval of the House Appropriations Committee on Wednesday……….

**Compromise Expected over Procedural Hurdle to Use of Extra Defense Funds**

http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/compromise-expected-over-procedural-hurdle-to-use-of-extra-defense-funds/#

House and Senate conferees appear to have reached a compromise over one of the primary sticking points to agreement on a fiscal 2016 budget resolution, a procedural hurdle that could
block the Senate from allocating $38 billion in extra funding added to DOD’s overseas contingency operations account (OCO). The Senate’s budget blueprint includes a point of order on spending from the department’s war account that exceeds $58 billion, the original amount requested by the Obama administration. The point of order would allow Senate Democrats or fiscal conservatives to block appropriations from the OCO that exceed $58 billion unless defense hawks can produce 60 votes to override the objection. The mechanism essentially would counteract the chamber’s attempt to sidestep the $523 billion Budget Control Act cap on national security spending by stashing extra funds for DOD in the OCO…….

**House Armed Services to Shift Base Budget Needs to OCO Account**


Defense Communities 360 © April 26, 2015

The House version of the fiscal 2016 defense authorization bill will be aligned with that chamber’s budget resolution, allowing DOD to tap the tens of billions of dollars in extra funds stashed in its war account for requirements that ordinarily would be funded in the department’s base budget. “I’m not too wrapped up in the label on the account,” Mac Thornberry (R-Texas), chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, said last week before his panel’s subcommittees began marking up the annual policy bill. House and Senate conferees are close to reaching agreement on a compromise budget resolution calling for the allocation of $96 billion to DOD’s overseas contingency operations (OCO) account, a $38 billion boost over the amount in the Pentagon’s budget request. With DOD’s base budget subject to the Budget Control Act spending caps, the House and Senate Budget committees decided shifting base budget needs to the war account was the easiest way to loosen the pressure on defense spending in FY 2016…….
Warbirds soar to promote Fly-in, My MacDill


Tampa Tribune © April 22, 2015

By Howard Altman

After two passes over MacDill Air Force Base, the formation of World War II warbirds received a call from the base tower. Can you make another pass? So the planes — a B-25, four T-6s and four Chinese-model Yaks — banked around and flew back over the base. “They were really excited,” said Todd Winemiller, pilot of the lead T-6 Texan trainer in the formation, which was flying right behind “Betty's Dream,” a B-25 Mitchell medium bomber. The flight, which passed over downtown and just over Bayshore Boulevard on the way to MacDill, was a dual-purpose mission. The planes took off from the Lakeland home of Sun 'n Fun International Fly-in and Expo to promote the 41st annual event — the nation's second-largest airshow and the state's largest annual convention. And it was meant to help spread the word about the “My MacDill” campaign, created to bring awareness to the base, its strategic and economic importance and the effort to keep it preserved against any attempts to shutter military installations.

Sequestration, US Budget Control Act 'Have Negative Impact' on US SOCOM

http://sputniknews.com/military/20150422/1021209317.html

Sputnik News © April 22, 2015

Defense spending caps, or sequestration, and the US Budget Control of 2011 forecast negative implications for the United States Special Operations Command because of projected reduced resources, US Assistant Secretary of Defense Michael Lumpkin told the US Senate Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities. “Sequestration and the Budget Control Act will have a negative impact for the US Special Operations Command,” Lumpkin said on Tuesday. “When we have challenges, we frequently cut research and development and education. We must not cut those because of sequestration.”

Preliminary budget allocates $100 million for MacDill construction projects
MacDill Air Force Base will receive nearly $100 million for military construction projects and the Veterans Benefits Administration will get an additional $163 million to hire more benefits claims personnel next year in the latest budget package approved by a key Congressional subcommittee, U.S. Rep. David Jolly said Monday afternoon. Jolly also told The Tampa Tribune that he supported a measure to call on the Pentagon, which wants another round of base closings, to provide specific details about which bases need to be closed and why. The measure was unanimously approved by the House Appropriations Committee Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, said Jolly, who supports a Congressional study of whether there should be another Base Closure and Realignment Commission (BRAC). Jolly said that ultimately, MacDill and the Tampa area would benefit from another BRAC round…….

GTE Financial Sponsors LinkedIn Job Search Workshop on MacDill AFB

Project Transition USA, the only 501(c)(3) nonprofit that specializes in teaching transitioning U.S. military veterans and their families how to fully utilize the powerful business networking site LinkedIn, is pleased to announce their new LinkedIn Job Search Workshop sponsor GTE Financial. GTE Financial, one of the largest credit unions in Florida, recently sponsored Project Transition USA's March and April LinkedIn Job Search Workshops on MacDill Air Force Base and have committed to sponsoring the remainder of the workshops on MacDill this year, which are facilitated by Nancy Laine, an Army Chaplain's daughter and the co-founder of Project Transition USA. GTE is currently celebrating its 80th anniversary of serving the financial needs of its local residents and businesses, as well as enriching the Tampa Bay community. Giving back to the community is important to GTE and is embedded in its culture. Year-round, the not-for-profit cooperative has been able to help multiple charity organizations and its members…….
Eglin AFB –

Local program to assist veteran owned tech businesses

http://miami.suntimes.com/mia-news/7/97/194646/local-program-assist-veteran-owned-tech-businesses

Miami Sun-Times © April 22, 2015

By Marty Arneberg

Entrepreneurship is an essential piece to a thriving economy. When business leaders have room to grow and develop their innovative ideas, the entire community benefits. Venture Hive is a Miami-based entrepreneurship education company that understands this fact well. The company is beginning a new initiative to help young, veteran-owned technology businesses get a head start in Miami. Fort Walton Beach will act as a key partner in the program that will provide coaching, training, and networking support to the businesses as they widen their footprint in the area………

House Bill Proposes F-35 Engine Study


Defense News © April 23, 2015

By Joe Gould and Aaron Mehta

House legislation released Wednesday would require the Pentagon to assess the lone engine program for the F-35 fighter program, but congressional aides contend it is not a gambit to revive a controversial second-engine initiative. The House Armed Services Tactical Air and Land Forces subcommittee proposal includes a requirement for an independent review of the F135 engine, the Pratt & Whitney design that powers the F-35 joint strike fighter. The subpanel,
however, decided to leave the fate of the Air Force's A-10 attack plane fleet to the full committee………. 

Panel Asks Air Force, Navy for Details on Criteria for F-35 Basing Decisions

http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/panel-asks-air-force-navy-for-details-on-criteria-for-f-35-basing-decisions/#

Defense Communities 360 © April 26, 2015

The House Armed Services’ Readiness Subcommittee is eager to learn more about the selection criteria the Air Force and Navy rely on when making stationing decisions for the F-35, according to report language attached to the panel's portion of the fiscal 2016 defense authorization bill. The subcommittee directs the two services to brief it before either announces the initial screening and site survey criteria for their next stationing action, or by Dec. 1, 2015, whichever is earlier. The briefing should cover each service’s existing process for stationing, basing and laydown decisions for the F-35, with an explanation of the methodology employed for each criterion………

Hurlburt Field –

Traffic shift on 98 as Hurlburt Flyover takes shape

http://www.nwfdailynews.com/local/traffic-shift-on-98-as-hurlburt-flyover-takes-shape-1.468044

Northwest Florida Daily News © April 22, 2015

By JENNIE McKEON
Traffic will be restricted from 7 p.m. Friday, April 24 to 7 a.m. Saturday, April 25 in front of the Hurlburt Field entrance as crews pour concrete for the new U.S. 98 elevated lanes. As a result of crews working the intersection of Cody Avenue and Champaigne Street traffic will not be permitted to cross U.S. 98 and no left turns will be allowed from 98 to Hurlburt Field main gate or Soundside area. Instead, drivers will be detoured past the intersection to make a U-turn. All east and westbound lanes will still be open.

NAS Jacksonville –

Navy, JAA, others talk about NAS Jax runway repairs; Cecil Airport relocation


Florida Times-Union © April 21, 2015

By Clifford Davis

The arrival of the larger P-8As brought with it the need for additional infrastructure improvements for the base that is now the East Coast hub for the aircraft. A massive overhaul to the fixed-wing runways at Jacksonville Naval Air Station will begin in June at a cost of $50 million, with an expected completion date of May 2016, the base’s commander, Capt. Howard Wanamaker said Tuesday. In the meantime, all fixed-wing aircraft and their maintenance crews, will operate out of the Jacksonville Aviation Authority’s Cecil Airport. The temporary relocation will bring about 2,100 additional sailors and civilians to Cecil daily. Although the 2,100 will be broken up in to three different shifts, Wanamaker said.

NS Mayport –
CNRSE Praises SAPR Team At NS Mayport


Mayport Mirror © April 22,2015

By MC1 Michael Wiss

Commander Navy Region Southeast, Rear Adm. Mary Jackson praised the continued efforts of the Sexual Assault Prevention and Reponses Team (SAPR) at Naval Station Mayport during a visit on April 17. The mission of SAPR programs is to prevent and respond to sexual assault, eliminating it from the ranks through a balance of focused education, comprehensive response, compassionate advocacy, and just adjudication in order to promote professionalism, respect, and trust, while preserving Navy mission readiness. “Eliminate Sexual Assault: Know your part. Do your part” is the Department of Defense 2015 theme of the annual Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month (SAAPM). According to Naval Station Mayport Fleet and Family Support Center (FFSC) Sexual Assault Reponse Coordinator Lauren Walton, the effort during the SAAPM is focused on raising awareness and highlighting prevention of sexual violence with an emphasis on bystander intervention…….

Florida National Guard –

Camp Blanding among environmental award winners


JD News © April 21, 2015

The Department of Defense (DoD) has announced the winners of the 2015 Secretary of Defense Environmental Awards. In FY 2014, DoD invested approximately $4.1 billion in its
environmental programs: $2 billion for environmental restoration activities; $1.9 billion for environmental quality activities; and $203.1 million for environmental technology. These investments protected the environment while strengthening operational capacity, reducing operational costs, and enhancing the well-being of military members, civilians, and their families and communities. The Secretary of Defense Environmental Awards recognize individuals, teams, and installations that distinguish themselves in supporting mission readiness through environmental acumen. "Their efforts strengthen the department's position as an environmental leader by integrating cost-effective environmental management with our national defense mission, thereby saving critical resources and helping to keep our country safe through sustained mission readiness," stated Frank Kendall, undersecretary of defense for acquisition, technology and logistics.

The nine winners chosen from a total of 35 nominations are:

Natural Resources Conservation, Large Installation: Camp Blanding Joint Training Center, Florida Army National Guard, achieved key natural resources conservation milestones through cost-effective programming and collaborative research. For more information, please visit: [www.denix.osd.mil/awards/FY14SECDEF.cfm](http://www.denix.osd.mil/awards/FY14SECDEF.cfm).

Environmental Quality, Industrial Installation: Robins Air Force Base, Georgia, implemented an award-winning recycling program, a community partnered transportation incentive program, and a robust water quality program that manages 549 million gallons of wastewater per year. For more information, please visit: [www.denix.osd.mil/awards/FY14SECDEF.cfm](http://www.denix.osd.mil/awards/FY14SECDEF.cfm).

Environmental Quality, Overseas Installation: Marine Corps Base Camp Smedley D. Butler, Japan, supported mission readiness and enhanced environmental quality with effective environmental management and maintained stakeholder involvement. For more information, please visit: [www.denix.osd.mil/awards/FY14SECDEF.cfm](http://www.denix.osd.mil/awards/FY14SECDEF.cfm).

**Ham, Lamont To Head Guard Commission: Tight Deadline, Big Decisions**


Breaking Defense © April 21, 2015

By Sydney J. Freedberg, Jr.
After 15 months of bitter public debate between regular Army leadership and National Guard advocates, the commission Congress created to settle the matter met for the first time Friday and chose its chair and vice-chair, announced today. Heading the commission will be Gen. Carter Ham, a retired regular officer, while his No. 2 will be Thomas Lamont, the only Guard veteran on the commission. Now the work can really start — with just nine months before a Feb. 1 deadline to report back to Congress. “It looks like it will be a pretty intense summer,” said John Goheen, spokesman for the powerful National Guard Association of the United States, which led the charge to create the commission. The commissioners face an enormous task: Their mandate is not just to settle the high-profile argument over transferring all Guard AH-64 Apaches to regular Army squadrons — it encompasses the entire long-troubled relationship between the regular Army, National Guard, and Reserve. Working backward from February 1st, given the time it takes to draft, revise, and print up a major report, “they have a lot to see and a lot of decisions to make before they can write the report,” Goheen told me. “They’ve a fairly narrow window to meet that 1 February deadline.”

Army Commission Announces Chairman, Vice Chair

http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/army-commission-announces-chairman-vice-chair/#

Defense Communities 360 © April 26, 2015

Retired Army Gen. Carter Ham, who most recently served as commander of U.S. Africa Command, will lead the National Commission on the Future of the U.S. Army, the commission announced last week. Thomas Lamont, who served as assistant secretary of the Army for manpower and reserve affairs from 2009 to 2013, will be the panel’s vice chair. The commission, created by the fiscal 2015 defense authorization bill, will assess the structure and size of the Army, determine the proper force mixture of the active and reserve components, and conduct policy analysis to document how policies affect mission requirements, according to a press release. Its findings are due Feb. 1, 2016………..

Defense Industry –

Defense Contractors Unsatisfied with Thornberry’s Acquisition Bill
A contractor's trade group representing some 400 companies say Rep. Mac Thornberry's acquisition reform bill further complicates an already complicated process. The largest contractors trade organization has asked the House Armed Services Committee to rethink several components of its bill to reform the Pentagon's acquisition process, opposing in particular a plan to centralize decision-making on whether to buy products on the existing commercial market. The 400-company Professional Services Council on April 17 sent a letter to committee Chairman Rep. Mac Thornberry, R-Texas, and top Democrat Rep. Adam Smith, D-Wash., calling their bill (H.R. 1597) a step in the right direction, but raising several objections over provisions they said might place contractors at a disadvantage while complicating acquisition management.

Florida Named No. 1 State For ‘Aerospace Manufacturing Attractiveness’

Governor Rick Scott announced on Friday that Florida ranked first in the United States for aviation manufacturing attractiveness for the second year in a row according to the PwC US 2015 Aerospace Manufacturing Attractiveness Rankings. The PwC report ranked states on tax rates, industry size, operating cost and education, and Florida again had an overall ranking of first in the nation.

Other Items of Interest –

Manned aircraft needed for future Air Force, as Navy moves unmanned
The Air Force will not follow the Navy into an all-unmanned future strike fleet, as pilots will be needed in the cockpits of most of its combat fleet for the foreseeable future. While the Air Force will increase its reliance on remotely piloted and possibly autonomous aircraft, there will be no replacement for a fighter pilot, Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Welsh said Wednesday. "Having the human brain as a sensor in combat is still immensely important in our view," Welsh said at an event sponsored by Defense One in Washington, D.C. Welsh's comments follow a statement last week from Navy Secretary Ray Mabus that the service's F-35C "should be, and almost certainly will be, the last manned strike fighter aircraft the Department of the Navy will ever buy or fly." The Navy will need fighter pilots for possible dog fighting, but unmanned aircraft will handle strike missions, Mabus said. 

OEA Makes $175M Available to Local Districts to Upgrade On-Base Schools

The Defense Department will be allocating $175 million to local school districts to construct, renovate, repair or expand elementary and secondary schools operated by local school districts on military installations that are in poor condition or experiencing overcrowding, according to an April 23 Federal Register notice. The funding, part of the fiscal 2015 spending bill for DOD, supplements an ongoing, non-competitive program administered by the Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA) that has provided a total of $770 million to upgrade schools. OEA will use a list of schools with the most serious capacity or facility condition deficiencies assembled by the department in 2011 to invite local education agencies to apply for funding. 

By Brian Everstine
New Air Force Agency Will Transform Delivery of Installation Support, Vice Commander Says

Defense Communities 360 © April 23, 2015

The new Air Force Installation and Mission Support Center (AFIMSC) for the first time will provide the service a “single voice” for installation and mission support, allowing officials to better prioritize funding across the service, according to the center’s vice commander. “The tremendous opportunity that is presented by the AFIMSC is that, for the first time in our history as an Air Force, we are going to be able to have that single voice across that installation and mission support portfolio and try to provide the balance and leveling that our commands have done a great job at thus far,” Col. Brian Duffy told a class of Air Force leaders attending the Commanders’ Professional Development School at Air University earlier this week

Pentagon Announces New Strategy for Cyberwarfare


By DAVID E. SANGER

The Pentagon on Thursday took a major step designed to instill a measure of fear in potential cyberadversaries, releasing a new strategy that for the first time explicitly discusses the circumstances under which cyberweapons could be used against an attacker, and naming the countries it says present the greatest threat: China, Russia, Iran and North Korea. The policy, announced in a speech at Stanford University by Defense Secretary Ashton B. Carter, represents the fourth time in four months that the Obama administration has named suspected hackers or announced new strategies designed to raise the cost of cyberattacks. A previous strategy, released in 2011, was less detailed and only alluded to the new arsenal of cyberweapons that the Pentagon was deploying. That strategy talked vaguely about adversaries, naming none.
May 4, 2015 – FDSTF Update

TF members –

1. **Next Task Force Meeting** – The next meeting of the Florida Defense Support Task Force will be on Thursday, **May 21, 2015 at the Doubletree Hotel, 101 S. Adams St., Tallahassee, FL** beginning at 9:00 AM.

2. **FY 2015-2016 Task Force Grants** – The Task Force Grant Application deadline was Friday, April 24, 2015. Staff has received 8 grant requests and will send them out to members this week for review.

3. **Attachments** –
   - TPG Monthly Report
   - Unfunded Requirement Lists (UFR)
   - FDTSF – Bills Passed
   - Veterans -- Bills Passed

Regards,  BG.

**Bruce Grant**

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Articles of Interest:

BRAC –

**Armed Services Chair Remains ‘Deeply Skeptical’ of BRAC Request**


Defense Communities 360 © April 28, 2015

Mac Thornberry (R-Texas), chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, reiterated his opposition to the Pentagon’s request to conduct a BRAC round in 2017, in a fact sheet accompanying the chairman’s mark of the fiscal 2016 defense authorization bill. The document acknowledges that DOD has expressed concerns that excess basing capacity is a financial drag on the department, as well as that its most recent capacity analysis is more than a decade old and does not reflect the probable future force posture. The fact sheet indicated, though, that Thornberry would remain extremely reluctant to approve a new round until the military’s roles and missions are better defined. –Chairman Thornberry is concerned that once an asset is lost through the BRAC process, it can never be regained, or is prohibitively expensive to replace. For that reason, he is deeply skeptical that BRAC is in the country’s national security interest,” it states…….
BRAC Needed to Help Army ‘Right-Size’ Its Infrastructure, Halverson Says


Defense Communities 360 © April 27, 2015

With the size of the Army’s active-duty force steadily dropping, the service needs to conduct a new round of base closures so it can eliminate unneeded infrastructure and direct its funds toward modernizing the infrastructure it does need, Lt. Gen. David Halverson, commander of Installation Management Command and assistant chief of staff for installation management, said last week. “In time, just putting off the health of your installations is degrading, and that’s a fine balance,” Halverson said at an Association of the U.S. Army breakfast, reported Army News Service. “You can do it for one year, you can do it for two years, but overall, you will not be able to modernize the capability that we need and so those are the decisions we have to look at now.”

Smith to Introduce BRAC Authorization Amendment Again

http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/smith-to-introduce-brac-authorization-amendment-again/?utm_source=dc360&utm_campaign=d48955ca82-RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_04f8ff45e8-d48955ca82-55784537&ct=t%28RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN%29#

Defense Communities 360 © April 28, 2015

For the second consecutive year, Rep. Adam Smith (D-Wash.), the ranking member of the House Armed Services Committee, plans to offer an amendment to the annual defense policy bill approving a new round of base closures. As Smith did last year, he plans to introduce the amendment when the committee marks up the fiscal 2016 defense authorization bill today, but withdraw it in the hopes of receiving a vote on the House floor, reported CQ Roll Call. Last year, however, the House Rules Committee blocked Smith’s proposal from receiving a vote when the House debated the measure. In addition to authorizing a BRAC round in 2017, the amendment is expected to include some reforms to the base closure process. For instance, it would require the defense secretary to certify that base closures would result in net savings within six years, according to the story. That declaration would be due when the department submits its new budget request next February.
Committee Postpones Debate over BRAC

One of the most prominent supporters of the Pentagon’s request to conduct a new round of base closures withdrew an amendment Wednesday during deliberations over the fiscal 2016 defense authorization bill that would have authorized a BRAC round in 2017, as the Obama administration has requested. Rep. Adam Smith (D-Wash.), the ranking member of the House Armed Services Committee, intends to bring up the amendment on the floor when the House debates the authorization bill. The legislation marked up Wednesday explicitly bars DOD from carrying out a new BRAC round. Rob Wittman (R-Va.), chairman of the committee’s Readiness Subcommittee, and full Committee Chair Mac Thornberry (R-Texas) oppose the administration’s request for additional base closures, citing the overwhelming challenge of reopening a base once it is shuttered………

Milcon Spending Bill includes Missile Site, BRAC Amendments

House lawmakers approved two amendments of interest to defense communities — one that would provide funding for an East Coast missile defense site and one that would prohibit a new BRAC round — as part of the fiscal 2016 Military Construction-Veterans Affairs spending bill the chamber approved Thursday. Language allocating $30 million for the planning, design and construction of an East Coast missile defense site was offered by freshman Rep. Elise Stefanik (R-N.Y), whose district includes Fort Drum. Last year, the Defense Department said it would prepare environmental impact statements at four locations, including Fort Drum, N.Y., to determine a potential site to host ground-based interceptors to protect the East Coast. The
department’s effort to identify an East Coast missile defense site follows Congress’ direction to study at least three potential sites, including at least two on the East Coast. DOD, however, has made no decision to proceed with construction of a new missile defense site, and officials do not believe it is necessary.

BRAC Needed Now, Bipartisan Coalition of Defense Experts Tells Congress


Defense Communities 360 © April 30, 2015

Citing rising threats around the globe and a military force declining in size and capability, a bipartisan coalition of 38 defense experts is urging congressional leaders to close unneeded bases, right-size the civilian workforce and modernize military pay and benefits. “Too much of the defense budget is currently consumed by institutional inefficiencies, some of which are mandated by law,” the experts wrote in an open letter to the defense committees and Defense Secretary Ashton Carter. As the U.S. military shrinks, it must reduce its inventory of physical infrastructure. Smaller budgets can no longer support paying for the operation of unnecessary facilities,” the letter states. Noting that 20 percent of DOD’s capacity is considered excess, the experts argue the department could be saving billions of dollars annually following a new BRAC round, reports Government Executive.

DOD Budget–

Policy Bill Would Trim Headquarters Spending, Personnel

http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/policy-bill-would-trim-headquarters-spending-personnel/#

Defense Communities 360 © April 28, 2015

The Defense Department would need to cut the budget and personnel at its headquarters by 20 percent and save $10 billion over five years, under the fiscal 2016 defense authorization bill the
House Armed Services Committee marks up today. The provision calls for the defense secretary to develop a plan for streamlining DOD management headquarters by requiring an accurate baseline accounting of headquarters budgets and personnel, and more specific information on actual and planned reductions in management headquarters. “The committee notes that the department has already claimed the savings associated with these reductions in the budget requests provided since the 20 percent goal was established in 2013,” according to a summary of the bill language.

**House panel approves $612 billion authorization bill**


Military Times © April 30, 2015

By Leo Shane III

The House Armed Services Committee early Thursday adopted a $612 billion defense authorization bill which would radically reform military retirement but reject changes to a host of other benefit trims proposed by the Pentagon. By a 60-2 vote, the panel approved the annual budget legislation after almost 19 hours of debate, setting the stage for a full House vote in mid-May. The bill is one of the most-followed measures among the defense community, because of the hundreds of policy renewals and revisions involved.

**HASC Approves Massive DoD Policy Bill**


Defense News © April 30, 2015

By John T. Bennett

The House Armed Services Committee early Thursday voted to add billions to a list of Defense Department weapon programs from cuts, and signed off on a $495.9 billion base Pentagon
budget and an $89.2 billion war account. In a bipartisan 60-2 vote, the committee approved its version of the national defense authorization act (NDAA), which proposes keeping alive the Air Force's A-10 attack plane fleet and endorses extra funding for additional fighter jets for the Navy and Marine Corps. The marathon session ended just after 4:30 a.m. on Thursday, and featured little — and in some cases no — debate about the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan or a Republican-crafted overseas contingency operations (OCO) account opposed by many Democrats and the White House because it inflates defense spending without doing the same for domestic programs………..

Reserve brass warns of budget caps' risks


Military Times © April 29, 2015

By Andrew Tilghman

More than a decade of wartime funding helped the military's reserve components expand far beyond their traditional mission of being a rarely used "strategic reserve." But with that money fading from the Pentagon's budget, some reserve components are struggling to maintain their operational edge. "In the past, readiness beyond that strategic level was purchased with overseas contingency account dollars, but that flexibility, we all know, no longer exists," Lt. Gen. Jeffrey Talley, chief of the Army Reserve, told lawmakers Wednesday. "Unfortunately, the current model of 39 base-funded training days per year produces only a strategic, nonoperational force. It is not sufficient to train, equip and maintain the Army Reserve to meet mission requirements," Talley said………..

NDAA: Congress Seeks Reams of DoD Data


Defense News © April 29, 2015
By John T. Bennett

If the House Armed Services Committee gets its way, a slew of amendments it approved Wednesday will keep Pentagon and service officials plenty busy next year. The panel moved Wednesday at considerable legislative speed through three sections of its 2016 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). And each one included amendments that would, if they make it into the final bill, require the Defense Department to deliver a long list of briefings and reports to lawmakers. The committee speedily approved the Emerging Threats and Capabilities subpanel's section of the bill. Moments before, it approved a bloc of amendments that would require 13 briefings, reports or "assessments" from the department or General Accountability Office (GAO).

GOP Plan to Rely on OCO Funds to Boost Defense Spending Survives House Vote


Defense Communities 360 © April 30, 2015

The House on Thursday passed the fiscal 2016 military construction-veterans affairs spending bill, after a bipartisan effort to bar the use of funds from DOD’s overseas contingency operations account (OCO) for non-war spending nearly upset Republicans’ plans to rely on the department’s war account to sidestep the statutory caps on the defense budget. Instead, Republican leaders were able to overcome support for three amendments introduced by Reps. Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.) and Mick Mulvaney (R-S.C.) that would have collectively eliminated $532 million in military construction funding allocated through the OCO. Appropriators added the funds to the department’s war account, which isn’t subject to the Budget Control Act spending caps, as part of the GOP strategy to use the OCO as a relief valve for defense spending that doesn’t fit under the $523 billion cap on national security funds.

Florida Reps Split on Party Lines on Military Construction/VA Funding

Members of the Florida delegation clashed in Congress this week over the Military Construction/VA Appropriations bill which the U.S. House passed 255-163 on Thursday. The bill contains $76.6 billion in discretionary spending, $4.6 billion more than last year, covering military construction projects in Florida including at naval facilities on the First Coast and Pensacola, Air Force posts at Cape Canaveral, Eglin and Hulburt Field, an Army National Guard readiness center in Palm Coast and other projects. The bill also urged the VA to bring in more nursing home beds and embrace new technology to reach rural populations. The bill also ensures the VA starts to incorporate new mental health treatments………..

**Authorization Bill a Prelude to US Spending Showdown**


The House Armed Services Committee handed the Pentagon and US defense sector a victory by surgically protecting weapon programs and authorizing extra war funding — but a showdown with the White House looms. The committee, in the early hours of April 30, voted to add billions to a list of weapon programs, and signed off on a $495.9 billion base Pentagon budget and an $89.2 billion overseas contingency operations (OCO) account. Its version of the 2016 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) throws a lifeline to the Air Force's A-10 attack planes, endorses extra funding for more Navy and Marine Corps fighter jets, and proposes buying more Army National Guard helicopters………..

**Resolution to Budget Dispute Not Coming Soon, Republicans Indicate**
In the face of calls from the White House for bipartisan talks to lift the statutory spending caps, senior Republicans say any negotiations will need to wait until the fiscal 2016 appropriations process plays itself out. After the White House issued veto threats on two appropriations bills considered by the House last week — including the military construction-veterans affairs spending measure — the Obama administration and congressional Republicans appear to be on a collision course. The statements from the Office of Management and Budget indicated that President Obama would not sign any spending bills that follow congressional Republicans’ plan to stick to the Budget Control Act levels while providing relief only to the Pentagon by stashing tens of billions of additional dollars in its war account.

MacDill AFB –

Something Special About Doing Business With SOCOM

There is a reason why many defense contractors consider U.S. Special Operations Command a dream customer. SOCOM knows what it wants, and it moves quickly to get it. It follows the same federal procurement regulations as the conventional branches of the military, but its acquisitions move faster in large measure because it is smaller, controls its own budget and has a leaner bureaucracy. With the Defense Department now focused on technological innovation in the military — or the lack thereof — SOCOM might offer some useful lessons, experts said. Special operations equipment is procured by the office of acquisition, technology and logistics. SOF AT&L over time has fine-tuned its acquisition “best practices” and these are shaped by the
unique missions of SOF units. To understand this, consider how the conventional Army acquires its —soldier systems— that is everything a soldier wears, shoots or carries, from boots and T-shirts to tactical radios and night-vision goggles ………..

MacDill hotel construction delays could cost taxpayers


Tampa Tribune © April 26, 2015

By Howard Altman

The 200,000-square-foot, five-story, 350-room hotel, with 25 distinguished visitor suites, was supposed to open up across from the Davis Conference Center on MacDill Air Force Base last month. But the best-laid hotels of airmen gang agley sometimes. And now the hotel project, which began with the bid award in September 2012 and is slated to cost nearly $46 million, probably won’t be open until the end of the year at the earliest, according to the Army Corps of Engineers, which is overseeing the project. Then again, no one really knows for sure, says corps spokesman Lance Davis (no relation to Benjamin Oliver Davis Jr., commander of the Tuskegee Airmen in World War II and the first black general officer in the history of the Air Force, for whom the Davis Conference Center is named) …………..

Socom seeks vendors for ‘Iron Man’ suit at Tampa conference


Tampa Tribune © April 28, 2015

By Howard Altman

Do you have an advanced solution to help U.S. Special Operations Command develop its Iron Man body armor of the future? If so, the command, headquartered at MacDill Air Force Base, wants to hear from you. Socom is seeking up to 12 vendors to display their technology at the upcoming Special Operations Forces Industry Conference (SOFIC) at the Tampa Convention Center next month. It’s the major event on the calendar for companies wanting to do business
with the command. In the latest step forward in its effort to field the Tactical Assault Light Operator Suit, or TALOS, Socom is seeking vendors ready to showcase new technology solutions for several components of the suit. And for the first time, selected vendors will get five minutes each to pitch their ideas at the world’s most important special ops industry confab, co-hosted by Socom, a command with $2 billion in annual acquisition spending power.

Eglin AFB –

**Hill reservists begin training operations at Eglin AFB**


Armed Forces © April 27, 2015

This post was originally published by Hill Air Force Base - Hill Air Force Base News

Nearly 300 reservists from the 419th Fighter Wing arrived at Eglin Air Force Base, Florida, for annual training April 18. During the two-week deployment, operations and maintenance personnel will support Emerald Warrior, an exercise designed to train forces for combat. Reservists from the 419th Mission Support Group will also participate in the annual tour training. "This annual tour gives us an opportunity to exercise both our strategic and operational capabilities," said Lt. Col. James Greenwald, 419th Emerald Warrior detachment commander. "We are exercising a large-scale mobilization that proves that, if called upon, we can move at a moment's notice. We are honing our operational capabilities by practicing joint operations, which is similar to our current deployed mission.

**Air Force: Keeping A-10 means F-35 delays, F-16 cuts**


Air Force Times © April 28, 2015

By Brian Everstine
If not allowed to retire the A-10, the Air Force says it will have to send F-16s to the boneyard and delay plans for the F-35 because there aren't enough airmen to maintain both fighters. If lawmakers succeed in passing a bill requiring the Air Force to keep the A-10 in its fleet for another year, too few maintenance personnel would available to stand up the first operating unit of the F-35 at Hill Air Force Base, Utah, and even fewer to continue maintenance of the F-16, the service told congressional staff in a recent briefing. The base is expected to begin receiving F-35s later this year. The Air Force plan, if authorized, would be to move F-16s from Hill to replace retiring A-10s at Whiteman Air Force Base, Missouri, and Fort Wayne Air National Guard Base, Indiana.

IG faults management of F-35 engine program


Air Force Times © April 28, 2015

By Brian Everstine

Management of the F-35's engine program is deficient in dozens of ways, and the blame lies with both the manufacturer and the Pentagon office overseeing the aircraft program, the Defense Department Inspector General said in a report released Monday. The report comes two weeks after another report, from the Government Accountability Office, questioned the engine's reliability based on a lack of flight testing and engine availability in fiscal 2014. The House Armed Services Committee, in its tactical air and land forces subcommittee markup of the fiscal 2016 defense bill, is calling for additional oversight of the program.

More F-35s may increase Eglin noise


Pensacola News-Journal © April 28, 2015
Eglin Air Force Base will be the temporary host for the Navy backup F-35 Lightning fleet during construction of primary Runway 12/30, which may increase noise for surrounding residents during the next few months. The construction-related closure of primary Runway 12/30 will be shifted to Runway 01/19 and previously limited F-35 operations will be allowed, as well as the addition of 15 backup aircraft inventory F-35C aircraft. The F-35 is made by Lockheed Martin in Fort Worth. "Closing Runway 12/30 may slightly increase noise over Valparaiso for a few months," said Mark Pohlmeier, acting deputy assistant secretary of the Air Force for Installations, in a recent news release. "However, we will take every possible action to mitigate noise, including directing departures south, away from Valparaiso, when conditions allow."

Vets tech startups offered a home in Florida


Military Times © April 29, 2015

By Leo Shane III

Fort Walton Beach in Florida is hoping to become the veterans' version of Silicon Valley. The city government last week announced plans to team with the entrepreneur consulting firm Venture Hive on a veteran-focused business accelerator program, designed to attract some of the best and brightest tech startups in the nation to the Florida panhandle. Officials have set aside $500,000 for the project and office space in town, not far from Eglin Air Force Base and a nearby Air Force Research Lab. Companies selected for the program will receive a $25,000 nonequity grant, working space for a year and mentoring as they meet potential investors.

INSIDE THE NAVY - 05/04/2015

Before relocating to NAS Lemoore . . .

Navy Doubles Number Of Joint Strike Fighter Aircraft Residing At Florida Base
The Navy will temporarily double the number of Joint Strike Fighter aircraft it has at an Air Force base in Florida while a facility is waiting to be built in Northern California to house the jets, according to a spokeswoman.

On April 23, the Air Force signed an addendum to a June 26, 2014, record of decision for the "Final F-35 Beddown Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement" that approved the Navy's request to add 15 F-35C carrier variant "Backup Aircraft Inventory" at Eglin Air Force Base, FL.

"The Supplemental EIS allows Eglin Air Force Base to temporarily house additional F-35C aircraft while they await final assignment to Naval Air Station Lemoore, [CA]," an F-35 spokeswoman wrote in an April 30 email. "Once facilities at Lemoore are sufficiently ready to accept F-35Cs, the additional aircraft at Eglin will be ferried to their ultimate duty station at Lemoore."

The Navy agreed to operate no more than 15 of 30 aircraft daily in order to abide by the threshold established in the original EIS, the F-35 spokeswoman wrote.

This means half of the F-35C jets at Eglin will effectively not be flown because of an agreement reached between the Air Force and the local community in the original EIS.

On October 2, 2014, the Navy announced its plan to base the F-35C at NAS Lemoore after weighing the strategic, operational and environmental consequences. A total of 100 F-35Cs in seven Navy Pacific Fleet squadrons and the Fleet Replacement Squadron will be based at Lemoore in the beginning of 2016.

-- Lee Hudson

US Southern Command –
Iranian ‘Cultural Centers’ Established to Promote Shiite Islam Blossom in Latin America


Breitbart © April 28, 2015

by Edwin Mora

Iranian ―cultural centers,‖ established across Latin America to enhance the Shiite country’s influence in the region, have proliferated in the last three years, while the Obama administration has been trying to reach a nuclear agreement with Iran. —As the foremost state sponsor of terrorism, Iran’s involvement in the region and these cultural centers is a matter for concern, and its diplomatic, economic, and political engagement is closely monitored,‖ Gen. John Kelly, the commander of U.S. Southern Command (Southcom), told lawmakers last month, as the P5+1 powers approached a self-imposed deadline to draw up a framework for a nuclear deal with Iran. Breitbart News found that the number of Iranian ―cultural centers‖ in Latin America have more than doubled, from 36 in 2012 to more than 80 today……..

NAS Jacksonville –

Seabees always building, renovating at NAS Jax


Florida Times-Union © April 29, 2015

By AN Otisa Williams

The men and women of Construction Battalion Maintenance Unit (CBMU) 202, Detail Jacksonville, are always ready to help with high quality, economical station-improvement
projects. From their Birmingham Avenue headquarters aboard NAS Jacksonville, highly qualified Seabees execute plans for construction projects built from the ground up or the renovation of existing facilities. For many base projects, Seabees provide most of the skilled labor required for sub-grade utilities, foundations, concrete block walls, steel erection and electrical systems. Seabees projects at NAS Jacksonville are planned and executed in conjunction with Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC) Southeast and the base public works officer. The detail’s operations department keeps track of projects and generates weekly reports for CBMU-202 headquarters in Little Creek, Va., as well as Naval Construction Group Two in Gulfport, Miss., that track the project materials, cost, crew size, days worked, safety and quality assurance. ............

NS Mayport –

Mayport-based USS Farragut sent to monitor situation after Iran fires on, boards cargo ship


Florida Times-Union © April 28, 2015

By Associated Press

Iranian forces fired warning shots across the bridge of a Marshall Islands-flagged cargo vessel as it was traversing the Strait of Hormuz, boarded the ship and directed it toward the Iranian mainland, a Pentagon official said Tuesday. The incident, which prompted the U.S. Navy to dispatch a destroyer and a plane in response, comes as Iran and the U.S. along with other world powers try to hammer out a final deal over Tehran's nuclear program. The ship was traveling through the narrow strait, which is technically Iranian territorial water, but under international agreement is open to foreign ships making an innocent passage, said Col. Steve Warren, a Pentagon spokesman. It wasn't clear whether the ship had strayed off course into coastal waters not protected by that agreement………….
$32M in funding for Mayport and NAS Jax passes House, heads to Senate


Jacksonville Business Journal © May 1, 2015

By Jensen Werley

The U.S. House's 2016 Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Bill includes $32.5 million in infrastructure funding for Naval Station Mayport and Naval Air Station Jacksonville. The bill, which next heads to the Senate, includes $16.1 million for construction of a Littoral Combat Ship support facility at Mayport, $8.2 million for construction of a support facility for the MQ-4 Triton unmanned aerial surveillance system and $8.2 million for an addition to the feet support facility for the Littoral Surveillance Radar System at NAS Jax……..

Congressman praises House passage of military/veterans funding bill


Ripon Advance Reports © May 4, 2015

U.S. Rep. Ander Crenshaw (R-FL) praised House passage on Wednesday of the fiscal year 2016 Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Bill, which would fund $32.5 million in defense infrastructure construction projects at Naval Station Mayport and Naval Air Station Jacksonville. “Day-to-day headlines from dangerous parts of the world constantly remind us that now is not the time to cut back our military,” Crenshaw, a member of the House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, said. “That’s why the military infrastructure projects in the fiscal year 2016 Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Bill, including those for Northeast Florida’s bases, are so critical. With effective and efficient use of taxpayer dollars, they will strengthen our national defense now and across many years to come.”…….
A new leader rises to guide the Blues


Pensacola News-Journal © April 27, 2015

By Marketta Davis

Having reached numerous milestones in their 69-year history, the United States Navy's Blue Angels have come to yet another momentous event in welcoming their first ever executive officer. Cmdr. Bob Flynn, previously assigned to the Naval War College in Newport, R.I., joined the flight demonstration squadron in November 2014. "Cmdr. Flynn has been a fantastic addition to the team and having an executive officer has allowed our leadership structure as a whole to better reflect naval aviation," said Lt. j.g. Amber Lynn Daniel, U.S. Navy public affairs officer. Originally from New Jersey, Flynn graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1992. As a naval flight officer, he attended flight school at Pensacola NAS and served in an S-3 Viking, a carrier-based anti-submarine airplane………..

Gulf Power wins approval from FPSC for three renewable projects

http://www.renewablesbiz.com/article/15/04/gulf-power-wins-approval-fpsc-three-renewable-projects

RenewablesBiz © April 29, 2015

Gulf Power has announced a partnership with the US Navy and US Air Force to build solar energy farms at three different facilities across northwest Florida. The utility has reportedly received approval from the Florida Public Service Commission, or FPSC, for all three renewable projects. "Adding solar energy to our portfolio is another step in further diversifying our energy mix," said Stan Connally, Gulf Power president and CEO. "Through careful planning, we've been able to work alongside our military partners to help provide cost-effective renewable energy - and all our customers will reap the benefit." The solar energy farms will be constructed at Eglin Air Force Base in Fort Walton Beach (30 megawatts), Naval Air Station Whiting Field,
Outlying Landing Field Holley in Navarre (40 megawatts), and Naval Air Station Pensacola, Outlying Landing Field Saufley in Pensacola (50 megawatts). ………

Florida National Guard –

**House Dem wants F-35 funds for reserves**


The Hill © April 28, 2015

By Martin Matishak

Rep. Jackie Speier (D-Calif.) plans to offer an amendment to the House version of the defense policy bill that would funnel money away from the costly F-35 Joint Strike Fighter program and give it to the National Guard and Reserve. The measure, the text of which was provided to The Hill, would divert $589 million from an authorized $1 billion funding boost proposed by House Armed Services Committee Chairman Mac Thornberry (R-Texas). The funds, intended for six additional F-35 aircraft, would go into an equipment account for the Guard and Reserve. The increase was included in the $611 billion “chairman’s mark” of the fiscal 2016 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), which was rolled out on Monday………

**GAO Favors Army Aviation Plan Over Guard's**


Defense News © April 28, 2015

By Joe Gould

A US government watchdog agency has given passing marks to the Army's massive aviation restructure plans, a potential blow to the National Guard, which opposes a key piece of that plan.
The 49-page Government Accountability Office's (GAO's) report found that the Army's proposal is less expensive than a Guard proposal and better meets mission demands. This follows two other analyses that backed the Army's plan, which is dubbed the Aviation Restructure Initiative (ARI), over the Guard's proposal.

**Wait For Commission Before Cutting Guard, Gen. Grass Tells SAC-D**


Breaking Defense © April 29, 2015

By Sydney J. Freedberg Jr.

It’s not every day you hear a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff asking Congress to undo part of the administration’s budget proposal. But National Guard Bureau director Gen. Frank Grass is in a unique position, the only chief caught between the Pentagon and the states. So this morning, Gen. Grass explicitly asked the Senate Appropriations defense subcommittee to hold off on any changes to Guard forces or missions — including some changes proposed in the president’s budget — until the congressionally-chartered Commission on the Future of the US Army reports its recommendations next February. “The problem we’ll have is we will be moving out on 1 October,” Grass told me after the hearing, “unless something happens in the [2016] NDAA; that’s the Congress’s call……Let’s wait until NDAA ’17, when Congress has an opportunity to act on the recommendations of the report.” It’s on Oct. 1st, the beginning of fiscal year 2016, that the president’s budget will begin transfer of 36 AH-64 Apache helicopters from the Guard to regular active duty squadrons and an 8,200-soldier reduction in the Army National Guard……..

Patrick AFB –

*Patrick AFB landmark starts coming down soon*
A year after the Air Force Technical Applications Center opened its new headquarters, the old vacant building still stands. But demolition could start in about two weeks. The discovery of building material long deemed hazardous has delayed the demolition of the landmark building, perhaps the most recognized structure at Patrick Air Force Base. "Based on the fact that the building is 50 years old, there is more hazardous material than we thought," said Jeff Barrows, AFTAC project manager. "Once you start taking out sheetrock and getting down to concrete, we found a lot more asbestos than we thought was there." Asbestos is a mineral fiber that was used for insulation, fire retardant and sound absorption. It was later found to be harmful and some uses were banned in the United States………

NAS Key West –

Joint Interagency Task Force South

DVIDS © April 30, 2015

U.S. Coast Guard Rear Adm. Steve Mehling, relinquished command to U.S. Coast Guard Rear Adm. Christopher Tomney, in a Joint Interagency Task Force-South (JIATF-S) change of command ceremony at the Tennessee Williams Theatre, Key West, Florida, on Thursday, April 30. U.S. Marine General John F. Kelly, Commander of United States Southern Command, presided at the ceremony. Over the last two years, Mehling’s leadership and innovative efforts across a wide spectrum of counter illicit trafficking initiatives resulted in major contributions of vital importance to United States national security. His strategic engagement and coalition building improved Partner Nation relationships and increased support to the interdiction of illicit traffickers, resulted in JIATF-S being responsible for 76 percent of all US cocaine disruptions and unparalleled levels of success against transnational criminal organizations………..
Special Forces Underwater Operations School in Key West celebrates 50th anniversary

http://www.fayobserver.com/military/special-forces-underwater-operations-school-in-key-west-celebrates-h/article_26feb10e-72c2-5fcf-b4c2-3b34e1939248.html

Fayetteville Observer © April 29, 2015

By Drew Brooks

Fort Bragg officials will celebrate the 50th anniversary of a dive school in Key West, Florida in mid-May and will rededicate the school in honor of a Korean War hero credited with starting the school. The celebration of the Special Forces Underwater Operations School, part of Fort Bragg's John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, will take place on Thursday, May 14, officials said. It's founder, Medal of Honor recipient Col. Ola L. Mize, died last year. "It is a privilege and honor to commemorate the SFUWO Headquarters Building after Col. Mize, who was the founding father of this remarkable training compound," said the dive school's commander, Maj. Joshua Eaton, in a release. "We are celebrating 50 years of excellence in combat diving and this compound will continue to serve as the center of excellence in underwater infiltration within the Special Forces Community." ........

Defense Industry –

Which States are Attracting Aerospace Companies?

http://www.industryweek.com/expansion-management/which-states-are-attracting-aerospace-companies

Industry Week © April 28, 2015

By Adrienne Selko
Florida ranked first in the U.S. for aerospace and aviation manufacturing attractiveness according to a new report by PwC. Florida is home to more than 2,000 aerospace and aviation companies that employ more than 82,000. The sector has an annual payroll impact of more than $5 billion in the state. The 2015 Aerospace Manufacturing Attractiveness Rankings ranked states on tax rates, industry size, operating cost and education. The study also includes global rankings.

Other Items of Interest –

**Texas Mayors Urge Lawmakers to Include $150M in Budget for Installations**

http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/texas-mayors-urge-lawmakers-to-include-150m-in-budget-for-installations/?utm_source=dc360&utm_campaign=ae7c7051c0-RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_04f8ff45e8-ae7c7051c0-55781729&ct=t%28RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN%29#

Defense Communities 360 © April 28, 2015

A coalition of defense communities in Texas is asking the state Legislature to include $150 million in the next two-year budget to support military installations. The money would be allocated to the Texas Military Preparedness Commission for grants to help communities enhance installations. The request, which represents only one-tenth of 1 percent of the nearly $150 billion that the state’s 15 installations bring to the Texas economy is “a very small price to pay to protect the military mission and jobs at Texas military installations,” wrote the Texas Mayors of Military Communities. “If state investment is going to make a difference in a future BRAC outcome, funding for projects is needed during the FY 2016-2017 biennium,” the request says. With the Pentagon eager to conduct a round of base closures, Fort Worth Mayor Betsy Price considers the funding a top priority.

**House panel blocks A-10 retirement**
By Brian Everstine

The House Armed Services Committee has approved a plan to keep the A-10 in the air. The committee passed an amendment late Wednesday from former A-10 pilot Rep. Martha McSally, R-Ariz., to block any attempt by the Air Force to cut any Warthogs. The amendment is on top of language in the defense authorization bill to authorize about $682 million to keep the A-10s flying. "Not only does [the amendment] prohibit the retirement of any A-10s, it prevents any additional back door attempts at mothballing these aircraft, such as placing them in backup status," McSally said in a statement. "I'll continue to work with my colleagues to make sure our troops on the ground have the support they deserve and that we don't retire this critical capability without a replacement."………..

Signs Point to Dunford as Next JCS Chairman

By Aaron Mehta

Gen. Joseph Dunford, the commandant of the Marine Corps, is at the top of the list to become the next Joint Chiefs chairman, according to several sources. Sources also say the next vice chairman will most likely be Air Force Gen. Paul Selva, head of US Transportation Command. White House officials have not said when an announcement on the moves will be made, but sources say it should be soon. Whoever is nominated will replace Army Gen. Martin Dempsey…….
TF members --

1. **Next Task Force Meeting** – The next meeting of the Florida Defense Support Task Force will be on Thursday, **May 21, 2015 at the Doubletree Hotel, 101 S. Adams St., Tallahassee, FL** beginning at 9:00 AM. Draft agenda is attached.

2. **No Task Force Meeting in June** – Due to the special legislative session on the budget, the Chairman has approved cancelling the Task Force meeting in June. However, we have now scheduled a Task Force meeting on August 20th in Ft. Walton in conjunction with FDA. Updated meeting schedule is attached.

3. **FY 2015-2016 Task Force Grants** – Task Force members are currently reviewing 2015-2016 grant applications in preparation for the May 21st meeting.

4. **Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) Review of Defense Grants (DRG & DIG) and FDSTF Grant Program** – OPPAGA is conducting a review/audit of all defense grants looking at performance measures and returns on investment. Staff has been providing them with a significant amount of data to review. Part of their review process involves contacting Task Force members (and other points of contact for grants). TF members may be receiving a phone call from OPPAGA staff in the next few weeks to discuss the effectiveness of the FDSTF grants during 2012-13 and 2013-14 grant cycle.

5. **Attachments:**
   - Notes from bi-weekly TPG conference call
   - FDSTF Meeting Agenda
   - DRAFT 2015 FDSTF Meeting Schedule (Updated as of May 11, 2015)

Regards, BG.
Articles of Interest:

**BRAC –**

**Senate Panel Unlikely to Adopt DOD’s BRAC Request, McCain Says**

[http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/senate-panel-unlikely-to-adopt-dods-brac-request-mccain-says/?utm_source=dc360&utm_campaign=aefe0b2642-RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_04f8ff45e8-aefe0b2642-55784537&ct=t%28RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN%29](http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/senate-panel-unlikely-to-adopt-dods-brac-request-mccain-says/?utm_source=dc360&utm_campaign=aefe0b2642-RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_04f8ff45e8-aefe0b2642-55784537&ct=t%28RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN%29)

Defense Communities 360 © May 7, 2015
The Senate’s version of the fiscal 2016 defense authorization bill probably won’t endorse the Obama administration’s request to hold a BRAC round in 2017, Armed Services Chairman John McCain (R-Ariz.) said Thursday. “I think they made bad mistakes in the last couple of rounds, and so I am a bit skeptical,” McCain told reporters in explaining his opposition to approving additional base closures, reported CQ Roll Call. McCain had not weighed in on the BRAC question since taking the helm of the Armed Services Committee at the beginning of the year, but in March the chairman and ranking member, Jack Reed (D-R.I.), called for DOD to carry out management reforms—that could reduce or consolidate military headquarters, commands and infrastructure.”

Public Private Partnerships –

Courtney Concerned about Impact of Opening up Family Housing Projects to General Public

http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/courtney-concerned-about-impact-of-opening-up-family-housing-projects-to-general-public/?utm_source=dc360&utm_campaign=e3e1ae2054-RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_04f8ff45e8-e3e1ae2054-55784537&ct=t%28RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN%29#

Defense News © May 5, 2015

The Defense Department would need to brief the House Armed Services Committee on the potential impacts to host communities of its policy of opening family housing projects to the general public when occupancy rates drop below certain levels. The request, an amendment to the fiscal 2016 defense authorization bill added during last week’s committee markup, directs DOD to focus on community impacts stemming from changes in the number of non-federally connected civilian children residing in military housing. Officials also should develop recommendations to mitigate possible community impacts. A growing number of installations recently have expanded eligibility to live in family housing projects to DOD civilians, military retirees, and in some cases, the public as occupancy rates have dropped due to cuts in end strength. ……..

Defense Committee Embraces Installation-Community Partnerships
Defense Communities 360 © May 6, 2014

The military services should take advantage of the relatively new authority allowing installations to enter into intergovernmental support agreements with local governments to provide, receive or share support services for most municipal functions, according to report language accompanying the fiscal 2016 defense authorization bill. “The [House Armed Services] Committee notes that the authority to enter into intergovernmental support agreements is broad and encourages the Department of Defense to leverage this authority in a manner that provides costs savings and improved services in support of Department of Defense installations, military personnel and their families,” the report states. Installation-community partnerships provide an opportunity for the military to realize efficiencies, the committee added. The report noted that last year’s policy bill clarified the authority first included in the FY 2013 authorization bill. The new language transferred section 331 from a chapter of the U.S. Code that deals with procurement to a chapter focused on real estate to emphasize that the shared services authority is focused on installations and should not be subject to the Federal Acquisition Regulation. The FY 2015 measure also defined an intergovernmental support agreement as a legal instrument for the first time. The committee approved the FY 2016 bill, H.R. 1735, last week. The full House is expected to take it up later this month. The report accompanying the legislation is available on the committee website.

DOD Budget–

Democrats May Delay GOP Defense Bill Until Spending Caps Are Lifted

Defense One © May 4, 2015

By Alex Brown
As Republicans celebrate a fast-clearing legislative logjam and early progress on next year's funding bills, Democrats are working to put a stop to those feel-good vibes—by drawing a line in the sand on defense spending. In both the House and the Senate, Democrats have lined up against the GOP’s approach to funding the military, raising questions of whether Republicans can get through the appropriations process without making concessions on sequester-level spending.

**Winners, losers in $612B defense bill**


The Hill © May 2, 2015

By Martin Matishak

The $612 billion defense bill approved by the House Armed Services Committee this week is a major victory for proponents of two jet programs and lawmakers arguing the military must reform its policies on sexual assault. Passage of the bill sets up a floor vote the week of May 12 and possibly difficult negotiations with the Senate, which is working on its own bill. Lawmakers are working to get a final bill done by before the end of the current fiscal year on Sept. 30. If they meet that goal, it would complete the process much earlier, and smoother, than the last few years. Here’s a look at the biggest winners to emerge on the House side, as well as some of the losers.

**Left-Right Alliance to Continue OCO Fight**

http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/policy-budget/congress/2015/05/05/oco-war-fund-republicans/26920961/

Defense News © May 5, 2015

By John T. Bennett

An alliance of right- and left-leaning House members is expected to continue its attacks on the Pentagon's war account when the chamber takes up the annual defense policy bill next week.
their sights on the overseas contingency operations (OCO) account. Both sides are upset that House and Senate Republican leaders added around $40 billion to the fund in the GOP-crafted 2016 budget resolution to appease defense hawks.

**Senators Decry Spending Caps before Passing Budget Resolution**

http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/senators-decry-spending-caps-before-passing-budget-resolution/?utm_source=dc360&utm_campaign=e3e1ae2054-RSS_dc360.EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_04f8ff45e8-e3e1ae2054-55784537&ct=t%28RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN%29#

Defense Communities 360 © May 5, 2015

The Senate passed the fiscal 2016 conference budget resolution Tuesday, after lawmakers from both parties used the debate to press their colleagues to strike a deal to lift the Budget Control Act spending caps. The budget blueprint adheres to the statutory caps on defense and domestic spending, but to sidestep the limit on the Pentagon’s budget, it stashes $38 billion in extra funds in DOD’s war account, which is not subject to the caps. The House passed the compromise resolution last week. The move sets up a showdown over next year’s budget with President Obama, who has threatened to veto any spending bill that sticks to the statutory caps or provides budget relief to DOD while leaving domestic programs at the capped levels.

**Carter, Dems Slam GOP's Inflated War Fund**

http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/policy-budget/congress/2015/05/06/carter-dempsey-budget-senate/70879462/

Defense News © May 6, 2015

By John T. Bennett

Defense Secretary Ashton Carter and key Senate Democrats on Wednesday slammed a Republican-concocted plan to offset defense-spending limits by inflating a war fund. House and Senate GOP leaders' decision to inflate the Obama administration's $50.9 billion war-fund
request to $89 billion is a "gimmick," says Dick Durbin of Illinois, the chamber's No. 2 Democrat and ranking member of the Appropriations Defense subcommittee. Sen. Barbara Mikulski of Maryland, the full committee's ranking Democrat, said the Republican budget plan the Senate approved Tuesday could plunge the chamber back into the partisan stalemate that has plagued the Obama era………

**Pentagon Pushes Hard For Murray-Ryan 2.0; GOP Wary**

http://breakingdefense.com/2015/05/pentagon-pushing-hard-for-murray-ryan-2-0-gop-wary/

Breaking Defense © May 8, 2015

By Colin Clark

The Senate Appropriations defense subcommittee has been identified as Congress' soft underbelly in the Pentagon’s battle to win a real solution to the Budget Control Act similar to the compromise secured two years ago. That became clear at the Wednesday hearing of the subcommittee, when Carter went way out of his way to praise SAC-D Chairman Thad Cochran (who also chairs the full committee, making him one of the most powerful people in Congress). –Mr. Chairman, I want to especially recognize the sense of civility and courtesy with which this committee conducts its business,” Carter said……

Space Coast –

**A MESSAGE FROM SPACE FLORIDA LEADERSHIP**

Welcome to the May edition of the Space Florida e-newsletter!

As 2015 moves along, we at Space Florida continue to work hard toward achieving our ultimate goal of fostering the growth and development of a sustainable and world-leading space and
aerospace industry in this state.

At the 31st Space Symposium last month in Colorado Springs, we had many discussions with commercial companies, government entities and investors alike regarding the best ways to continue growing our state’s aerospace economy rapidly and responsibly, utilizing our unique State-empowered tools to attract, retain and grow high-tech business across Florida.

Our marketplace is extremely active right now, and our plate is full with attractive industry development projects. May and June will provide additional opportunities to engage with local, national and international communities regarding Florida’s economic growth in the space and aerospace sector.

On June 9th, I will be speaking at the National Space Club Luncheon at the Radisson Resort at the Port in Cape Canaveral, Florida. Following the luncheon, our next significant business development opportunity will be at the International Paris Air Show where we look forward to connecting with some existing international partners and creating new ones. As you have seen in past Space Florida newsletters and press releases, Florida has had great success partnering with other countries to enable industry expansion in the Sunshine State, and we will continue to look for opportunities to do so.

In closing, I want to welcome Mr. Jason Steele and Mr. Drew Weatherford to our Space Florida Board of Directors. These two gentlemen are extremely seasoned businessmen who will add unique and forward-thinking skillsets to our already outstanding Board. I look forward to having these new representatives join us for our May 27th Board Meeting in Tampa.

Sincerely,

Frank A. DiBello

MacDill AFB –

Marketing Blitz to Promote MacDill AFB

http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/marketing-blitz-to-promote-macdill-afb/#

Defense Communities 360 © May 4, 2015
The Tampa Bay Defense Alliance is rolling out a campaign to promote MacDill Air Force Base at a time when DOD is facing budget constraints and pursues a new round of base closures. The initiative is intended to raise awareness of the installation among area residents and businesses, as well as in Washington. A central theme of the effort is showcasing the robust partnership between the community and MacDill, reported the Tampa Tribune. The initiative is centered on the “My MacDill” website, which provides residents and local organizations an opportunity to post photos, videos and personal memories about the base and its contributions to the Tampa region and the nation. The site features a series of interviews with personnel who have served at MacDill, including retired Army Gen. Tommy Franks, who commanded U.S. Central Command from 2000 to 2004.

MacDill AFB Celebrates Anniversary

http://www.buccaneers.com/news/article-1/MacDill-AFB-Celebrates-Anniversary/187ced5e-bfb2-4bf4-afe6-002e7f301abc

Buccaneers © May 6, 2015

By Joe Kania

MyMacDill.com, sponsored by the Tampa Bay Defense Alliance, is celebrating MacDill Air Force Base’s birthday from April to September. The base was established in the late 1930s and flew its first flight in 1941. In celebrating their birthday, MyMacDill.com is hoping to gather as many stories as possible from people in the Tampa community – from active duty members and veterans to residents of the Tampa Bay area. Those interested in sharing a story are encouraged to visit MyMacDill.com or interact via social media at #MyMacDill. “By visiting MyMacDill.com and sharing your stories, photos and videos, you will officially be ‘Taking the Oath’ and sharing your pride and unique connection to our great base,” MyMacDill.com wrote. “Even if you don’t think you have a direct connection to the base or a story to share, we are sure that with a little thought you will discover that you have an indirect connection. You can also show your support with a MyMacDill Salute when visiting one of our amazing Tampa Bay iconic area attractions and meeting our MyMacDill volunteer corps.”

Eglin AFB –
The goal of most bases' honorary commander programs is to familiarize civilian members of the community with a particular unit’s mission and service members. For years, one of the perks of being an honorary commander at some squadrons at Eglin has been the promise of a unique opportunity: an incentive/orientation flight in a fighter jet. It’s an opportunity that even many long-time service members never get to experience. But due to sequestration and the phasing out of two-seater aircraft at the 33rd Fighter Wing, incentive flights went by the wayside the past few years. So it was a big deal for the 53rd Wing when honorary wing commander Whitney Smith, a Shalimar attorney, suited up for the wing’s first incentive flight in three years. Smith, who started out as an honorary squadron commander, has also served as a group commander within the wing. .........

Hurlburt Field –

U.S. MARINE SUPER HERCULES SUPPORTS U.S., CHILEAN AIR COMMANDOS DURING EXERCISE AIRFIELD SEIZURE

United States Marine Corps © May 6, 2015

By Cpl. Alexander Mitchell

Marines with Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron 252, Marine Aircraft Group 14, 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing transported a combined team of 20 U.S. personnel from the 123rd Special Tactics Squadron and Chilean Air Commandos, along with two 50cc mini bikes aboard a KC-130J Super Hercules April 28, during Emerald Warrior 2015. Working with VMGR-252, the team landed and prepositioned two 50cc mini bikes at an airfield before later taking off again and jumping out to parachute down to the airfield to conduct their planned Jump Clearing Team mission. “Flying with Americans and the unit helps us towards the training that we do out here,” said Rudy, a team leader with the Chilean Air Commandos. “Working together helps with future missions in a combat area.”

NAS Jacksonville –

Battaglia Meets With Sailors, Marines at NAS Jacksonville

DOD News © May 5, 2015

By Army Sgt. 1st Class Tyrone C. Marshall Jr.

The military’s top senior enlisted leader met with sailors and Marines, toured facilities and hosted a town hall meeting here yesterday. Marine Corps Sgt. Maj. Bryan B. Battaglia, senior enlisted advisor to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, stopped at the base as part of a six-day visit to the area to promote the Defense Department’s partnership with the PGA Tour and nonprofit organizations that help service members and veterans. At a troop talk, Battaglia spoke about a number of topics ranging from the budget to total force fitness.

NS Mayport –

Navy secretary stresses Mayport importance; upbeat on progress over sex assaults
Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus visited sailors at Mayport Naval Station on Thursday to say thank you and to brief them on some of the Navy’s newest initiatives. The soft-spoken Mississippian also spoke to the media on topics from ships, to military retirement, to sexual assault — and, of course, the long awaited possibility of a new aircraft carrier. –“The main message was just to thank the people here,” Maybus said. –“We're the greatest expeditionary fighting force the world has ever known. –Mayport is one of the most crucial ports that we have.”

**Secretary of Navy: A carrier needs to come to Mayport**

The Secretary of the Navy made a stop at Naval Station Mayport on Thursday to talk to sailors and Navy leaders. Nav Secretary Ray Mabus was on board the USS Gettysburg and at Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron 48. –“We have to keep building ships, and while the Navy declined pretty dramatically between 2001 and 2008, we are growing the Navy again,” Mabus told the sailors and Navy leaders. –“We will get above 300 ships by the end of this decade.” Mabus made one thing clear -- the void created at Mayport by the decommissioning of the USS John F. Kennedy needs to be filled. –“We believe in strategic dispersal,” he said. –“We believe a carrier needs to come to Mayport. We've had to delay it some for purely budgetary reasons.”

NSA Panama City –
Right here in Bay County, military service members are setting the standard for diving around the world. Wednesday NSA Panama City celebrated the year of the military diver. For more than 100 years, military divers have answered our nation's call. NSA Panama City was excited to invite the public to see inside the life of a military diver and look upon the past centuries accomplishments and advancements in technology. "The new equipment that they have today, than what we had 70 years ago, I mean I was down 135 foot and today they go 2...300 foot down, with half the equipment that I had. It's unbelievable," said World War II Veteran Ray McClelland. Since 1980 the Naval Diving and Salvage Training Center has been the largest school in the world where Navy Divers are trained.

News: NDSTC holds recognition for USCG new Diver rating

The United States Coast Guard (USCG) is having a ceremony to officially recognize their 22nd rating, Diver, among their brothers in arms at the Naval Diving and Salvage Training Center (NDSTC) located at Naval Support Activity Panama City (NSA PC) May 5, 2015. While the official announcement of the rating came Jan. 31, 2014, it wasn't until April 1, 2015, that the first group of Coast Guardsmen were established as Divers. For the past 75 years, we have always had collateral duty divers, and with this new rating we have established a platform for a proficient professional that was able to stay within their job rating, said USCG Capt. Tim
Espinoza, commanding officer of the Maritime Safety and Security Team out of San Diego. –Our mission has always been validated………..

NAS Pensacola –

**Blue Angels announce new commanding officer**


Pensacola News Journal © May 4, 2015

The U.S. Navy Flight Demonstration Squadron, or the Blue Angels, announced the appointment of a commanding officer for the 2016 and 2017 seasons at a press conference at the National Museum of Aviation onboard Pensacola Naval Air Station. A selection panel comprised of ten admirals and former commanding officers selected Cmdr. Ryan Bernacchi to succeed Capt. Tom Frosch. "We prioritized selecting an officer who is an outstanding example of the pride and professionalism of the Navy and Marine Corps," said Kelley. "Commander Bernacchi has a proven record of excellence and will be both a strong flight leader and commanding officer for the 2016 team."………

**Community involvement key to improving education**

http://www.pnj.com/story/news/2015/05/05/community-involvement-key-improving-education/26964993/


By Mary Lett

The Pensacola area has all the tools it needs to improve education and workforce opportunities for its children. However, everyone in the community — business owners, parents, educators —
must get involved. That was pretty much the consensus of business leaders, educators, advocates, parents and residents during a BlabTV town hall meeting on public education Tuesday night. Presented by Cox Communications and Hill Kelly Dodge, the meeting was a follow-up to a Studer Community Institute’s education report that ran in the Pensacola News Journal. Martha Saunders, executive vice president and provost at the University of West Florida, said business leaders have a responsibility to improve the weakest link in education and the community………

**Aviators return home to Pensacola NAS**


Pensacola News Journal © May 6, 2015

By Marketta Davis

Watching the Blue Angels fly overhead during their practice show Wednesday, two very special groups sat in the stands reminiscing about their days being trained at Pensacola Naval Air Station six decades ago. Today's Blues practice was a treat for Aviation Officer Candidate (AOC) Class 29-55 and Naval Aviation Cadet (NAVCAD) Class 34-55 who met on their familiar stomping grounds for their 60th class reunions…………

Florida National Guard –

**Why The National Guard Needs Its Community Connection:** The National Guard is running the risk of losing its long-held community ties as it becomes more aligned with the regular Army.


Task and Purpose © May 7, 2015
It was a beautiful spring evening as my convoy traversed the country roads en route from our state training area back to the armory. It had been a weekend of continuous field operations for my unit, and the soldiers, while tired, were happy to have conducted solid training. As we passed through the small villages and towns, people would wave, honk, or yell, "Thank you," to the convoy as it rolled by. In a few cases, families stopped their barbecues to stand alongside the road together and wave as we went by. I was struck with the thought that if I was on active duty and coming back from the training area, this would never happen. The National Guard's community connection is truly unique. And unfortunately, we're on the verge of losing it.

NAS Whiting Field –

Sacred Heart patient becomes pilot for a day

http://www.pnj.com/story/news/military/2015/05/05/kids-pilot-day-program/26950475/


By Marketta Davis

DreLan "Dre" Whitfield, 9, is a frequent patient at the Children's Hospital at Sacred Heart. He was diagnosed with respiratory/chronic severe asthma and often times has to use an inhaler. But Tuesday, none of that mattered as he received a custom flight suit and the red carpet treatment aboard Whiting Field Naval Air Station for the Children's Hospital Pilot for a Day program. "Once a month, one of the kids from the Children's Hospital gets to come out and NAS Whiting Field hosts the entire day for them," said Julia Humphries, Sacred Heart child life specialist. "They see all the different airplanes and helicopters all the guys train and fly in, they see the night vision goggles, the tower — they show them all of that."
State to Offer N.D. Communities $1.5M to Support Military Bases

North Dakota Gov. Jack Dalrymple (R) on Friday signed legislation funding a $1.5 million base retention grant program for the state’s defense communities. The funds would be allocated for the two years beginning July 1 and would support Grand Forks and Minot Air Force bases, and the Air National Guard Base in Fargo. Each community can receive up to $500,000. The legislation, the state Department of Commerce budget bill, also includes $7.5 million for infrastructure development at the Grand Sky unmanned aerial systems (UAS) business and aviation park at Grand Forks AFB. The 217-acre project is being developed under an enhanced use lease with Grand Forks County. Plans call for 1.2 million square feet of hangar, office, shop, laboratory and data center space required for research, testing, training and operations of UAS…….

State Efforts to Improve License Portability for Spouses Miss Mark

State lawmakers have begun to take aim at the hurdles facing military spouses striving to maintain a career as they move across the country, but so far legislation addressing the portability of professional certifications and licenses has been uneven, according to a panel discussion last week. After moving to Virginia, one spouse, a hairdresser, had to spend four months satisfying state requirements calling for her to obtain notarized copies of the licenses she previously earned in five others states. —Who’s your advocate when you’re that one spouse trying to get a governing body to expedite?” Eddy Mentzer, DOD’s program manager for spouse
education and career opportunities, said April 28 at the American Legion’s National Credentialing Summit in Washington. —May spouses don’t have the resources.”

**Dunford tapped for Joint Chiefs chairman, Selva for vice**


Military Times © May 4, 2015

By Jeff Schogol, Hope Hodge Seck and Aaron Mehta

President Obama will announce Tuesday that he will nominated Marine Corps Commandant Gen. Joseph Dunford as the next chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, sources told Military Times. Obama will also announce that he will nominate Air Force Gen. Paul Selva, currently commander of U.S. Transportation Command, to serve as the next vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, sources said. Dunford, 59, was tapped for commandant of the Marine Corps following a year and a half serving as the commander of International Security Assistance Force, leading all coalition troops in Afghanistan. "Fighting Joe" earned his nickname during the 2003 invasion of Iraq, when, as a colonel, he commanded Regimental Combat Team 5 under Gen. James Mattis. A Ranger-qualified infantryman with jump wings and nearly four years spent between Iraq and Afghanistan, Dunford has the physical presence of a warrior: He has a habit of going on seven-mile runs in the heat of the day and completed the Marine Corps Marathon in 2012 with his adult children Patrick and Kathleen at his side.

**US Navy Cyber Launches Strategic Plan**


Defense News © May 6, 2015

By Joe Gould
The commander of US Navy Cyber announced a five-year strategy, and like the Pentagon's cyber strategy announcement two weeks earlier, acknowledged the dire need for talented workers with the skills to fend off the nation's foes. Vice Adm. Jan Tighe, who assumed command of Fleet Cyber Command/10th Fleet a year ago, said the US Navy is strengthening its ability to defend against intrusions, launch offensive cyber weapons and field 40 cyber mission teams — a task that is halfway done.

**Lawmakers Look to Halt Next Round of Army Downsizing**


Defense Communities 360 © May 10, 2015

With the Army on course to shrink its active-duty end strength by up to 70,000 soldiers in the coming years, lawmakers representing Army communities are eager to offer amendments to the fiscal 2016 defense authorization bill when it goes to the House floor this week that would suspend the planned drawdown. The House Armed Services Committee already denied one attempt to maintain the Army’s end strength at current levels when it marked up the legislation last month. An amendment sponsored by Republican Reps. John Fleming (La.) and Elise Stefanik (N.Y.) called for maintaining troop strength at 490,000, the service’s current target for the end of fiscal 2015. The provision would have prohibited further cuts until six months after officials submitted a strategic and operational analysis of the impact of future reductions, and assessed how the cuts would harm overall readiness.
TF members --

1. **Task Force Meeting This Week** – The next meeting of the Florida Defense Support Task Force will be on Thursday, **May 21, 2015 at the Doubletree Hotel, 101 S. Adams St., Tallahassee, FL** beginning at 9:00 AM in the large room on the ground floor. This meeting will be devoted primarily to the review of 7 grant applications for FY 2015 – 2016. Draft agenda is attached.

2. **No Task Force Meeting in June** – Due to the special legislative session on the budget, the Chairman has approved cancelling the Task Force meeting in June. In its place, we have scheduled a Task Force meeting on August 20th in Ft. Walton in conjunction with FDA.

3. **Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) Review of Defense Grants (DRG & DIG) and FDSTF Grant Program** – OPPAGA continues a review/audit of all defense grants looking at performance measures and returns on investment. Staff has been providing them with a significant amount of data to review. Part of their review process involves contacting Task Force members (and other points of contact for grants). TF members may be receiving a phone call from OPPAGA staff in the next few weeks to discuss the effectiveness of the FDSTF grants during 2012-13 and 2013-14 grant cycle.

4. **Call In Numbers** -- For those calling in, here are the call in numbers:

   **Open Session – 800-501-8979**  
   **Access code: 8784566**

5. **Attachment** – FDSTF Meeting Agenda

Regards, BG.
Bruce Grant
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, FLORIDA DEFENSE SUPPORT TASK FORCE

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Articles of Interest:

BRAC –

Senate Readiness Panel Denies Pentagon’s BRAC Request

http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/senate-readiness-panel-denies-pentagons-brac-request/?utm_source=dc360&utm_campaign=e17729e4a7-RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_04f8f45e8-e17729e4a7-55784537&ct=t%28RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN%29#
The Defense Department would be prohibited from holding a round of base closures, under the portion of the fiscal 2016 defense authorization bill marked up Tuesday by the Senate Armed Services’ Readiness Subcommittee. "At a time when the department cannot afford to fully fund … readiness requirements, I do not support giving the department the authority to pursue a BRAC round," said Subcommittee Chair Kelly Ayotte (R-N.H.), reported CQ Roll Call. The panel’s rejection of the Obama administration’s request to hold a BRAC round in 2017 was not a surprise as Ayotte has made her opposition clear in recent years. She pointed to the potential for a new round to incur significant upfront costs, as the last one did, in explaining her stance at a hearing of the subcommittee in March……..

Lack of BRAC, Extra War Funds Prompt White House Veto Threat over House Defense Bill


The White House on Tuesday threatened to veto the House version of the fiscal 2016 defense authorization bill, citing a host of disputes, including its reliance on the department’s overseas contingency operations (OCO) account to sidestep the statutory spending caps and its failure to adopt many cost-cutting reforms proposed by the Obama administration. The "Statement of Administration Policy" issued by the Office of Management Budget (OMB) highlights language precluding DOD from spending funds on a new round of base closures. "This impairs the ability of the executive branch to plan for contingencies or make other needed adjustments that would improve military effectiveness and efficiency," it states. The department needs Congress to authorize a new BRAC round to "allow DOD to rightsize its infrastructure while providing important assistance to affected communities, freeing resources currently consumed by maintaining unneeded facilities."……..

White House threatens 'alternative options' to close military bases

The Obama administration is threatening to take "alternative options" to close military bases if Congress continues through its annual defense bill to block the Pentagon from conducting another round of closures. The warning was part of a White House veto threat issued on Tuesday against a Republican defense policy bill the House plans to vote on this week. The massive 600-page bill, known as the National Defense Authorization Act, authorizes Pentagon spending and activities in 2016. The bill prohibits Pentagon leaders from conducting a new round of base closures through a process known as Base Realignment and Closure, or BRAC, which the Department of Defense (DOD) has been trying to do for several years under budget constraints. ...........

DOD Budget–

Issue Tracker: NDAA Hits House Floor


Defense News © May 12, 2015

By John T. Bennett

The House this week will take up a massive Armed Services Committee-approved Pentagon policy bill that would add billions to a list of Defense Department weapon programs and keep alive some targeted for cuts by the services. The panel's measure proposes a $495.9 billion base Pentagon budget and an $89.2 billion war account, also called the overseas contingency operations (OCO) fund. What's more, it proposes keeping alive the Air Force's A-10 attack plane fleet and endorses extra funding for additional F/A-18 Boeing-made and F-35B Lockheed Martin-made fighter jets for the Navy and Marine Corps. It also authorizes an OCO account with $38 billion more than the administration requested to offset defense spending caps........
HASC's Ranking Dem Will Oppose Its NDAA

http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/policy-budget/congress/2015/05/13/house-ndaa-military-veto/27232755/

Defense News © May 13, 2015

By John T. Bennett

In a rare move, House Armed Services Committee Ranking Member Adam Smith announced Wednesday he will oppose the panel's 2016 Pentagon policy bill. The measure includes a war fund with nearly $40 billion added that essentially are base-budget funds. But since Republican congressional leaders are opposed to equal domestic-spending hikes, Smith and other House Democrats say they will vote no later this week when the chamber votes on its 2016 NDAA

Democrats to Oppose House Authorization Bill over Reliance on OCO Funds

http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/democrats-to-oppose-house-authorization-bill-over-reliance-on-oco-funds/?utm_source=dc360&utm_campaign=7b97353ab7-RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_04f8ff45e8-7b97353ab7-55784537&ct=t%28RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN%29#

Defense Communities 360 © May 13, 2015

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) will whip Democrats against the fiscal 2016 defense authorization bill over opposition to the measure’s reliance on DOD’s overseas contingency operations (OCO) account to get around the Budget Control Act spending caps. The unprecedented move follows a DOD briefing Wednesday for House Democrats that concluded, "this bill is the wrong bill,” according to House Democratic Caucus Chair Xavier Becerra (D-Calif.). The annual policy legislation typically passes with bipartisan support. Equally surprising was the announcement by Adam Smith (D-Wash.), ranking member of the House Armed Services Committee, that he also would vote against the measure.
White House Opposes Defense Bill Language Mandating Headquarters Downsizing

Defense Communities 360 © May 13, 2015

Language in the House version of the fiscal 2016 defense authorization bill requiring DOD to trim its headquarters budgets and personnel by 20 percent over five years garnered a strong objection from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), which claimed the provision was unnecessary. The bill stipulates that the streamlining initiative generate $10 billion in savings and calls for the department to prepare an accurate baseline accounting of defense headquarters budgets and personnel, and detailed information on planned reductions in management headquarters. The department, however, already is carrying out a plan to reduce headquarters personnel, according to OMB’s “Statement of Administration Policy” issued Tuesday for H.R. 1735. That effort should be implemented by FY 2019, but has projected savings of only $5.3 billion………….

Defense budget fight hits House floor: It’s Mac Thornberry vs. the fiscal hawks, liberals, and Obama — and he might just win.

Politico © May 14, 2015

By Jeremy Herb

Mac Thornberry, the new chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, will be the man in the middle on Thursday as this year’s Defense Authorization Bill goes to the floor. Liberals will question the size of the $612 billion defense budget; fiscal conservatives will charge that the military spending increases he helped engineer represent a blatant end run around spending guidelines. At stake is $38 billion for the military — the amount Thornberry persuaded House leaders to include in March in the overall Republican budget plan via a special war fund that evades the fiscal limits enacted by his fellow Republicans in 2011. But in the eyes of Thornberry and other defense hawks, more is at stake than fiscal restraint: the long-term fate of the military’s budget. This week’s debate is a key part of the bruising fight this year over whether the military
budget will continue to decline in a period of austerity or return to the meaty years before the 2011 budget caps put a stranglehold on federal spending………..

**Playing politics with defense spending**

http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/playing-politics-with-defense/2015/05/14/88ee4768-fa66-11e4-9ef4-1bb7ce3b3fb7_story.html

Washington Post © May 14, 2015

THERE ISN’T much bipartisan governance left in Washington, but if anything still fits that description, it’s probably the annual defense authorization act, which sets spending levels and policy for the Pentagon, and, therefore, usually brings Republicans and Democrats together in support of national security and the troops. On April 30, the Republican-led House Armed Services Committee approved a $600 billion-plus bill by a bipartisan vote of 60 to 2. Thursday, the Senate counterpart did the same, by a bipartisan vote of 22 to 4. Now that the bill is headed to the full House, however, President Obama is threatening a veto and House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi is urging her caucus to vote no. Mr. Obama and Ms. Pelosi’s main objection is that the bill uses budgetary legerdemain to let the Pentagon escape sequestration budget caps, while other discretionary spending remains constrained by them………

**Senate Panel Fails to Resolve Questions over OCO End-Around**

http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/senate-panel-fails-to-resolve-questions-over-oco-end-around/#

Defense Communities 360 © May 14, 2015

The Senate Armed Services Committee on Thursday approved its fiscal 2016 defense authorization bill, 22-4, after failing to assuage Democrats opposed to the measure’s reliance on DOD’s war funding account to evade the statutory spending caps. The committee’s draft legislation, like the version being debated this week on the House floor, authorizes DOD to spend $38 billion of funds added to its overseas contingency operations (OCO) account for items traditionally funded in its base budget. Stashing the extra funds in the OCO account allows Congress and the Pentagon to sidestep the Budget Control Act (BCA) caps. Democrats, and some fiscal conservatives, have called the maneuver a “gimmick.” And the White House has
issued a veto threat against legislation that adheres to the spending caps or provides extra funds to DOD but not to domestic agencies………

After OCO Drama, House Passes Defense Bill

http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/policy-budget/congress/2015/05/15/ndaa-2016-house-military/27362407/

Defense News © May 15, 2015
By John T. Bennett

The House on Friday voted to add billions to a list of Defense Department weapon programs from cuts, and signed off on a $495.9 billion base Pentagon budget and an $89.2 billion war account. The legislation proposes keeping alive the Air Force's A-10 attack plane fleet and endorses extra funding for additional F/A-18 Super Hornet and F-35B Lightning II fighter jets for the Navy and Marine Corps. The final vote, 269-151, was closer than expected a week ago. That's because House Armed Services Committee Ranking Member Adam Smith, D-Wash., and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi of California came out against the measure because it included nearly $40 billion in additional funding for the Pentagon via a war account………

House Passes Defense Authorization Bill Opposed by Obama


Military.com © May 15, 2015

The House passed a nearly $612 billion defense policy bill Friday despite President Barack Obama's veto threat and Democratic worries that the measure opens the door to sharp cuts in domestic spending later this year. The vote was 269 to 151 for the bill, which maps next year's military and national security programs. A 2011 bipartisan budget deal placed caps on defense and domestic spending. The defense bill that passed skirts those limits by putting $89 billion of the total into an emergency war-fighting fund, which is exempt from the caps. Democrats predict that Republicans won't attempt to do end-runs around the spending caps when it comes to domestic spending………
SASC Markup Whacks LRS Bomber; Adds 12 Super Hornets, 6 F-35Bs

http://breakingdefense.com/2015/05/sasc-markup-whacks-lrs-bomber-adds-12-super-hornets-6-f-35bs/

Breaking Defense © May 14, 2015

By Colin Clark

The Navy won and the Air Force lost in the markup of the Senate Armed Services Committee. Sens. John McCain and Jack Reed presided over the SASC markup of the defense policy bill, cutting $860 million from three Air Force programs — including the two of the service’s top three priorities — and moving the money to pay for things the Air Force doesn’t want: the $355 million restoration of the A-10, which the Air Force wants to retire; buying 24 more General Atomics MQ-9 Reaper drones for $480 million; and moving another $75 million to add back the Compass Call aircraft the Air Force wanted to retire, The bill will lower spending by $200 million for Lockheed Martin’s GPS III satellite; $460 million for the Long Range Strike Bomber (being battled over by Boeing-Lockheed and Northrop Grumman); and $200 million for the long-sought KC-46 airborne tanker (Boeing). The House also cut $460 million from the LRSB……..

MacDill AFB –

MyMacDill campaign gathers momentum


Tampa Bay Times © May 14, 2015
Gov. Rick Scott calls it an "important part of our state's history." Mayor Bob Buckhorn points to the people. And University of South Florida President Judy Genshaft dubs it a "pillar of the Tampa Bay region." The trio of Florida leaders are among the first to post video diaries online in support of MacDill Air Force Base after the Tampa Bay Defense Alliance launched a community pride campaign called My MacDill. The idea is to celebrate its 75th anniversary next year and thwart a potential closure, something Washington lawmakers have combated for years despite the Pentagon's belief that it has superfluous facility capacity nationwide. The initiative encourages Tampa Bay residents to share their experiences and stories about the base. The campaign organizers are directing people to MyMacDill.com, where they can upload stories, photos and videos about the base………..

Socom looks to enhance interactions with industry, academia


Tampa Tribune © May 18, 2015

By Howard Altman

Imagine a Special Operations Forces Industry Conference in Tampa every single day of the year. Imagine U.S. Special Operations Command reaching out to inventors, industry and academia with needs, and a place to bring them all together to figure out how to rapidly turn ideas into prototypes. It is not pure imagination. It is a concept Socom has dubbed—Thunderdome.” —We are looking at venues and creating opportunities where we can better interact with the local community and take advantage of the incredible talent in academic institutions, small business and large business and create venues where we can all come together and work on problems,” says James —Hondo” Geurts, Socom’s head of acquisitions. With the annual SOFIC conference in town, Geurts is kind of like the king of what I call—commando prom” this week……….
Utah citizens take AF Reserve training to Florida


Air Force Reserve Command © May 11, 2015

By Tech. Sgt. Michael McCool

Everyday Utah citizens, who also serve part time in the Air Force Reserve, spent two weeks in Florida April 19 to May 20, sharpening their skills and preparing for future deployments. About 300 Air Force reservists from the 419th Fighter Wing's operations, maintenance, and mission support groups worked alongside their active-duty counterparts at Eglin Air Force Base during their annual training tour. The bulk of personnel were there to support Emerald Warrior, a special operations training exercise that leverages lessons learned from operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom………..

Pentagon Will Attempt Competition On F-35 Upgrades


Aviation Week © May 15, 2015

After announcing that it will structure the Long-Range Strike Bomber program to include competitive proposals for costly block upgrades with the aim of controlling sustainment costs, the Pentagon —will try” to do the same with the Lockheed Martin F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, according to William LaPlante, U.S. Air Force assistant secretary for acquisition. As a first step, he said at a meeting here today, the service will be pushing for a more-open systems architecture in Block 4, the first post-service-entry upgrade, which is now being defined. —It’s not decided.” LaPlante said, —but we’re going to try.” This would make it possible for later upgrades, or elements of them, to be competed……..
USS Taylor decommissioned; officer's family recalls his heroism


Florida Times-Union © May 8, 2015

By Clifford Davis

The last sailors walked off the brow of the USS Taylor (FFG-50) on Friday as Mayport said goodbye to one of its last remaining frigates. However, this frigate’s work isn’t done. As the U.S. Navy and Mayport welcome in the frigate’s replacement, the littoral combat ship and fast frigate, the USS Taylor and three other Oliver Hazard-Perry class frigates will be sold to Taiwan under the Naval Transfer Act of 2013. —We’ve had a long-standing commitment to Taiwan,” said Adm. Phil Davidson, commanding officer of U.S. Fleet Forces Command and a former CO of the Taylor. —Part of that commitment has been transferring ships and aircraft there. —This is another in that line.”

USS Carney Holds Change of Command


Mayport Mirror © May 13, 2015

On May 8, 2015 at a ceremony on Naval Station Mayport, Commander Edward Crossman was relieved by Commander Kenneth Pickard as Commanding Officer of USS Carney (DDG 64). The ceremony began with an invocation by Lt. Cmdr. Stephen Cloer, followed by the singing of the national anthem by Lt.j.g. Jessica Bronson and Ensign Michael La Pietra. Commander, Destroyer Squadron 14, Commodore Glenn Kuffel attended the ceremony and Rear Adm. David Gale was the guest speaker. Gale delivered a speech highlighting Crossman’s outstanding leadership, exceptional performance, and dedication to duties as the commanding officer of USS Carney (DDG 64).

Naval Station Mayport honors sailors killed on USS Stark
Hundreds gathered at Naval Station Mayport on Friday to honor 37 sailors who were killed aboard the USS Stark. The Navy ship was struck by missiles fired by an Iraqi warplane in 1987 during the first Gulf War. Surviving members of the crew and family members of the sailors killed were in attendance. “It really helps to come and see the outpouring of support, to meet the families especially of those that were lost and injured, and to reminisce and get back with them. It’s just something I think we need,” former USS Stark sailor Lawrence Barrow said.

Homestead ARB –

**Military families moving to Homestead often must wait in hotels for background checks**

Dee Sonntag moved to South Florida from North Carolina when her husband Kurt was stationed at the Homestead Air Reserve Base last year. Like most military families, the Sonntags knew the drill with relocation: you get 10 days to pack up, move and settle in a new home. They didn’t expect, however, to have to wait up to 30 days to get approved by their new homeowners association. “They tell you they need to run background checks, but the soldiers already have all these security clearances,” Sonntag said. “It was unexpected for us. It could be more efficient because then you’re sitting in a hotel.” The military community has a harder time relocating in Homestead because the majority of homes are managed by homeowners associations. Most don’t take into account the limited time families have to move in.
Miami-Dade could sell land for FedEx distribution center


South Florida Business Journal © May 11, 2015
By Brian Bandell

FedEx is looking to build a distribution in Homestead. Miami-Dade County could sell land near the Homestead Air Reserve Base to the developer of a FedEx distribution center. The county commission’s Economic Prosperity Committee will consider a deal on May 14 to sell 48.9 acres to SunCap Property Group for $4.45 million. The Charlotte, N.C.-based company plans to build a warehouse and distribution facility for FedEx - a project it has experience completing around the country, including one currently under construction near West Palm Beach.

Tyndall AFB –

Utility rate team completes 8-year study, finds millions in potential cost savings


By Kevin Elliott

The Air Force Civil Engineer Center recently completed a groundbreaking eight-year review of utility rates for nearly 70 Air Force bases in the continental U.S. and found millions of dollars of potential savings for the service. AFCEC Energy Directorate's Utility Rate Management Team (URMT) along with utility rate consultants Exeter Associates, discovered over $22 million in
possible installation utility cost reductions. The URMT team is comprised of a lead engineer, regulatory economists and support staff who analyze and negotiate utility services on behalf of the Air Force. Starting in 2007, the URMT began systematically visiting Air Force installations, and examined electric, natural gas, water, and wastewater invoices and contracts for potential savings. The team soon realized the opportunities were many and varied……..

Florida National Guard –

**Governors to Congress: Don't make cuts to National Guard**


The Hill © May 12, 2015

By **Kristina Wong**

The nation’s governors on Tuesday urged Congress to reject any personnel or equipment cuts from the Army National Guard, as lawmakers craft the defense bill that authorizes spending and activities in 2016. "The nation’s governors call on Congress to maintain Army National Guard (ARNG) aircraft, personnel and force structure," said a statement by the National Governors Association (NGA), which represents all governors. The group said provisions in both the House and Senate bills would allow for the transfer of all remaining Army National Guard Apache attack helicopters to the active-duty Army and cut more than 8,000 personnel. The cuts would affect an additional 15,000 personnel nationwide, who would need to be reassigned or retrained, it added. ……..

**Army Helo Cuts Save $176M A Year Over Guard Plan: CAPE**


Breaking Defense © May 14, 2015

By **Sydney J. Freedberg Jr.**
The Pentagon’s hardest-nosed accountants have endorsed the Army’s Aviation Restructure Initiative. ARI is a controversial cost-cutting plan which would retire the Vietnam-vintage OH-58 Kiowa scout helicopters and replace them with AH-64 Apache gunships taken from the National Guard. The Army said ARI, once fully implemented, would save $1.09 billion a year. In a document obtained by Breaking Defense, the independent Cost Assessment & Program Evaluation (CAPE) estimate comes in almost the same, at $906 million. In a comparison mandated by Congress in last year’s defense spending bill, CAPE found the Army’s plan would save $176 million more a year than the National Guard Bureau’s counter-proposal, which would have left some Apaches in the Guard. The Guard Bureau plan would also cost an additional $493 million up-front in one-time costs to buy more aircraft. A recent Government Accountability Office (GAO) study also found the Guard plan would cost more……..

Defense Industry –

Northrop Grumman Aims To Retain Grip on Aviation

http://www.nationaldefensemagazine.org/archive/2015/June/Pages/NorthropGrummanAimsToR etainGripAviation.aspx

National Defense Magazine © June 2015

By Sandra I. Erwin

Almost all military contractors these days see every competition as a “must win.” And that is especially true for Northrop Grumman Corp. as it makes a big play to join the ranks of Lockheed Martin and Boeing as one of the nation’s top manufacturers of combat aircraft. The company has set its sights on upcoming Air Force competitions that would give the winners a once-in-a-generation chance to solidify their place in the industry. The biggest prize will be the $55 billion long-range strike bomber program. Other coveted deals will be the contract to build a fleet of training jets for Air Force fighter pilots, and a $2 billion program to replace aging ground surveillance airplanes. Northrop Grumman Corporate Vice President Thomas E. Vice said the company has spent years preparing for these high-stakes competitions……

Brevard County, Florida Considers $8M Economic Development Incentives for Aerospace Project
At their next meeting, the Board of County Commissioners of Brevard County, FL will consider a proposal to offer as much as $8 million in economic development incentives to secure a high-tech aerospace facility involving a large investment and hundreds of high-wage jobs. The grant award resolution, sought by the North Brevard Economic Development Zone (NBEDZ), is for an aerospace company identified in county documents only as ―Project Panther.” Project Panther is planning to make approximately in between $205 million to $220 million in new capital investments to establish a new 155,000-square-foot aerospace facility. They expect to create 330 new jobs with an average annual wage of approximately $89,000. The Florida site under consideration for the project is located in Exploration Park. The company is seeking $8 million from the NBEDZ for infrastructure improvements vital for making the site suitable for a high-tech aerospace design and manufacturing facility.

Other Items of Interest –

Mabus to push big changes to PT, career opportunities

http://www.navytimes.com/story/military/2015/05/12/navy-secretary-mabus-fitness-women-seals-changes/27170391/

Navy Times © May 12, 2015

By Meghann Myers

Fair fitness standards, less online training, more educational opportunities and a better balance of work and family life. Those hot button issues for sailors and Marines are now at the forefront of a new campaign by the Navy's top civilian to boost quality of life and recruit more women into the ranks. Navy Secretary Ray Mabus is set to unveil a host of far-reaching initiatives and policy changes Wednesday, aimed at improving quality of life and careers for sailors and Marines,
many which came directly from the deckplates, a senior Navy official has confirmed to Navy Times. Mabus plans to to ease body fat restrictions, boost career flexibility, and push to recruit more women in the Navy and Marine Corps, while opening up the last billets that remain closed to them…….

**Defense secretary names next Army, Navy chiefs**


The Hill © May 13, 2015

By Kristina Wong

Defense Secretary Ash Carter on Wednesday announced the nominations of Gen. Mark Milley for Army chief of staff, and Adm. John Richardson as the next chief of naval operations. Carter said the nominations also had the support of Army Secretary John McHugh and Navy Secretary Ray Mabus, as well as the current Army Chief of Staff Gen. Ray Odierno and Chief of Naval Operations Adm. John Greenert. Carter hailed Milley as "a warrior and a statesman." "He not only has plenty of operational and joint experience in Afghanistan and Iraq and on the joint staff, but he also has the intellect and vision to lead change throughout the Army," he said. ……

**Air Force Identifies Millions in Potential Utility Rate Savings**


Defense Communities 360 © May 14, 2015

Air Force officials have identified more than $22 million in potential savings on utility costs following an eight-year review of utility rates for nearly 70 Air Force bases in the continental United States. In 2007, the Air Force Civil Engineer Center’s (AFCEC) energy directorate found a variety of opportunities to cut costs after it began examining electric, natural gas, water and wastewater invoices and contracts for potential savings. “We found savings in multiple ways,” Nancy Coleal, chief of the utility rate management team, told [AFCEC Public Affairs](http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/air-force-identifies-millions-in-potential-utility-rate-savings/?utm_source=dc360&utm_campaign=370cc67e30-RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_04f8ff45e8-370cc67e30-55784537&ct=t%28RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN%29#).
Sometimes it was a billing error, sometimes a simple rate change. Every situation was unique; we really had to examine each base case by case,” Coleal said……..
June 3, 2015 – FDSTF Update

TF members --

1. **July Task Force Meeting** – The next meeting of the Florida Defense Support Task Force will be on Thursday, **July 16, 2015 in Tampa** beginning at 9:00 AM. Will forward the hotel information with next week’s update.

2. **No Task Force Meeting in June** – Due to the special legislative session on the budget, the Chairman has approved cancelling the Task Force meeting in June.

3. **Attachments:**
   - TPG Monthly Report
   - Veterans Legislative Summary from FDVA

Regards, BG.

Bruce Grant

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Articles of Interest:

**BRAC** –

**New BRAC round inches forward in pending defense bill**

[Link](http://www.militarytimes.com/story/military/capitol-hill/2015/05/18/ndaa-new-brac-study/27524421/)

Military Times © May 18, 2015

By Leo Shane III

Pentagon officials won't get congressional permission for a new base closure round next year. But they might be inching closer. Both the House and Senate versions of the 2016 defense authorization bill again prohibit a new base closure round, despite defense leaders' repeated pleas for the infrastructure reduction tool. Lawmakers have called the process too costly financially and in terms of public support, especially given the divisive nature of the 2005 base closing round. However, the House did include language in its draft bill calling for a militarywide review of "force-structure plans and infrastructure inventory" that outsiders hope could be the precursor to another base closure round, by providing better justification for the need to shutter some military facilities………

**White House Highlights Need for BRAC in Veto Threat over Senate Measure**

[Link](http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/white-house-highlights-need-for-brac-in-veto-threat-over-senate-measure/?utm_source=dc360&utm_campaign=bb4bca386f-
The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) on Tuesday cited the lack of language authorizing a new BRAC round as one of the key factors that could prompt President Obama to veto the Senate version of the fiscal 2016 defense authorization bill. OMB’s “Statement of Administration Policy” echoed the veto threat the agency issued last month in response to the House version of the policy bill. Both statements highlighted the need for a BRAC round and the bills’ reliance on DOD’s war account to boost its budget rather than raising the Budget Control Act spending caps as issues that would need to be resolved before the president would sign the legislation.

FDSTF –

_Military records exemption reaches Scott's desk_

http://www.pnj.com/story/news/politics/2015/05/19/military-records-exemption-reaches-scotts-desk/27602861/

Pensacola News-Journal © May 19, 2015

By Jim Turner

A proposal intended to make it tougher for evildoers to track the home addresses of military service members and military families has been sent to Gov. Rick Scott. However, the leader of an open-government group that has asked Scott to veto the measure (HB 185) argues it will simply create a hardship for county record-keepers and may do little to provide actual security. "This is huge in terms of redactions that are going to have to be made," said Barbara Petersen, president of the First Amendment Foundation. "I understood what they were trying to do. I just don't think they thought it through."
House Spending Bill Includes Inflated OCO

http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/policy-budget/budget/2015/05/19/house-gop-defense-budget/27576005/

Defense News © May 19, 2015
By John T. Bennett

Defying opposition from conservative Republicans and liberal Democrats, House appropriators are proposing a Pentagon spending bill with nearly $90 billion in a politically controversial war account. The House Appropriations Committee on Tuesday morning released its 2016 Pentagon-funding bill, which proposes $578.6 billion in defense spending. That includes an $88.4 billion overseas contingency operations (OCO) account, setting up a potential battle on the House floor. The committee's overall funding level would be $24.4 billion above the amount enacted for the current fiscal year. House and Senate Republican leaders earlier this year added around $40 billion to the war fund in the GOP-crafted 2016 budget resolution to appease defense hawks and secure their votes on that measure……

Senate Milcon Bill Surpasses House Panel’s Spending Recommendation

http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/senate-milcon-bill-surpasses-house-panels-spending-recommendation/?utm_source=dc360&utm_campaign=154b64ae27-RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_04f8ff45e8-154b64ae27-55784537&ct=t%28RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN%29

Defense Communities 360 © May 20, 2015

Spending on military construction and family housing programs in fiscal 2016 would rise $1.3 billion over current year funding to $8.1 billion, under the spending bill marked up Tuesday by a Senate Appropriations subcommittee. The milcon spending level recommended by the Senate Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Subcommittee would be $400 million higher than the amount included in the appropriations bill passed by the House on April 30. Both versions, though, take a significant step toward restoring milcon funding to levels allocated as recently as FY 2014. Spending on military construction programs dropped about one-third in the
current year as the department opted to defer a portion of its construction program to fund higher priorities such as operations and readiness…….

**House Defense Spending Bill Employs Extra Funds**


Defense Communities 360 © May 20, 2015

DOD would receive $579 billion in discretionary spending in fiscal 2016, an increase of $24.4 billion above the current level and $800 million above the president’s request, under the draft defense spending bill unveiled Tuesday by the House Appropriations Committee. The spending bill takes advantage of $88 billion included in DOD’s overseas contingency operations (OCO) account under the budget resolution adopted by the House and Senate. That represents the department’s share of the $96 billion in funds allocated to the OCO account to elude the Budget Control Act cap on defense spending. The administration had requested only $58 billion for the war account…….

**House Panel Sends DoD Spending Bill to Floor**


Defense News © June 2, 2015

By John T. Bennett

The House Appropriations Committee on Tuesday approved a bill that proposes nearly $600 billion in 2016 defense spending, leaving intact a controversial $88 billion war account and fully funding weapon programs. The measure, largely crafted by Appropriations Defense subcommittee Chairman Rep. Rodney Frelinghuysen, R-N.J., proposes $578.6 billion in defense spending and heads next to the chamber floor. The committee's overall funding level would be $24.4 billion above the amount enacted for the current fiscal year. It passed overwhelmingly via voice vote, with support from Republicans and Democrats…….
White House Blasts ‘Budget Gimmicks’ in House Defense Spending Bill


Military.com © June 2, 2015

by Brendan McGarry

The White House is criticizing proposed defense spending legislation in the U.S. House of Representatives for relying on "budget gimmicks." Echoing comments from other administration officials, Shaun Donovan, director of the White House's Office of Management and Budget, on Monday slammed the Republican plan to use emergency war funding to get around spending caps on the base defense budget. "We have a number of serious concerns about this legislation, which would underfund these important investments in the base budget and instead rely on budget gimmicks that have been criticized by members of both parties," he wrote in a letter to Rep. Hal Rogers, R-Kentucky, chairman of the House Appropriations Committee……..

Cut ‘Pure Overhead,’ Navy Sec. Mabus Says: DFAS, DLA, DOT&E


Breaking Defense © June 2, 2015

By Sydney J. Freedberg Jr.

In what looks very much like an opening shot in a fundamental fiscal battle between the four armed services and the Office of Secretary of Defense, Navy Secretary Ray Mabus came right out today and said we should preserve fighting forces by cutting Defense Department agencies that are pure overhead,” His prime candidates? The testers who make sure the services’ weapons actually work; the Defense Logistics Agency that buys supplies like fuel; and — the particular target of the SecNav’s ire — the Defense Finance and Accounting Service. Don’t cut my budget, cut the other fellow is a standard Washington plea in times of tightening budgets. Ray Mabus himself has repeatedly urged cost-cutters in Congress to spare the services and target the Defense Department’s independent agencies and the Office of the Secretary of Defense. But I’ve never heard him name names before……….
OMB Chief: Fix Sequestration, End OCO 'Gimmick'


Defense News © June 2, 2015

By Joe Gould and John T. Bennett

Ahead of a House Appropriations Committee markup session set for Tuesday, a senior White House official sent a letter to committee leadership decrying the use of war accounts to pay for routine operations as a "gimmick" and called for a fix for sequestration budget cuts, lest they place national security "at unnecessary risk." Shaun Donovan, director of the Office of Management and Budget, sent the letter Monday night to Rep. Hal Rogers, R-Ky., the committee chairman, and top House Appropriations Democrat Rep. Nita Lowey, of New York, that likely will provide ammunition for the floor debate over the budget in the coming weeks. The committee's Defense subpanel approved its markup in May, which mostly fully funds big-ticket Pentagon weapon programs.

Air Force Certifies SpaceX To Launch Military Satellites


Defense One © May 26, 2015

May 26, 2015

By Tim Fernholz

The US Air Force announced today that it certified SpaceX to launch national security payloads, from spy satellites to mystery drones, ending the monopoly held by the Boeing-Lockheed Martin joint venture, United Launch Alliance (ULA). The move is another milestone in the development of SpaceX from start-up to a legitimate aerospace company, giving it access to a major customer for its Falcon 9 rocket, which can carry spacecraft weighing several tons into low-earth and geo-synchronous orbits. The company has already successfully performed 18 missions with the rocket, including for NASA and private companies, but national security launches come with a raft of additional technical, safety, and security requirements.
MacDill AFB –

**US SOCOM Evaluates Vehicle for Osprey**


Defense News © May 19, 2015

By Joe Gould

US Special Operations Command is evaluating what it needs for a vehicle to be transported inside a CV-22 Osprey — the Pentagon's latest foray into the growing light-vehicles market. Air Force special tactics squadrons would use a speedy off-road vehicle for combat search-and-rescue operations, deep reconnaissance missions and combat controller team insertions on rugged, hostile territory, program officials say. Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) has, since trading its MH-53 Pave Low for the tilt-rotor Osprey in 2008, sought a narrow vehicle to fit inside it. Special Operations Command (SOCOM) plans to wrap up a yearlong proof-of-concept evaluation of the General Dynamics Flyer 60 in July and finalize its requirements. The goal is to post a request for proposals in late 2016 and a competitive award for 68 vehicles in 2017. Program officials said the Flyer 60 was evaluated as a representative of the class of light, commercially available vehicles……..

**Two hurricane hunter planes at MacDill AFB to get $42 million upgrade**


Tampa Bay Times © May 26, 2015

By Tamara Lush, Associated Press
The hurricane planes known affectionately as "Miss Piggy" and "Kermit" are getting new Rolls-Royce engines, new wings and better radar. Every hurricane season for nearly four decades, the two technologically packed planes have flown into storms at speeds of up to 300 mph, collecting research and forecasting data to transmit back to the mainland. The 38-year-old planes are getting $42 million "nose-to-tail" upgrades of key components. The money comes from the post-Hurricane Sandy Disaster Relief Appropriations Act of 2013. While the planes are routinely maintained, this is the first big overhaul in more than a decade. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration estimates that the refurbishments could keep them flying for decades. The improvements also will mean better fuel efficiency and additional safety for the crew and scientists who fly in the mobile weather stations. 

Florida County Considers Acquiring Airport Property from Eglin AFB


Defense Communities 360 © May 20, 2015

In a bid to save money and help shield Eglin Air Force Base, Fla., during a future round of base closures, Okaloosa County officials are considering purchasing the property of the Destin-Fort Walton Beach Airport that it now leases from the installation. County commissioners on Tuesday voted to ask county airport officials to research the issue, reported Northwest Florida Daily News. The county currently leases the 131-acre airport property for about $400,000 a year. The airport had been called Northwest Florida Regional Airport until its name was changed earlier this year. Obtaining ownership of the land could help protect Eglin in the event of a future BRAC round, according to County Airports Director Sunil Harman. Purchasing the property also would save the county millions of dollars over the long run. “As we project out over 50 years, there’s a $45 million cost in maintaining the current arrangement.” Harman told the paper. “No civilian airport of this size and capacity can endure that sort of burden.” One priority for extra funds would be to attract additional air service to the airport.
AFIMSC stands up final detachment at AFMC


AFMC © May 27, 2015

by Kim Bowden, Air Force Materiel Command Public Affairs

The Air Force Installation and Mission Support Center activated its tenth and final detachment, Detachment 6, during a ceremony here May 26, 2015. Detachment 6 will directly support Air Force Materiel Command, which is also AFIMSC’s parent major command. Maj. Gen. Theresa Carter, AFIMSC commander, presided over the activation ceremony as Col. Jeffrey Todd assumed command of the new detachment. Todd will serve as the interim commander until Col. Shawn Moore, currently the 96th Civil Engineer Group commander at Eglin Air Force Base, Florida, arrives later in the summer. "This is a new approach for the Air Force, and in some ways it's like buying a new car," Carter said. "You don't expect a lot of things to go wrong with a brand new car, but sometimes there are hazards that you can't predict. Roadside assistance gives you advice and counsel and sends a relief team when you need it. That's what I would argue our detachments are doing. Our detachments respond to the warning lights on the dashboard, making sure our Center knows what support our commanders and installations need." ……..

Changes coming to Eglin leadership


Northwest Florida Daily News © May 26, 2015

By KELLY HUMPHREY | Daily News

The 96th Test Wing will soon have a new commander. Col. Christopher Azzano, who most recently served as the commander of the 72nd Air Base Wing and installation commander at Tinker Air Force Base, will assume command of the Eglin’s largest wing on June 4. Azzano will take the place of Brig. Gen. David Harris, who will pin on his second star that same day. Harris is being promoted to commander of the Air Force Test Center at Edwards Air Force
Base in California. While some local military watchers have expressed concern that a colonel is taking command of a wing that traditionally has been led by a brigadier general, a local member of the Air Force Chief of Staff’s Civic Leader Program dismisses those worries.

Tyndall AFB –

**Tyndall unveils changes to waterway security proposal**


News Herald © June 2, 2015

By VALERIE GARMAN

Officials from Tyndall Air Force Base unveiled changes to a draft waterway security plan Tuesday that was recently submitted to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for review. The original proposal, noticed by the Corps in May 2013, was met with backlash from residents concerned about restricted access to local waterways, including those surrounding Shell Island and Crooked Island. The outcry prompted Tyndall to take another look at the plan and involve the public in several town hall meetings to receive additional feedback.

**QF-4 targeting drone takes last flight at Tyndall**

[Link](http://www.airforcetimes.com/story/military/2015/05/30/qf4-targeting-drone-last-flight/28015077/)

Air Force Times © May 30, 2015

By Brian Everstine
The mission for the QF-4 targeting drone is over, with the last of the converted F-4 Phantom IIs destroyed over the Gulf of Mexico. Since 1997, the Air Force has flown 315 QF-4 drones as targets for training and weapons testing. On Wednesday, the 82nd Aerial Targets Squadron operated the last of the fleet on a training mission out of Tyndall Air Force Base, Florida. The jet was destroyed during a live weapons testing flight, according to base public affairs. The Air Force's new fleet of QF-16s, converted Fighting Falcons, will now take over the unmanned targeting drone role. The aircraft, converted block 15, 20 and 30 variants of the F-16, first began unmanned test flights in 2013, with the first production model arriving at the Florida base in March 2015. The service expects to field 210 of the converted jets…….

Florida National Guard –

Clay commissioners seek solutions to preserve Keystone Heights Lakes


Florida Times-Union © May 27, 2015

By Teresa Stepzinski

Collaboration between county and state agencies is key to restoring, protecting and preserving water levels in the Keystone Heights chain of lakes — a primary source recharging the Floridan aquifer supplying drinking water throughout Northeast Florida. That was the consensus flowing Wednesday during the Clay County water summit the county commission hosted. Participating in the four-hour workshop were stakeholders: Save Our Lakes Organization, a nonprofit citizens group dedicated to restoring lake water levels, and officials from the St. Johns River Water Management District, Clay County Utility Authority and Camp Blanding…….
Defense Bill Creates Path From Navy, Coast Guard to Maritime Industry Jobs

http://news.usni.org/2015/05/18/defense-bill-creates-path-from-navy-coast-guard-to-maritime-industry-jobs

USNI News © May 17, 2015

By Megan Eckstein

The House-passed National Defense Authorization Act creates a simpler path from a career in the Navy or Coast Guard to a career in the commercial maritime industry, a boon to both veterans and businesses. Rep. Mark Takai (D-Hawaii) proposed an amendment that was accepted by House Armed Services Committee Democrats and Republicans that would help those who served primarily as mariners to take their skills to private industry. Several efforts have emerged over the past few years to help military medics become EMTs, or military vehicle drivers obtain a commercial driver’s license, without having to start at the beginning of the training and certification process. Takai’s amendment, a congressional staffer told USNI News, would apply this principle to the maritime industry, which is struggling to find qualified workers. The amendment states that “to the greatest extent practicable … members of the armed forces whose duties are primarily as a mariner receive training opportunities necessary to meet the requirements for licenses, certificates of registry, and merchant mariners’ documents.” For those in shipboard engineering positions, the Navy and Coast Guard would create a designated path to meet the requirements for such licenses, documents, and endorsement commensurate with their positional responsibilities.”

Lockheed considers 300-employee expansion in Titusville


Florida Today © May 20, 2015
Lockheed Martin Corp. is looking to make an $80 million investment in expanded facilities in Titusville, and could add up to 300 high-paying jobs. The aerospace company, however, also has been considering other locations for the expansion, including Georgia, according to Greg Weiner, senior director of business development for the Economic Development Commission of Florida's Space Coast.

Other Items of Interest –

**Senate Committee to Conduct Comprehensive Review of Military Forces, Capabilities**

[http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/senate-committee-to-conduct-comprehensive-review-of-military-forces-capabilities/?utm_source=dc360&utm_campaign=8b048e46a0-RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_04f8ff45e8-8b048e46a0-55784537&ct=t%28RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN%29#](http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/senate-committee-to-conduct-comprehensive-review-of-military-forces-capabilities/?utm_source=dc360&utm_campaign=8b048e46a0-RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_04f8ff45e8-8b048e46a0-55784537&ct=t%28RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN%29#)

Defense Communities 360 © May 26, 2015

DOD infrastructure will be one of a multitude of issues the Senate Armed Services Committee intends to dive into during a far-reaching, 18-month review of the roles, capabilities and size of the armed forces prompted by the evolving threats posed by a handful of powerful adversaries. “In short, for the first time in three decades, the United States faces a potential turning point where our nation’s long-standing military advantages threaten to be eroded by new shifts in the balance of military power,” the committee states in its report accompanying the fiscal 2016 defense authorization bill, S. 1376.
TF members --

1. **Next Task Force Meeting in July** – The next meeting of the Florida Defense Support Task Force will be on Thursday, **July 16, 2015** **at the Westin Tampa Harbour Island, 725 South Harbour Island Blvd., Tampa, FL 33602** beginning at 9:00 AM.

2. **Special Legislative Session** – The Florida Legislature convened in special session beginning June 1st to complete the state budget. Staff is closely monitoring the budget lines for the Florida Defense Support Task Force and the Defense Grants.

Regards, BG.

**Bruce Grant**

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BRAC –

We’ll Get There,’ Carter Says about a New BRAC Round

Defense Secretary Ashton Carter vowed to continue pursuing another BRAC round until Congress relents, during remarks Thursday at a town hall event in Stuttgart, Germany. “It must be done,” Carter told troops from Africa Command, reported Military.com. “We can’t let tail and not tooth eat our budget. And so where we have unneeded infrastructure, and BRAC obviously pertains to unneeded infrastructure in the United States, we’ve got to get after that,” he said. “I am in an ongoing argument essentially with the Congress over this necessity,” Carter explained. This year’s request by President Obama to hold a BRAC round in 2017 represents the fourth consecutive year the administration has asked Congress to approve one or more base closure rounds. “But we’re going to keep trying. And I think at some point we’ll get there,” Carter said.
Senate Armed Services Committee Ranking Member Jack Reed (D-R.I.) introduced on Wednesday an amendment to a defense policy bill that would fence off $38 billion in war funding until Congress finds a way to reverse federal spending caps known as sequestration. Republicans and Democrats in the Senate are facing off this week over whether that money should be in a war funding account or the Pentagon's base budget, as they consider the 2016 National Defense Authorization Act, which authorizes Pentagon spending. The Republican bill authorizes $523 billion for base defense spending, in line with federal budget caps, but authorizes $89 billion in its war funding account, which isn't subject to caps. While that meets the White House's overall defense budget request of $612 billion, the president has urged Congress to lift the spending caps and provide $551 billion for base defense spending and just $51 billion in war funding……..

What the White House Hates About the Senate Defense Policy Bill


Defense One © June 3, 2015

By Charles S. Clark

In a Tuesday statement threatening a veto of the Senate Defense authorization bill, the White House objected chiefly to off-budget war funding and the continuing of sequestration. But it also took aim at lawmakers’ plans to empower the military service chiefs in weapons acquisition and at smaller provisions affecting the contractor community. As both chambers of Congress begin floor consideration of the $612 billion fiscal 2016 National Defense Authorization Act, the veto threat —strongly” objected to a Senate provision in section 843 designed to alleviate procurement delays prompted, as the Armed Services Committee report put it, by “multiple, duplicative reviews within the Office of the Secretary of Defense and services.” The bill would decentralize decision making on weapons system milestones for service-unique programs and limit documentation of approvals……..

McCain, Reid Spar Over Fate of Defense Bill

Two of the US Senate's old bulls squared off on the chamber floor Thursday morning, trading barbs over the fate of a Pentagon policy bill. Sens. John McCain, R-Ariz., and Harry Reid, D-Nev., were part of the freshman class that took office on Jan. 3, 1987. Over their 28-year stints in the upper chamber, the two have done battle many times. Now, the Senate Armed Services Committee chairman and minority leader are leading a partisan squabble over McCain's 2016 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). The SASC chairman's annual Pentagon policy bill includes an $88.4 billion overseas contingency operations (OCO) account. McCain grudgingly accepted GOP leaders' decision to add $38 billion in essentially base-budget dollars to the war fund, concluding it was the only way to get the military more funding to offset spending caps……..

Ex-Pentagon official: Obama isn't bluffing about Defense bill veto


The Hill © June 4, 2015

By Kristina Wong

President Obama is likely to follow through on his threat to veto spending bills that lock in federal spending caps, including a defense policy bill the Senate is now considering, said the administration's former Pentagon comptroller, Bob Hale. "The president's been pretty adamant that he won't accept it and he will veto the bills. He just issued a strong veto threat on the Senate Armed Services Committee's authorization bill," Hale said Thursday in an interview with The Hill. "It was quite clear," he said, referring to an Office of Management and Budget statement issued Tuesday that said "senior advisors would recommend to the President that he veto" the bill if the bill is presented in its current form. "They're not tying his hands, but it's a pretty strong statement," added Hale, who served as the Pentagon comptroller from 2009 through last June, and is now a fellow at Booz Allen…….
Senate Debate on Authorization Bill Marked by Quarrel over Budget Caps

http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/senate-debate-on-authorization-bill-marked-by-quarrel-over-budget-caps/?utm_source=dc360&utm_campaign=2c8f521d26-RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_04f8ff45e8-2c8f521d26-55784537&ct=t%28RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN%29#

Defense Communities 360 © June 5, 2015

The possibility that Senate Democrats may filibuster the fiscal 2016 defense authorization bill loomed over a debate Thursday stuck on the dispute over the measure’s heavy reliance on DOD’s war account to sidestep stringent spending caps. While some Democrats have indicated they will try to stop appropriations measures from advancing in the Senate, they have not yet settled on a strategy for the annual defense policy bill, reported CQ Roll Call. The authorization bill employs the House-Senate budget framework that adds $38 billion to the department’s overseas contingency operations (OCO) account, which is exempt from the caps, to meet the Pentagon’s base budget request. Minority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) called the maneuver a “one-year gimmick” and deliberations over the authorization bill a “waste of time” given President Obama’s threat to veto the measure over its use of the OCO.

Democrats Underscore White House Veto Threat

http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/policy-budget/congress/2015/06/03/white-house-obama-ndaa-veto/28402079/

Defense News © June 3, 2015

By John T. Bennett

The US Senate on Wednesday will take up its annual Pentagon policy bill, but senior Democrats are doubling down on a White House veto threat. The legislation, overwhelmingly approved recently by the Senate Armed Services Committee, would authorize nearly $590 billion in 2016 base defense and war spending. But it contains a slew of proposals opposed by Democrats and the White House. Atop that list is an $88 billion overseas contingency operations (OCO) account, grudgingly included by SASC Chairman John McCain, R-Ariz., after GOP leaders concluded the lone way to keep their defense hawks happy was to give the Pentagon more cash via the off-budget war account.
Democrats’ Opposition to GOP Defense Bill Is Slowly Crumbling


Defense One © June 4, 2015

By Fawn Johnson

Senate Democrats are drawing a line in the sand on defense spending—sort of. They are acknowledging that members of their party will have a hard time voting against an annual defense authorization bill, which includes a number of welcome changes for troops, including a pay raise and 401(k) options for new recruits. In deference to that sentiment, Democratic leaders said Thursday that they aren’t going to block the bill. But when it comes to defense appropriations bills, they will use every tool at their disposal to stop them from getting through the Senate. At issue is a much-derided funding “gimmick” that uses contingency war funds to plug a Defense Department budget shortfall that has been demanded by across-the-board spending rules. “We have agreement that the appropriations bill is the place to have this discussion,” said Sen. Jack Reed, the ranking member on the Senate Armed Services Committee……

MacDill AFB –

Modifications, other problems delay opening of MacDill hotel


Tampa Tribune © June 8, 2015

By Howard Altman
By now, the big building they call the "Green Monster" should have been a functional hotel, with 350 rooms — including 25 VIP suites — providing much-needed sleeping areas for people visiting MacDill Air Force Base. But because of several design changes among the nearly $4 million in modifications, along with other unforeseen problems, the 200,000-square foot building is still a construction zone. It was supposed to be completed in January and opened in March. Instead, the green shell of a vapor barrier is still exposed, giving the building its nickname. In place of guests wheeling luggage into rooms spread out over five floors are workers hammering, drilling, caulking, building masonry walls and applying paint — Believable Buff, a shade of pale gold ……..

Eglin AFB –

**Eglin's 96th test wing conducting change of command**


Pensacola News Journal © June 3, 2015

By ROD DUREN

The 96th Test Wing will conduct a change of command ceremony June 4 at Eglin Air Force Base. Colonel Christopher Azzano will assume command of the wing. He will come to the Gulf Coast from head of the 72nd Air Base Wing and base commander of Tinker AFB, Okla. Outgoing Eglin AFB boss Brig. Gen. David Harris will receive a second star prior to the ceremony. He has been assigned to command the Air Force Test Center at Edwards AFB, Calif. It will be Azzano's second stint at Eglin AFB. For nearly three years, beginning in July 2000, he was an F-15 experimental chief-test pilot and flight commander with the 40th Flight Test Squadron ……..
Air Force proposes specific use of state forests

http://www.pnj.com/story/news/military/2015/06/05/air-force-proposes-specific-use-state-forests/28532789/

Pensacola News-Journal © June 5, 2015

The proposed long-term agreement between the Air Force and the Florida Forest Service to have military activities in and above the Blackwater River and Tate’s Hell state forests moved a step closer to reality on Friday. The Air Force, through Eglin Air Force Base, has released a Final Environmental Impact Statement that analyzes the environmental impacts associated with the Air Force proposal to apply to be a permitted user of northwest Florida state forests for non-hazardous military activities. The Final EIS also evaluates the environmental consequences of the establishment and use of up to 12 emitter sites in northwest Florida.

UPDATE 1-U.S. Air Force says 2014 F-35 engine mishap cost $50 mln

http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/06/05/lockheed-martin-fighter-idUSL1N0YR1B320150605?feedType=RSS&feedName=everything&virtualBrandChannel=11563

Reuters © June 5, 2015

By Andrea Shalal

The U.S. Air Force on Friday said last year's catastrophic F-35 engine failure, which grounded the entire fleet of jets built by Lockheed Martin Corp for a month, cost over $50 million. The Air Force's Air Education and Training Command said its investigation of the June 23 mishap involving the F135 engine built for the jet by Pratt & Whitney, a unit of United Technologies Corp, showed the mishap was caused by a failure of the third-stage rotor of the engine's fan module. The completion of the official accident investigation board confirmed details widely reported after the accident, which prevented the F-35 from making its international debut at two UK air shows last year.
Hurlburt Field –

**Carlisle: Air Force intel uses ISIS 'moron's' social media posts to target airstrikes**


Air Force Times © June 4, 2015

By Brian Everstine

OPSEC isn't the Islamic State group's strong suit. Airmen at Hurlburt Field, Florida, used social media posts by the insurgent group to track the location of an Islamic State group headquarters building. Twenty-two hours later, three joint direct attack munitions destroyed the target, said Gen. Hawk Carlisle, commander of Air Combat Command, at a June 1 speech in Arlington, Virginia. "The [airmen are] combing through social media and they see some moron standing at this command," Carlisle said at the speech, which was sponsored by the Air Force Association. "And in some social media, open forum, bragging about command and control capabilities for Da'esh, ISIL, And these guys go 'ah, we got an in.' ..........

Other Items of Interest –

**Jolly’s bill would extend ban on oil drilling off Florida’s Gulf coast**


Tampa Tribune © June 4, 2015

Tribune staff
Published: June 4, 2015
Rep. David Jolly filed legislation to extend a ban on oil drilling off Florida’s Gulf coast through 2027. Jolly’s bill comes on the heels of a Senate bill filed last month that would allow drilling 50 miles off Florida’s coast. Under current rules, drilling for oil is not allowed within at least 125 miles of Florida’s west coast and in some areas the ban extends to 235 miles. That ban expires in 2022 and Jolly’s bill would extend it another five years. “It is paramount that we take steps to continue protecting our pristine beaches, our fisheries, our marine sanctuaries, and coastal communities from the impact of drilling in the eastern Gulf and devastating events like the Deepwater Horizon oil spill of 2010,” Jolly said. “The bottom line is the economic benefits simply do not outweigh the risks. We can achieve energy independence and national energy security without jeopardizing our natural resources.” The bill’s cosponsor in the House is Rep. Gwen Graham, a Panhandle Democrat. Florida’s lawmakers have also said that lifting the moratorium would interfere with a thousands of acres of airspace over the Gulf used by Pensacola’s Eglin Air Force Base for training and weapons testing.

Clash over drilling off Florida coast heats up in Congress


Miami Herald © June 4, 2015

By Chris Adams

Two Florida members of the House of Representatives are joining one of the state’s senators to keep oil drilling far off shore, seeking to stave off efforts to bring the rigs closer to land. Opposing legislation in the Senate designed to ease drilling restrictions opens the way for a debate over drilling amid worries about the quality of the Gulf of Mexico. Reps. David Jolly, a Republican from Indian Shores, and Gwen Graham, a Democrat from the Panhandle, introduced legislation late Wednesday that would extend an existing ban on oil drilling in the eastern Gulf of Mexico through 2027. The ban, now set to expire in 2022, extends 125 miles off much of Florida’s Gulf Coast, and as much as 235 miles in some areas. “It is paramount that we take steps to continue protecting our pristine beaches, our fisheries, our marine sanctuaries and coastal communities from the impact of drilling in the eastern Gulf and devastating events like the Deepwater Horizon oil spill of 2010,” Jolly said in a statement. “A oil spill off the coast of Pinellas County would be disastrous to our quality of life and our local economy.”
TF members --

1. **Next Task Force Meeting in July** – The next meeting of the Florida Defense Support Task Force will be on Thursday, **July 16, 2015 at the Westin Tampa Harbour Island, 725 South Harbour Island Blvd., Tampa, FL 33602** beginning at 9:00 AM.

2. **Special Legislative Session** – The Florida Legislature convened in special session beginning June 1st to complete the state budget. Staff is closely monitoring the budget lines for the Florida Defense Support Task Force and the Defense Grants. The budget is expected to be approved by the Florida Legislature later this week.

3. **Welcome to Newly-Appointed Task Force Members** – The Task Force membership is in transition. The House Speaker has made the following appointments to the Task Force effective July 1, 2015 through July 1, 2019: **BG Chip Diehl** and **CW4 Derrick Fritts**. The Senate President has made the following appointments effective July 1, 2015 – July 1, 2019: **Senator Garrett Richter (New Task Force Chair), former Senator Mike Bennett, J.R McDonald, and Tom Neubauer**. Staff expects to see the finalized Governor appointments in the next 2 weeks. We welcome all new members of the Florida Defense Support Task Force and look forward to working with you to protect and preserve Florida’s military installations. We also want to convey our deepest thanks and appreciation for the service of those Task Force members whose terms will expire on July 1st. Your leadership as part of this Task Force has served to significantly improve the military value of Florida’s military installations and superbly prepare the state of Florida for any future Department of Defense Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) actions.

4. **Attachments**:

   - Appointment letters
   - Notes from bi-weekly TPG conference call

Regards, BG.
Articles of Interest:

BRAC –

Battle Plans: Preparing for the Next Base-Closure Round

http://cdn1.cq.com/emailed/w-Tf7PRKVfMFBURKLYGnPcAvLA/weeklyreport-4699844.html

CQ Weekly © June 8, 2015
By Megan Scully

The slow and low-flying A-10 Warthog is the heart of Arizona‘s Davis-Monthan Air Force Base and, by extension, a critical economic driver in the surrounding Tucson community. Aside from the 83 Warthogs stationed at the vast desert installation, the base‘s other major claim to fame is its dusty, rusty boneyard, a dumping ground for more than 4,000 discarded fighters and other military planes that have long since passed their glory days. The Air Force wants the venerable A-10s that now fly in the skies over Davis-Monthan and at bases in eight other states to join the ranks of the retired aircraft in that boneyard, a cost-saving move officials hope would free up more cash in a tight Pentagon budget to buy newer and more capable aircraft………

BRAC Featured Prominently in Latest White House Veto Threat


Defense Communities 360 © June 11, 2015

The House‘s fiscal 2016 defense spending bill would undermine a new round of base closures and prevent DOD from aligning its infrastructure with the needs of its evolving force, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) said this week in explaining the White House‘s threat to veto the legislation. The appropriations bill, which the House began debating Wednesday, does not include $10.5 million that President Obama requested for planning and analyses to support a BRAC round in 2017, according to OMB‘s response to the measure, H.R. 2685. –This impairs the ability of the executive branch to plan for contingencies or make other needed adjustments that would improve military effectiveness and efficiency. The administration strongly urges the Congress to provide the BRAC authorization as requested, which would allow DOD to right-size its infrastructure while providing important assistance to affected communities, freeing resources currently consumed by maintaining unneeded facilities,” according to the –Statement of Administration Policy.”……

House Adopts Language Barring BRAC
House lawmakers approved an amendment prohibiting the Defense Department from spending funds to propose, plan for or carry out a new round of base closures in fiscal 2016, before passing on Thursday the underlying defense appropriations bill for next year. The move probably won’t have any practical effect as this year’s defense authorization bill likely will reject the Obama administration’s request to hold a round in 2017, but it does underscore lawmakers’ opposition to BRAC. The chamber previously adopted similar language when it took up the FY 2016 military construction-veterans affairs spending measure in April.

Budget Impasse Fast Approaching in Senate

Progress on fiscal 2016 appropriations bills could come to a screeching halt in the Senate this week, with Democrats vowing to block the chamber from beginning debate on all 12 spending bills, including the defense measure which the Senate is expected to turn to shortly. A deadlock in the Senate could slow work on appropriations on the other side of the Capitol as well, reported CQ. Democrats and the White House oppose GOP’s budget framework, which sticks to the stringent budget cap for non-defense spending but offers relief to the Pentagon by stashing $38 billion in extra funding in DOD’s overseas contingency operations account. The dispute has been building since the House and Senate passed their budget resolutions in the spring. The most direct route to resolving the impasse would be bipartisan negotiations to lift the Budget Control Act caps on both defense and non-defense spending. Members of both parties have indicated they are open to reaching a deal similar to 2013’s Ryan-Murray agreement which provided DOD $31 billion in extra room for FY 2014 and 2015.
Defense appropriations may set stage for budget impasse


Military Times © June 9, 2015
By Leo Shane III

Senate appropriators on Tuesday backed plans for $576 billion in defense spending in fiscal 2016, mostly in line with House lawmakers' funding plans and keeping in place policies that have already invited presidential veto threats. The plan passed out of the Senate Appropriations Committee's defense panel without opposition from Democrats, but could serve as the first major showdown in the Senate over the issue of looming spending caps. President Obama has insisted that future increases in defense spending must be matched with other domestic funding raises, and that the budget bills must include a repeal of spending caps outlined in the 2011 Budget Control Act. But Republican leaders in Congress have instead offered budget plans that leave those caps in place and boost military spending through the overseas war fund. The Senate plan would transfer $36.5 billion from base defense spending to the contingency accounts "to meet the overall defense funding levels … while avoiding sequestration."………

Senate Blocks Attempt to Restrict Use of OCO Funds

http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/senate-blocks-attempt-to-restrict-use-of-oco-funds/?utm_source=dc360&utm_campaign=ecdb3e0bf0-RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_04f8ff45e8-ecdb3e0bf0-55784537&ct=t%28RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN%29#

Defense Communities 360 © June 10, 2015

In the most significant policy battle the Senate expects to face as it debates the fiscal 2016 defense authorization bill, the chamber on Tuesday rejected a Democratic effort to stop lawmakers from authorizing the use of tens of billions of dollars in extra war funds to sidestep the statutory spending caps in a 46-51 vote. Following the vote, it's not clear whether Senate Democrats will try to block the annual policy bill, S. 1376, from advancing in the chamber. Afterwards, Democrats vowed to stop the GOP from going ahead with its strategy to offer the
Pentagon budget relief by adding funds to its overseas contingency operations (OCO) account while ignoring domestic agencies by blocking progress on spending bills………

Pelosi urges Dems to vote against defense bill


The Hill © June 10, 2015

By Rebecca Shabad

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) is calling for House Democrats to vote against a GOP defense spending bill this week that holds to sequestration spending limits, except for a boost to the war fund. “Once again, I am writing to underscore the urgent need for House Democrats to support the President’s path to lifting the sequester by urging a ‘No’ vote on the Republican Defense Appropriations bill,” Pelosi wrote in a letter to members of her caucus………

House defies veto threat, passes defense spending bill


Washington Examiner © June 11, 2015

By Charles Hoskinson

House lawmakers defied a White House veto threat and passed a defense appropriations bill for fiscal 2016 that uses a war funding account to bypass mandatory budget cuts for military operations and maintenance costs. The vote was 278-149, with only five Republican budget hawks joining most Democrats in opposing the bill, which allots $578.6 billion for the Pentagon and nuclear weapons programs of the Energy Department, an increase of $24.4 billion from fiscal 2015 and $800 million more than President Obama requested. It includes $88.4 billion in overseas contingency operations, roughly double the amount Obama requested. The White House late Tuesday said Obama would veto the bill if it includes a provision shifting regular spending into the war funding account, which is exempt from sequestration requirements. Democrats have called the funding shift a "gimmick."………
Defense budget breakthrough in the cards

http://www.militarytimes.com/story/military/capitol-hill/2015/06/12/ndaa-senate-stalled-shutdown/71074804/

Military Times © June 12, 2015

By Leo Shane III

In between threats of a possible government shutdown this fall, lawmakers still hope to pass the annual defense authorization bill as a sign of common ground. The military budget measure stalled in recent days amid a week of Senate floor debate and amendments, during which Republicans attempted to include new cybersecurity provisions in the bill. That effort failed, but did not dampen lawmakers’ expectations that the policy measure will clear the chamber before the end of June, barring a new political snag. That would give House and Senate conference committee staff most of the summer to iron out the differences in the two drafts, which includes an overhaul of the military retirement system, sweeping defense acquisition reform provisions, and authorities for pay raises, family benefits and a host of other military compensation issues.........

Space Coast –

DiBello: Cape must compete for commercial space business


Florida today © June 9, 2015

By James Dean
Cape Canaveral must continue to adapt to attract emerging commercial space businesses, or else watch them choose to launch from other states, Space Florida President and CEO Frank DiBello said today. "Our goal must be to not just lure an occasional billionaire here, but more importantly to become a business location which the broader capital markets and our successful business leaders find attractive," DiBello told an audience of several hundred at the National Space Club Florida Committee's lunch meeting in Cape Canaveral. DiBello said the Space Coast has made progress accommodating commercial missions on its federally controlled facilities at Kennedy Space Center and Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, but must do more, DiBello said…….

Eglin AFB –

**New Leader Takes Helm of Air Force Materiel Command**


Defense Communities 360 © June 11, 2015

Gen. Ellen Pawlikowski assumed the top position of the major command responsible for installation support and the technology, acquisition, test and sustainment of the Air Force’s current and future weapon systems during a ceremony this week at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio. Pawlikowski took the reins of Air Force Materiel Command (AFMC) from Gen. Janet Wolfenbarger, marking the first time a female four-star general is replaced by another female four-star general at a major command. ―The fact that we’re changing command from one woman to another is interesting, and it’s historic,” said Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Welsh, who presided over the ceremony. ―But it’s not as cool to me as the fact that we’re changing from one phenomenal leader to another.”…….

**Comments on Blackwater military use being accepted**

http://www.pnj.com/story/news/military/2015/06/10/comments-blackwater-military-use-accepted/71016968/

Pensacola News-Journal © June 10, 2015
Comments and concerns from the public in regards to the military using the Blackwater and Tate's Hell forests for exercises are being accepted for review. The Air Force recently completed and submitted a Final Environmental Impact Statement analyzing impacts on northwest Florida state forests should the federal agency conduct military training activities on the grounds. All comments from the public must be considered by the decision maker, or the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force For Installations, Environment and Logistics, during the environmental analysis process………..

US Southern Command –

Practicing Innovation in the U.S. Navy

http://warontherocks.com/2015/06/practicing-innovation-in-the-u-s-navy/

War on the Rocks © June 11, 2015

By Ciro Lopez

The term innovation has gotten a lot of attention in the Department of Defense (DOD) lately. The Defense Innovation Initiative was announced last fall by the Secretary of Defense, and the Secretary of the Navy, Ray Mabus, recently established Task Force Innovation. In addition, the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) and the Chief of Naval Research (CNR) called for more innovation at the 2015 Naval Future Force Science and Technology Expo. These initiatives and discussions point to the critical role that innovation must play as the defense community grapples with the technological advances of our adversaries under diminishing DOD budgets. The message from leadership on the importance of innovation is clear, but what’s less clear is how we practically implement it. In particular, how does someone at the staff level with an innovative idea get traction in the bureaucratic world of DOD? How can that staff innovator overcome the
NAS Jacksonville –

**Breaking ground for the future: NAS Jacksonville airfield closes for construction**


Florida Times-Union © June 10, 2015

By Julie Lucas

Naval Air Station Jacksonville (NAS Jax) closed it’s runway June 8 to undergo repairs after 75 years of operation. NAS Jax runways 10/28 and 14/32 will be impacted during construction. The last re-pavement was completed in 1986. “This construction is critical to naval operations,” said NAS Jax Commanding Officer Capt. Howard Wanamaker. “This project has been in the works for years and something we’ve been talking about for the last three years.” The scope of the work for the $51.9 million project includes construction of a new 1,000 foot over-run pavement connected to the west end of the existing runway. Some of the issues the airfield has been dealing with include cracks in the pavement as well as pooling of water during rain storms. Along with it, construction of associated taxiways and new airfield lighting are also part of the project........
NS Mayport –

First littoral combat ship on track to arrive in Mayport


Jacksonville Business Journal © June 8, 2015

By Alexa Epitropoulos

The first littoral combat ship is set to arrive in December 2015. The first of eight littoral combat ships scheduled to arrive in Mayport by 2020 is officially docking December 2016 and starting its journey on the Menominee River in July, according to the Florida Times-Union. The littoral combat ships, or LCSs, are a major part of Mayport's future, replacing the frigates that it became known for over the years. Only one frigate remains in the harbor, whereas 11 frigates were in Mayport four years ago. Two other ships – the USS Milwaukee and USS Jackson – are still based in San Diego, but will operate out of Mayport for most of 2016……..

Mayport prepares to home-port 8 new combat ships


News 4 Jax © June 12, 2015

By Ashley Mitchem

The first of eight new combat ships to be home-ported at Naval Station Mayport will arrive in December 2016. But the commodore of the squadron headed to Northeast Florida said he wouldn't be surprised if the base gained more than that number of Littoral Combat Ships. "(We're) making history, I think. We've never had ships like this. We've never had a capability like this,” Capt. Paul Young said. Not only will the local-based fleet grow, but Mayport will be a hub for small surface combat ships. A 67,000-square-foot facility will open in September. Littoral Combat Ships are fast and mission-focused, designed to operate in near-shore environments with capabilities for surface warfare, mine countermeasures or anti-submarine warfare……..
USS Simpson returns home one last time


Action News Jax © June 14, 2015

More than 200 sailors returned home safe from a seven month deployment, Sunday. The guided-missile frigate USS Simpson (FFG 56) returned to Naval Station Mayport for the final time Sunday. More than 200 sailors returned home after successfully completing a seven-month deployment conducting theater security exercises. On its final voyage, USS Simpson provided more than 1,500 flight hours in support of national tasking. USS Simpson is the last Oliver Hazard Perry-class frigate stationed at Mayport and is one of only four frigates remaining in the US Navy. In September, Simpson will be decommissioned. Only three frigates will remain in service.........

Tyndall AFB –

Out of the Past: Establishing Tyndall AFB


News Herald © June 8, 2015

By MARLENE WOMACK

To most longtime residents of this area, Tyndall Air Force Base is a place that’s always been here and for many that’s true. The base was conceived in 1940 and next year Tyndall will be 75 years old. Two men — Jesse C. Cogburn and Philip A. Roll played major roles in the creation of the base and each took credit for the establishment of Tyndall. Cogburn was the owner of Cogburn’s Clothing Co. on lower I larrison Avenue. Aware that we were headed toward a world
war, Cogburn took his idea of obtaining a military base in Bay County to Harry G. Fannin, mayor of Panama City. Fannin appointed W.J. Cook, Sr., A.W. Pledger, E.E. Brewton and Cogburn to serve with him on a special committee………

**Out of the Past: Tyndall AFB Part 2**


News Herald © June 14, 2015

By MARLENE WOMACK

Tyndall’s first headquarters became a suite in the Dixie-Sherman Hotel. Lt. Col. W.A. Maxwell next operated from an office in the city hall with his headquarters force quartered at the National Guard Armory on Sixth Street (now part of First Baptist Church). War Department plans called for the base to become a flexible gunnery school with a contingent of 130 officers, 800 students and about 1,600 enlisted men in addition to a runway complex and associated technical facilities to store and repair aircraft. As they tackled the difficulties they encountered in trying to find places in which to move, those forced from Tyndall found few unoccupied homes existed in Bay County…………

**Our View: Tyndall’s mission**


News Herald © June 7, 2015

Tyndall Air Force Base officials unveiled a “game changer” of a waterway security plan during an Editorial Board meeting at The News Herald last week. In a show of how much it clearly means to the Tyndall leadership that they be more open with the public about the plan, Col. Derek France invited Tyndall’s loudest critics to attend the meeting. We certainly can’t recall
any similar invitation issued by the military or just about anyone in a government seat. For more than hour France, Stephanie Somerset, the executive director of the nonprofit group Friends of Shell Island and Bay County resident Greg Presser discussed the issue. They didn’t hold hands and agree on everything but it was clear that, for now and hopefully going forward, the tone of the disagreement has changed. Tyndall and those concerned about the plan seem to have gone from an adversarial relationship to something more collaborative………..

Florida National Guard –

Commentary: Guard is interchangeable with active duty


Military Times © June 8, 2015

By retired Maj. Gen. Gus Hargett

My association with the National Guard has passed the half-century mark, but there is still much about this wonderful organization for me to learn. In fact, just recently, I learned that one of the bedrock principles of the Guard I’ve believed since first pulling on a pair of combat boots is wrong. The Army National Guard, I was surprised to learn, is not interchangeable with the active-component Army. Nor was it ever meant to be. This was a shock, but there it was in written testimony submitted to the National Commission on the Future of the Army by Army Secretary John McHugh and Gen. Ray Odierno, the service's chief of staff. "Today, we need each Component in our Total Army to be complementary," they wrote. "They have never been interchangeable, nor should they."………..

53rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team rehearses unified land operations
By Capt. Colleen Krepstekies and Staff Sgt. Aidana Baez

The 53rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team’s leadership conducted a combined arms rehearsal during their annual training at the Regional Training Institute on Camp Blanding in order to train leaders on the three-dimensional nature of unified land operations June 9. The Army is transitioning from a counter insurgency based doctrine back to a unified land operation doctrine. “Unified land operations is what the Army is doing now,” said Col. Rafael Ribas, commander for the 53rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team. “That’s what we’re training to; that’s why we’re doing this scenario.”

**SRWMD Board approves purchase of 2,000 acre Camp Blanding buffer**

An acquisition of approximately 2,000 acres that will benefit natural resources and benefit a military base is underway in Bradford County. The Suwannee River Water Management District (District) Governing Board has authorized the District to move forward with the purchase of 2,014 acres from Rayonier Atlantic Timber Company. The acquisition of this tract will provide a buffer to Camp Blanding Joint Training Center. Moreover it will support the implementation of flood abatement and water resource development projects in addition to other regional benefits. Land acquisition falls in line with the District’s core mission as a mechanism to protect natural resources through flood abatement and restoration projects. Concurrently, the governing board authorized the conveyance of 104 acres of the tract to St. Johns River Water Management District, an area that is situated within the boundary of St. Johns District. “Rayonier is proud to partner, once again, with both the Suwannee River Water Management District and the Department of Defense,” said Doug Long, Rayonier Vice President of Operations. “The opportunity to work together on this project to achieve both important environmental and military goals makes this transaction doubly rewarding for us.”
Patrick AFB –

Secretive Patrick AFB agency gets new leader


Florida Today © June 10, 2015

By R. Norman Moody

Air Force Col. Christopher Worley will tell you that when he came here he knew little about the Air Force Technical Applications Center. But now, as commander of the nation's front line for monitoring nuclear test-ban treaties, he heads a team that excels in innovation, has created a university internship to help prepare the scientists of tomorrow and which encourages even the youngest students to study science. Worley, who has been at the helm of AFTAC since May 2012 will relinquish command to Col. Jennifer Sovada in a ceremony June 19, the first change of command since the wing moved into its $158 million headquarters. "It's been extraordinary," Worley said of his tenure. "This is the longest assignment I've had in my career." ..........

Defense Industry –

Northrop Grumman Aims To Retain Grip on Aviation

http://www.nationaldefensemagazine.org/archive/2015/June/Pages/NorthropGrummanAimsToRetainGriponAviation.aspx

National Defense Magazine © June 2015

By Sandra I. Erwin
Almost all military contractors these days see every competition as a “must win.” And that is especially true for Northrop Grumman Corp. as it makes a big play to join the ranks of Lockheed Martin and Boeing as one of the nation’s top manufacturers of combat aircraft. The company has set its sights on upcoming Air Force competitions that would give the winners a once-in-a-generation chance to solidify their place in the industry. The biggest prize will be the $55 billion long-range strike bomber program. Other coveted deals will be the contract to build a fleet of training jets for Air Force fighter pilots, and a $2 billion program to replace aging ground surveillance airplanes……..

Other Items of Interest –

Lessons from New Mexico: Know your assets, and sell them

http://tucson.com/news/local/lessons-from-new-mexico-know-your-assets-and-sell-them/article_efff43d8-1e75-5e04-a7cb-844b91dfb22e.html

Arizona Daily Star © June 5, 2015
By Sarah Garrecht Gassen

Cannon Air Force Base, about 10 miles of farmland west of Clovis, New Mexico, has almost doubled its personnel and is in the midst of a $1 billion construction boom. It is home to the 27th Special Operations Wing, commonly known as the Air Commandos. And it could have been in Tucson. A decade ago, the base — and, by extension, Clovis and nearby Portales — appeared doomed. The Air Force had recommended that Cannon be closed, a fate that’s nearly impossible to escape once put in motion. Tucson had hoped the same Base Realignment and Closure process that threatened Clovis would bring significant growth to Davis-Monthan Air Force Base. Neither happened…….
TF members --

1. **Next Task Force Meeting in July** – The next meeting of the Florida Defense Support Task Force will be on Thursday, **July 16, 2015 at the Westin Tampa Harbour Island, 725 South Harbour Island Blvd., Tampa, FL 33602** beginning at 9:00 AM.

2. **Attachments:**

   - Florida Chamber Military, Defense and Veterans Opportunities Summit – August 6, 2015 -- Orlando
   - Summary of 2015 Florida Military-Friendly Legislation (Signed into law by Governor Scott)

Regards, BG.

Bruce Grant

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Articles of Interest:

FDSTF –

**Manatee County's Mike Bennett to serve on Florida Defense Support Task Force**


By Kate Irby

Florida Senate President Andy Gardiner appointed Manatee County Supervisor of Elections Mike Bennett to the Florida Defense Support Task Force on June. The task force is meant to, "preserve, protect and enhance Florida’s military missions and installations," according to a release. Bennett said its main focus is to enhance the economic benefits to the state through the military. "That's the main emphasis," Bennett said. "I want to take a dual role with it, and also increase benefits to our veterans." The position is unpaid, and Bennett will begin on July 1 and serve until July 2019. Bennett is a former state senator and House representative, serving on the military affairs and domestic security committee, among others. 

DOD Budget–
The annual defense policy bill advanced Tuesday in the Senate toward final passage by the end of this week, with its main sponsor saying he's optimistic it will become the first such legislation enacted into law on-time since 1997. Looming in the background, however, is President Obama's veto threat over a plan to shift $38 billion in funding for operations and maintenance to a war account that falls outside mandatory spending caps. Although most Democrats allowed the policy bill to advance in an 83-15 vote, they remain opposed to what they call a spending "gimmick" and have called for a long-term solution to mandatory budget caps rather than shifting needed funds into an account not subject to them. Next up for the Senate is legislation appropriating $575.9 billion for the Defense Department and nuclear weapons programs of the Energy Department, which Democrats are expected to try to block.

The Senate could move to a final vote on the fiscal 2016 defense authorization bill before the end of the week, after the chamber on Tuesday voted to end debate on the measure. Armed Services Chairman John McCain (R-Ariz.) told reporters, “I'm very, very guardedly optimistic that we'll get it done by Thursday,” reported the Hill. The chamber’s debate over the annual policy bill, S. 1376, has been slowed by a dispute over amendments, but lawmakers took up three on Tuesday, voting to:

- reject a plan to directly arm the Iraqi Kurds in their fight against the Islamic State;
reject an proposal to remove the military chain of command from the prosecution of sexual assault; and
approve language limiting the use of interrogation techniques to the tactics outlined in the Army’s field manual

Flournoy: No Quick Fix Likely to Pentagon Budget Woes


DOD Buzz © June 17, 2015
By Brendan McGarry

The former highest-ranking woman at the U.S. Defense Department who turned down the Pentagon’s top job said there probably won't be a deal in Congress anytime soon to undo defense spending caps. Michele Flournoy, the former undersecretary of defense for policy who now works as a senior adviser at Boston Consulting Group, was in town Tuesday to speak to a group of chief executive officers in the defense industry. During the day, she stopped by the Paris Air Show at the historic Le Bourget airfield outside the city to view the military aircraft on display and talk to crew members. “I don't see an immediate deal,” she said during an interview with Military.com, when asked about negotiations in Congress to undo or delay the across-the-board spending limitations known as sequestration

DoD secretary repeats support for defense bill veto


Military Times © June 17, 2015
By Leo Shane III

Under angry questioning from Republican lawmakers, Defense Secretary Ash Carter again supported the idea of vetoing the annual defense authorization bill over concerns that the funding mechanisms involved would hurt other federal programs and security efforts. "I haven't changed my view," he told members of the House Armed Services Committee on Wednesday. "I still
fervently hope everyone can come together and find a (budget) compromise." The comments drew immediate, familiar criticism from GOP lawmakers who have repeatedly accused the White House of choosing bloated government bureaucracy over troops' pay and benefits.

**Defense policy bill clears final Senate hurdle**


The Hill © June 17, 2015

By Jordain Carney

An annual defense policy bill overcome its last procedural test Wednesday, paving the way for final passage. The Senate voted 84-14 to end debate on a House-passed shell bill being used as a vehicle for the Senate's National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). They also agreed by a voice vote comprised of only a handful of senators to attach the defense policy bill to the shell bill. Wednesday's move sets up a final vote on the bill, which Republicans predicated would occur Thursday. McCain made a closing pitch for the bill ahead of Wednesday's votes, suggesting the legislation was a necessary "reform bill" for the Defense Department. "It is a reform bill," he added. "A reform bill that will enable our military to rise to the challenges of a more dangerous world, both today and in the future." .........

**Senate advances defense bill, but Obama veto looms**


Military Times © June 18, 2015

By Leo Shane III

The Senate on Thursday approved its draft of the $613 billion defense authorization bill for next year, setting up either the earliest passage of the annual legislation in 18 years or a divisive presidential veto later this summer. The budget policy bill includes a host of pay and benefits provisions for troops, including a 1.3 percent pay raise next January and a dramatic overhaul of the military retirement system. But it also includes language supporting more than $35 billion in extra overseas war spending, which has drawn criticism from Democrats who call it irresponsible
budgeting and a veto threat from the White House. The measure was approved 71-25, with opposition from Democrats who called the bill a first step toward a government shutdown this fall. House lawmakers passed a similar draft last month, and drew similar criticism from Democrats in that chamber. President Obama also threatened to veto that draft, citing the war funding language. ……

**Senate Passes NDAA By Veto-Proof 71-25; McCain Pledges July Conference**


Breaking Defense © June 18, 2015

By Sydney J. Freedberg Jr.

The $612 billion National Defense Authorization Act for 2016 passed the Senate by a vote of 71 to 25 today. The final version could emerge from a House-Senate conference in early July,” Senate Armed Services chairman John McCain said boldly at a press conference this afternoon. That would be a staggering speed for a bill that usually passes very late in the fall, after the fiscal year it covers has begun. This is the earliest the NDAA has gotten to the Senate floor in many years, McCain said, praising Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell. The plan is to keep up that pace. “I’m totally convinced we can get the bill back out of conference in July, probably early July. There are not significant differences,” Sen. McCain said…….

Space Coast –

**Space Florida to take over NASA shuttle facility**


Daytona Beach News-Journal © June 15, 2015
Gov. Rick Scott at the 51st International Paris Airshow announced on Monday that Space Florida will take over the historic space shuttle landing facility at Kennedy Space Center from NASA. Space Florida, the state’s aerospace and spaceport development authority, will use the Brevard County facility as a launch pad for commercial space launch vehicles under a 30-year management agreement from NASA. The official hand off of the facility will take place next Monday, according to a news release……..

State approves deal to take over KSC's shuttle runway


Florida Today © June 15, 2015

By James Dean

Space Florida's board of directors this morning unanimously approved a deal with NASA to take over management of Kennedy Space Center's former shuttle runway for at least the next 30 years. The state hopes to attract companies developing space planes that will take off and land like aircraft, carrying space tourists, researchers and experiments to orbit or suborbit. Drones and other vehicles could also use the facility. The deal is projected to create more than 200 jobs over six years, according to the Economic Development Commission of Florida's Space Coast. "It's probably one of the most recognized landing facilities in the world," said Frank DiBello, Space Florida president and CEO. "We intend to convert it really into an economic engine that will become the centerpiece for state's commercial horizontal infrastructure offerings to the marketplace. It is a catalyst for technology growth and innovation, and for economic development."……..

Team Orlando –
TSIS brings together Team Orlando with industry with focus on procurement

http://www.teamorlando.org/tsis-brings-together-team-orlando-with-industry-with-focus-on-procurement/

Team Orlando © June 16, 2015

The 2015 Training & Simulation Industry Symposium (TSIS) is June 17-18 at the Rosen Centre Hotel, and is a great opportunity to network and interact with procurement officials from Team Orlando for Training and Simulation products and services – Army, Marine Corps, Navy and Air Force. On Wednesday, the National Defense Industrial Association – Central Florida Chapter, will kick off the day with Captain Wes Naylor, commanding officer for the Naval Air Warfare Center Training Systems Division (NAWCTSD). He will be joined by Robert Matthews, NAWCTSD deputy program director, and multiple directors and program managers in his command to discuss topics ranging from naval aviation training systems and training ranges to cross-warfare programs to surface and undersea programs...........

MacDill AFB –

‘My MacDill’ marks base’s 75th anniversary

http://tbo.com CENTRAL TAMPA/ MY-MACDILL-MARKS-BASES-75TH-ANNIVERSARY-20150603/

Tampa Tribune © June 3, 2015

BY LINDA CHION KENNEY

A brigadier general and a former newspaper publisher stepped up to the dais May 5 at The Regent in Riverview to tell the Greater Brandon Chamber of Commerce members in attendance about a community pride campaign for the MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa. The “My MacDill” initiative — launched in time for the base’s 75th anniversary — calls upon anybody with a history at MacDill to tell their stories online in a social media campaign designed to showcase the base and its meaning to their lives, livelihood and community. There to tell the story behind the story of mymacdill.com were John Schueler, past president of Media General’s Florida Communications Group, and retired Brig. Gen. Arthur F. “Chip” Diehl III, former deputy
director of engagement, plans and policy directorate at U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) headquarters at MacDill………

Tampa, Brandon make list of best cities for vets to live


Tampa Tribune © June 17, 2015

By Howard Altman

Tampa and Brandon both made the Military Times’ list of best cities for veterans to live. Tampa, home to MacDill Air Force Base, was named the 18th best large city (250,000 or more residents) for veterans to live in the first-ever –Best for Vets: Places to Live” ranking by Military Times. And Brandon came in 13th on the list of medium-sized cities (75,000 to 250,000). The publication –considered the sorts of military- and veteran-specific culture and services that can lead city vet populations to swell into six figures, as well as economics and livability factors, such as traffic and crime.” A total of 577 places were considered as part of the project, according to Military Times, but only 75 — divided equally into large, medium and small cities — made the cut. Military Times, which compiles a number of –Best for Vets” lists, said it used federal and private data, as well as information from its previous lists, to reach its conclusions………

MacDill AFB commander joins Twitterverse

http://tbo.com/list/military-news/macdill-commander-joins-twitterverse-20150617/

Tampa Tribune © June 17, 2015

By Howard Altman

On June 3, Col. Daniel Tulley, commander of MacDill Air Force Base, joined the modern world of communications. Using the Twitter handle @6AMW_CC, Tulley made his first tweet. –#MyPlayoffsMoment -- USAF TSgt Sonya Bryson, 6th Air Mobility Wing singing the anthem, intro by MG Garrett, USCENTCOM. Good luck Bolts!” Tulley, who took command of the 6th Air Mobility Wing, last August, says that he joined the Twitterverse to better keep in touch with the men and women who work at the base. He says his experience with Facebook showed him
the value of social media. I get so much feedback from airmen and their families on Facebook that I wanted to try Twitter,” Tulley said at a recent event honoring a group of people at MacDill raising puppies for Southeastern Guide Dogs.

Eglin AFB –

Changing command at ‘one of the crown jewels of the Air Force’


Northwest Florida Daily News © June 11, 2015

By KELLY HUMPHREY

Surrounded by examples of the aircraft and weaponry it helped to develop, the 96th Test Wing said goodbye to one leader on Thursday and hello to another. Members of the wing gathered in the King Hangar to witness Col. Christopher Azzano assume command from newly minted Maj. Gen. David Harris. Since the 96th Test Wing serves as the host unit at Eglin, the wing commander also serves as the base’s installation commander. “Chris Azzano is the perfect officer to serve as the 96th Test Wing’s commander,” said Maj. Gen. Arnold Bunch, commander of the Air Force Test Center, which oversees the 96th Test Wing. He’s inheriting a world class team that David Harris built.”
US Southern Command –

High-ranking US Southern Command official says drug interdiction efforts could be in peril


Fierce Homeland Security © June 18, 2015

By Dibya Sarkar

A U.S. joint military task force's progress in detecting, monitoring and stopping illicit drug trafficking from South America, Central America and the Caribbean could be in "jeopardy" due to defense cutbacks and limited resources, a high-ranking U.S. Southern Command official said at a recent House hearing. Coast Guard Rear Adm. Karl Schultz, who's the director of operations for the command known as SOUTHCOMM, said the Joint Interagency Task Force South, or JIATF South, is considered the "gold standard" in leading and interdicting drug operations in that region. In fiscal 2014, it seized 158 metric tons of cocaine, or about 76 percent of the total amount of cocaine seized by all U.S. government agencies.

Tyndall AFB –

James: Air Force may send F-22s to Europe

http://www.airforcetimes.com/story/military/pentagon/2015/06/16/future-theater-security-packages/28806915/

Air Force Times © June 16, 2015

By Jeff Schogol
Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James has raised the possibility of deploying F-22 Raptors to Europe to deter Russia, which she called, "the biggest threat on my mind," according to media reports. The F-22, which flew its first combat mission in September over Syria, now is part of every strike package that goes into Syria as part of the war against the Islamic State terrorist group. James told reporters at the International Paris Air Show on Monday that the F-22 may be part of future theater security packages to Europe, which typically last about six months, Military.com reported……

Florida National Guard –

Huggins takes command of Camp Blanding regiment


June 18, 2015

By Jesse Hollett

Bees buzzed around the podiums and pull out chairs of the Camp Blanding main stage, and the heat beat down on the soldiers of the 3-348th regiment battalion as they stood staunch in their lines, flags and friends at their sides. On June 7, a new leader took command at Camp Blanding, spelling uncertainty but also hope for the reserves and active duty soldiers that trained and work there. Camp Blanding has been used as a final training base for units preparing to mobilize to overseas contingencies, and is also the primary focus for training for the Florida National Guard. The outgoing commander was Lt. Col. Daniel Leavitt who had been at Camp Blanding for the last two years. "This isn’t a reflection of me, this is more a reflection of all the soldiers you see standing before you. You’ve become much more like family to me. I’m going to miss the soldiers," said Leavitt in his speech……

Patrick AFB –

Air Force Col. Sovada takes command of AFTAC
As a forward on the Air Force Academy women's basketball team from 1990-94, Jennifer Sovada traveled to Patrick Air Force Base every holiday season with her teammates for winter practice and tournaments at the Florida Institute of Technology. Now, the former prolific scorer-rebounder has returned as the new colonel in charge of the Air Force Technical Applications Center. "To the men and women of AFTAC, I look forward to learning from you and seeing what you have to offer," Sovada said this morning during a change of command ceremony. "I look forward to leading us into the next chapter of success and the next chapter of innovation. I thank you all for your commitment to professionalism in order to keep this organization the best that it can be and to keep our nation safe," she said………

Avon Park –

**Sheriff’s office bids delayed**

Highlands County will have to wait two weeks to find out how much the proposed sheriff’s office will cost. The county had scheduled bid openings for June 18 for the law enforcement building, which has been estimated over the years to cost from $8 million to $11 million. On Tuesday, County Engineer Ramon Gavarrete said opening the bids would be delayed until July 2. The office will be within the City of Sebring, and that added 245 pages to the bid documents, Gavarrete said. –We are in the process of getting a building permit from the city,” Gavarrete told county commissioners at their Tuesday morning meeting. –We’ve already had a few prospective bidders to pull out.” The number of bidders has fallen from eight initially interested to five. –As a result of the changes by the city?” Chairman Ron Handley asked. –No sir, I’m not saying that,” Gavarrete said………
Embeya, Lockheed adding 280 jobs in Brevard


Florida Today © June 16, 2015
By Wayne T. Price and Ilana Kowarski

Local officials and community boosters probably wished every Paris Air Show would open like it did Monday — with key job announcements for Brevard County. First, Lockheed Martin announced from the famed aerospace and aviation showcase that it is expanding its Brevard operation in Cape Canaveral and adding 130 new jobs to support the U.S. Navy's Trident II D5 Fleet Ballistic Missile program. The positions come with an annual average wage of $85,000. Then a short time later, Embraer announced it was moving a recently acquired California company, now called Embraer Aero Seating Technologies, to Spaceport Commerce Park in Titusville. That will mean 150 new jobs paying an annual average wage of $48,000.

Top 10 Federal Contractors Are Major Military Suppliers

http://247wallst.com/aerospace-defense/2015/06/16/top-10-federal-contractors-are-major-military-suppliers/

24/7 Wall St © June 16, 2015
By Paul Ausick

According to the Federal Procurement Data System, the top 100 federal contractors in fiscal year 2014, which ended on September 30, 2014, received a total of $235.93 billion in contract awards. The top 10 recipients of federal dollars raked in $117.7 billion, or about 49.9% of all dollars awarded. Here are the top 10 federal contractors for last year based on contract dollars awarded.

1. **Lockheed Martin Corp.** (NYSE: LMT) received $32.23 billion in fiscal year 2014, of which $9.6 billion came from the U.S. Air Force, $2.74 billion came from the U.S. Army and $9.64
billion came from the U.S. Navy. The U.S. Department of Defense authorized a total of $25.07 billion in contracts for Lockheed in 2014. In addition, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) paid $1.69 billion for Lockheed’s services, and the Department of Homeland Security chipped in $365 million.........

Other Items of Interest –

Monterey Steps up Effort to Defend Area Installations

http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/monterey-steps-up-effort-to-defend-area-installations/?utm_source=dc360&utm_campaign=561608945c-RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_04f8ff45e8-561608945c-55784537&ct=t%28RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN%29#

Defense Communities 360 © June 19, 2015

The city of Monterey, Calif., on Tuesday approved a contract to hire a Washington-area consultant to craft a strategy to prevent possible closure of the Presidio of Monterey or the Naval Postgraduate School. “The need will almost inevitably arise when we need to defend these institutions,” said Deputy City Manager Dino Pick, who led the effort to hire Public Private Solutions Group. David Spauer, the county’s economic development director, also supported the proposal before the city council. “This first and essential step is extremely necessary,” Spauer said, reported the Monterey Herald. “When [the analysis] is completed, it will set the groundwork we will need to talk to the Navy, to the Pentagon, other legislators, on the strength of our area and our assets,” he said. Former Defense Secretary Leon Panetta told KSBW that even though it’s not certain when Congress will authorize a new BRAC round, Monterey needs to prepare. “The smart communities are the ones that prepare for this, don’t take it for granted,” Panetta said. Councilman Alan Haffa said Monterey should collaborate with neighboring cities because the installations in Monterey benefit the entire county. Monterey already has begun initial discussions with the Monterey County Business Council, nonprofit foundations supporting the Army and Navy schools, and county staff, and has plans to reach out to other cities, according to Pick. “At the end of the day, Monterey does have a significant stake in this, so we are leading the way,” Pick said.
TF members --

1. **Next Task Force Meeting in July** – The next meeting of the Florida Defense Support Task Force will be on Thursday, **July 16, 2015** at the **Westin Tampa Harbour Island, 725 South Harbour Island Blvd., Tampa, FL 33602** beginning at 9:00 AM. Draft agenda attached.

2. **Attachment:**
   - TPG Monthly Report

Regards, BG.

**Bruce Grant**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, FLORIDA DEFENSE SUPPORT TASK FORCE

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After three years of living within tight fiscal constraints, defense officials will begin to consider jettisoning lower-priority missions to free up funds for the department’s most critical functions.

The wholesale cancellation of select missions is the only way to free up billions of dollars in a single budget year, Robert Work, the deputy secretary of defense, said this week. And regardless of whether lawmakers strike a deal to give the Pentagon more breathing room under the statutory spending caps, top officials are preparing for an extremely constrained topline budget number, reported Federal News Radio. —It’s going to be tough. There’s no simple way out of this problem,” Work said at a conference sponsored by the U.S. Geospatial Intelligence Foundation. —The fact is that we’re going to have to really prioritize and be ruthless about it,” he said. The search for missions the department can abandon will be a key driver of the fiscal 2017 budget request the department is now developing. Next month Defense Secretary Ashton Carter expects to submit a new set of strategic guidance describing the basic factors the services should use to eliminate existing initiatives and divert their funding elsewhere, according to the story…….
Another round of base realignments and closures looks to be out of the question for now, but BRAC — and its potential costs — dominated some discussions at a summit on the future of military communities. The Association of Defense Communities summit was the backdrop for exchanging ideas on how the private sector could get more involved in the installations of the future, to the point of perhaps even managing military bases. Ongoing talk of budget constraints in the near future has led the Defense Department and the services to seek another BRAC round, to reduce unneeded infrastructure that costs precious dollars to maintain………

**Military Will Manage Even as Infrastructure Scrapes By, Conger Says**

The nation’s defense infrastructure has not been adequately maintained for the past several years as the Pentagon diverts funds for installation support to higher priority readiness needs, but the military will be able to cope even if the stringent budget caps forcing officials to skimp on facility needs continue through the end of the decade, the department’s top installations official said this week at the 2015 Defense Communities National Summit. –We’ve done this before and survived it,” said John Conger, acting assistant secretary of defense for energy, installations and environment, referring to a similar situation in the 1990s. –It takes years for buildings to crumble,” Conger said. DOD’s investment in facilities that occurred before the department was forced to tighten its belt two years ago provided a base that should sustain it while its buildings are allowed to deteriorate……

**Army, Air Force Not Currently Planning to Bypass BRAC**
Defense Communities 360 © June 24, 2015

Despite threats from the Obama administration to resort to alternative options if Congress fails to approve its request for a new BRAC round, the Air Force and Army have no immediate plans to rely on a rarely used authority to close or realign bases outside of a BRAC round, installation officials said Tuesday at the 2015 Defense Communities National Summit. Before taking a step to use 10 U.S.C. Sec. 2687, the Air Force would wait for direction from the Defense Department, said Col. Jonathan Webb, director of Air Force Installations Planning. Section 2687 requires the defense secretary to give Congress 60 days to review proposed actions meeting certain thresholds…….

Army Faces Limited Options in Addressing Excess Capacity

Defense Communities 360 © June 24, 2015

The Army is paying $480 million a year to maintain more than 160 million square feet of excess infrastructure, and the service has only a limited ability to trim that cost, officials said Tuesday at the 2015 Defense Communities National Summit. The service estimates that 18 percent of its infrastructure is excess. One tack it is taking to address the surplus is asking garrison commanders to identify their unutilized and underutilized space, and to consolidate activities into their most efficient facilities, said Katherine Hammack, assistant secretary for installations, energy and environment. Facilities in the worst condition can then be mothballed or torn down. But this initiative will not produce significant savings, Hammack said. The problem for the Army — and the Air Force which also is dealing with a large amount of excess capacity — is that a drop in an installation’s population will not result in a proportional reduction in the cost to operate the base due to the fixed costs required to keep things running…….
BRAC Round Inevitable, Experts Say

http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/brac-round-inevitable-experts-say/?utm_source=dc360&utm_campaign=a6a560051c-RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_04f8f45e8-a6a560051c-55784537&ct=t%28RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN%29#

Defense Communities 360 © June 23, 2015

Congress is likely to approve a new round of base closures within five years, as BRAC is not the political third rail it’s frequently described as, Mackenzie Eaglen, a resident fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, said Monday at the opening general session of the 2015 Defense Communities National Summit. While lawmakers are naturally disinclined against authorizing the Pentagon to close additional installations, the consequences of DOD’s worsening budget situation should help persuade Congress that a BRAC round is needed, Eaglen told more than 500 Summit attendees. The Budget Control Act caps have resulted in deteriorating readiness levels for the military, an indication of less frequent training and lower spending on facility maintenance, she explained……..

FDSTF –

UWF joins Complete Florida Military to provide scholarships and support

http://pensacolatoday.com/2015/06/uwf-joins-complete-florida-military-to-provide-scholarships-and-support/

Pensacola Today © June 26, 2015

The University of West Florida’s Military and Veterans Resource Center, in collaboration with Complete Florida Military, helps active duty service members, veterans and their families return to college. Recent funding from the Florida Defense Support Task Force has enabled Complete Florida Military – a new State of Florida initiative – to offer scholarships and support for Florida military, veterans and dependents. The program’s reach includes, but is not limited to, coaching to help military students determine benefits and make informed decisions; scholarships in the Northwest Florida and Jacksonville areas; fully online degree programs, certificates and
certifications in information technology and cybersecurity; and connection with career opportunities in the aforementioned fields. Employment in the computing industry is projected to grow in some fields by up to 25 percent between 2012 and 2022. Complete Florida Military provides routes to career paths in IT and cybersecurity for military personnel and their dependents.

DOD Budget–

**Smith Outlines Recipe for Sustaining DOD**


Defense Communities 360 © June 26, 2015

It’s not exactly a tightly-held secret that the Defense Department would like to spend a lot more money in the coming years than it is likely to get. And as long as the spending caps imposed by the 2011 Budget Control Act remain in effect and partisan differences prevent Congress from striking a long-term budget deal, the Pentagon will continue to struggle to carry out all of its missions. But there is a way out of this predicament, Washington Rep. Adam Smith (D), ranking member of the House Armed Services Committee, said this week during the congressional keynote at the 2015 Defense Communities National Summit. The first step is for lawmakers to scrap the Budget Control Act and replace it with a new long-term spending plan. The federal government already has achieved four times the amount of deficit reduction called for under the statute, but because Congress failed to agree on an initial plan to trim the deficit, the spending caps are slated to remain in effect though fiscal 2021.

**No Sequestration 'Pretty Certain,' Work Says**


Defense News © June 22, 2015

By Aaron Mehta
The number two man at the Pentagon believes a budget deal will be reached to avoid sequestration levels of funding, good news to those in the defense industry who are nervously tracking the budget debate in Washington. Deputy Defense Secretary Bob Work also said that Russia's continued aggression in Europe will play a major part in shaping the next budget put forth from the Pentagon. Work said Monday that three months ago he would have thought sequestration was "better than a 50-50 proposition," but that today he is "pretty certain we won't get to sequestration-level funding."………

Five challenges for the defense bill


The Hill © June 21, 2015

By Jordain Carney

The Senate cleared its annual defense policy bill this week, but the military bill faces a handful of hurdles before it can become law. The House and Senate will now try to merge their two bills, with both sides pledging to finish up their work next month. If they can manage to stick to that timeline, it will mark a sharp contrast from recent years when lawmakers scrambled to finish their work by the end of the year. Here's a look at some of the biggest challenges lawmakers face……

MacDill AFB –

MacDill reservist nominates boss for Patriot Award


Air Force Reserve Command © June 26, 2015

By Staff Sgt. Adam C. Borgman
A local employer was presented the Patriot Award from the Florida Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve office here June 7. The Patriot Award is awarded to employers who go above and beyond to support the National Guard or Reserve military service of their employees. Senior Master Sgt. Nathaniel Greenwich, 927th Force Support Squadron training manager, nominated his boss, Carlos Garcia, for supporting his reserve commitments. "Mr. Garcia stays late to perform duties to prevent an additional heavy load on me when I return from reserve duty," Greenwich said. "He also sacrifices his projected off time to ensure my reserve requirements are met." The Florida ESGR State Chairman Emeritus, Judge Gregory P. Holder, presented the award. ........

Eglin AFB –

**Eglin recognized with national community partnership award**


Eglin AFB © June 25, 2015

by Jasmine Porterfield, Team Eglin Public Affairs

The 96th Test Wing was presented with the 2015 Installation Excellence Award at a June 24 Defense Community Awards ceremony hosted by the Association of Defense Communities in Washington, D.C. "It's an honor for Eglin to be recognized for this significant achievement," said Maj. Gen. David Harris, Air Force Test Center commander. The recognition is awarded to military installations that have successfully built strong partnerships with communities, regions and states to enhance community-military collaboration; promote efficiency and innovation;
advance Department of Defense energy efficiency goals; and serve as a national model for community-military partnerships, according to the ADC. The 96th Test Wing was recognized for the seamless collaboration of Eglin's joint-use airfield with a civilian airport; its partnership with county and state organizations on land preservation to protect aircraft test and training corridors; and reducing the demand on Florida's main potable water supply through an Eglin-based supplemental reclaimed water main that also provides additional reclaimed water to Eglin and a neighboring city........

Air Force retreats on GRASI


Apalachicola Times © June 24, 2015

By Lois Swoboda

When staging war games in Tate’s hell was first proposed by representatives of the Gulf Regional Airspace Strategic Initiative (GRASI), practically everyone in Franklin County said no. Apparently, military planners heard and understood because the new executive summary of the proposal published on June 15, outlines a radically diminished program of training exercises. In 2013, the Air Force struck a deal with the state to lease sections of Tate’s Hell as part of GRASI, a plan to relieve Eglin Air Force Base’s crowded airspace by expanding military training operations to state lands. After publishing an Environmental Impact Study in April of that year, GRASI organizers were mandated to hold scoping meetings with affected communities.......
Lightning II, currently scheduled for next year. Eglin, a sprawling complex located in the Florida panhandle, has been the USAF’s epicenter for all F-35 training since the first aircraft arrived on 15 July 2011. The initial complement was nine aircraft, spanning all three variants destined for services with the Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps. At the present time, according to Eglin officials, there are 26 F-35As and 17 F-35Cs on station; the Marines have moved their jets to MCAS Yuma in the west and MCAS Beaufort in the east, preparing for their own IOC push this summer. In the mean time, Eglin has gone from flying nine lines per day in 2013 to a milestone on 8 June of this year, when nineteen F-35 sorties were generated in a single day of flying……..

Eglin rushes to meet F-35 training and deployment deadline


Air Force Times © June 19, 2015

By Brian Everstine

The Air Force's main F-35 schoolhouse is constantly setting records, officials like to boast. The most F-35 sorties in one day, in one week and in one month. There's been a continuous stream of pilots and maintainers coming through classes here with the sole focus on helping the Air Force get ready for its deadline of initial operating capability next summer, said Col. Todd Canterbury, the outgoing commander of the 33rd Fighter Wing at Eglin that oversees all the training. "We've taken this airplane from having nine, to a full complement of 26 A models and 17 C models," Canterbury said. "We are flying large force exercises, F-22 integration sorties, we're training students on a regular basis. We've really operationalized the airplane."……..

Nomads welcome new commander


Northwest Florida Daily News © June 19, 2015

By KELLY HUMPHREY | Daily News

One of the time-honored traditions of change of command ceremonies is the moment when the men and women of a unit stand in formation and present a final salute to their outgoing commander. On Friday, Col. Todd “Tales” Canterbury turned the tables on his airmen and
recognized them for their hard work and dedication. “I would like to reverse roles,” he told the assembled airmen. “As my last act as your commander, I’d like to salute you.”

US Southern Command –

**Miami-based former American Airlines pilot to run Guantánamo prison**


Miami Herald © June 25, 2015

By Carol Rosenberg

In an about-face, the U.S. Southern Command is dispatching a Miami-based Air Force combat pilot — an American Airlines pilot at the time of the Sept. 11 attacks — to run the prison camps at Guantánamo after the admiral who was selected declined the position “for personal reasons.” Brig. Gen. José R. Monteagudo becomes the 15th commander of the detention center of 116 captives and 2,000 staff members next week. He’s deputy director of operations at Southcom where, Army Col. Lisa Garcia said Thursday, he served as Marine Gen. John F. Kelly’s “lead for oversight of detention operations” at Guantánamo for nearly two years. He becomes the first Air Force officer to command the detention center that opened Jan. 11, 2002, at Camp X-Ray and has across the years held at least 780 captives.

**Coast Guard lowers hammer on drug-running on high seas**


Miami Herald © June 28, 2015

By Alfonso Chardy
When the cutter Vigilant docked at the Coast Guard base in Miami Beach on June 12, its crew offloaded bales of marijuana and packets of cocaine worth millions on the illegal market. It was the latest catch in the ongoing Operation Martillo dragnet in which vessels and aircraft from the United States and more than a dozen other countries in Latin America, the Caribbean and Europe seek to disrupt drug-trafficking routes in the Atlantic, the Caribbean and the Pacific. Launched Jan. 15, 2012, Operation Martillo (Spanish for hammer) has netted at least 515,336 kilos of cocaine and 117,754 pounds of marijuana. It has also led to the arrest of at least 1,348 people in various operations under the program. The interdictions have resulted in a loss of about $8 billion in revenue for drug trafficking organizations, according to official U.S. estimates. The figures were supplied by a spokesman for the U.S. Southern Command. Operation Martillo is run by Joint Interagency Task Force-South (JIATF-South), in support of U.S. Southern Command.

Homestead ARB –

Mission United gains insight into Reserve component


Youngstown Air Reserve Station © June 23, 2015

By Senior Airman Aja Heiden, 482nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

Members of Mission United, an organization that supports military veterans and their families in Broward County, Florida, visited the base to gain a greater understanding of what reservists do during drill weekends so they can better understand the military background of veterans. Mission United helps veterans navigate resources using employment readiness, legal assistance, and other supportive services for veterans and their families. Mission United is working to close the gap between military service and civilian employment for veterans. There are many resources available to veterans to bridge this gap but it can be difficult to navigate these resources alone, according to George E. Ivanoff, employment specialist for Mission United. "During this event I was able to have one-on-one conversations with Airmen and hear about their challenges," said Ivanoff. "It is invaluable for us to know what challenges our people are going through so we can find ways to help them."
Avon Park Air Force Range –

News: 18th ASOG JTACs exercise joint efforts at DRAGON STRIKE


DVIDS © June 22, 2015

By Airman 1st Class Dillian Bamman

―Cleared hot!‖ yelled the joint terminal attack controller (JTAC), sweat dripping from his sunburnt face. Within seconds, he hears the sound of 50-caliber rounds raining down on the target from an A-10C Thunderbolt II. As a billowing cloud of smoke and dust consumes his sight, he runs to his next objective. This scenario was one of many conducted during Exercise Dragon Strike, a JTAC-oriented exercise June 6-13 in Avon Park Air Force Range, Fla. JTACs out of the 18th Air Support Operations Group worked in a joint environment alongside Airmen from the 820th Combat Operations Squadron, 23d Fighter and Maintenance Groups, and U.S. Army Soldiers from the 3-27th Field Artillery Regiment……..

Tyndall AFB –

US Army and Air Force to develop laser-equipped MRAP vehicle


Army Technology News © June 23, 2015

The US Army is working with the US Air Force (USAF) to develop laser technology-equipped mine-resistant, ambush-protected (MRAP) vehicles. The Recovery of Airbase Denied by Ordinance (RADBO) prototype is being developed by the Army Aviation and Missile Research
Florida National Guard –

**Camp Blanding: Building Bridges and Knocking Down Walls with Disaster Training**


Clay Today © June 25, 2015

In this era of possible terrorist attacks of any kind, in any location, it should come as no surprise that military and civilian first responders regularly train to respond to such an attack. But, what may come as a bit of a surprise, is that the training is taking place right here in Clay County. Camp Blanding Joint Training Center regularly trains highly-specialized units that focus on responding to major man-made disasters. Those units — called Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and high-yield Explosives Enhanced Response Force Package, or CERFPs — are trained to provide unique capabilities to assist civilian authorities in the event of a disaster. Disasters involving chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and high-yield explosives (CBRNE) can cause mass casualties and contamination that would quickly overwhelm local civilian first responders. CERFPs are highly-trained National Guard first responders who must be prepared to respond to the worst incidents imaginable, and to seamlessly coordinate with local first responders. They must be ready to deploy within six hours of notification……..

**US Army Commission Tackles Force Structure**
Whether US Army's active component absorbs the National Guard's AH-64 Apaches may be the highest profile issue for a congressionally established commission on the service's future, but the panel is taking on tougher questions, ones that may redefine the roles of the active side, Guard and Reserve. "The more lasting, longer term recommendations we will make will be, 'How do those three components of the Army contribute most effectively to the nation's land power requirements,'" retired Army Gen. Carter Ham, chairman of the commission, said after it met Thursday. "It's more nuanced, it's more difficult, it's a less precise answer than the AH-64 issue."

The commission was mandated by the fiscal 2015 National Defense Authorization Act following a public dust-up between the Army National Guard and active component over the active Army's Aviation Restructuring Initiative. The panel is to study the Army's structure, size, force mix, and how they all should be modified to fit the Army's missions and available resources.

Company gets contract for Whiting runway repairs

Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC) Southeast awarded a $14.4 million firm-fixed-price contract June 15 to Lagan Construction LLC, out of Woodbridge, Va., for repairs to South Field runways 5/23 and 14/32 at Whiting Field. "Naval Air Station Whiting Field's role is vital toward supporting Training Air Wing FIVE in their mission to train 100 percent of the Navy's, Marine Corps' and Coast Guard's helicopter pilots," said NAS Whiting Field Commanding Officer Capt. Todd Bahlau. --The South Field runway repairs and resurfacing will
help ensure we are able to continue producing the world's finest aviators for years to come."……..

**Crew OK after Whiting mishap**


A Whiting Field helicopter was damaged in a training mishap Thursday afternoon, but it appears the two pilots of the aircraft suffered no major injuries, according to a U.S. Navy spokesperson. At about 3:10 p.m., a helicopter from Training Air Wing Five experienced a hard landing on the grass near a runway at Navy Outlying Landing Field Santa Rosa near Milton. A student and instructor exited the helicopter on their own accord and were transported to a local hospital for a routine, precautionary examination, according to a spokesperson………

**Patrick AFB –**

**70 turn out to help clean Patrick AFB beach**


Florida Today © June 21, 2015

By Chris Bonanno

About 70 people turned out Saturday morning to help clean the area around Tables Beach at Patrick Air Force Base as part of Keep Brevard Beautiful's beach cleanup. "I know when we leave here today there's not going to be a speck of trash on the beach, on the dune, out here in the park and that's really important 'cause we want our guests and locals to see what it looks like," said Tony Sasso, executive director for KBB. It was unknown exactly how much trash the volunteers picked up. Community events director Bryan Bobbitt estimated it to be "at least 300
or 400 pounds." Trash was found in many different shapes and forms with volunteers stating they found bottles and bottle caps, plastic plates and cups, among other items…….

**Fallen Rescue Warriors Remembered At Patrick Air Force Base**


Space Coast Daily © June 28, 2015

By 1st Lt. Leslie Forshaw

Under crystal blue skies here a memorial ceremony was held by Rescue Warriors of the 920th Rescue Wing to honor the memory and service of five Rescue Airmen who lost their lives 19 years earlier from a terrorist bombing of the Khobar Towers, a dormitory where Airmen were housed while deployed. Many Patrick past and present personnel attended, including base leadership, survivors of the attack, family members of the fallen and military brethren…….

**45th SW receives EFT-1 Award from NASA**


Patrick AFB © June 25, 2015

by 45th Space Wing Public Affairs

Col. Shawn Fairhurst, 45th Space Wing vice commander, received a certificate of appreciation for launch and range support during the Orion Exploration Flight Test 1 from Don Reed, a representative of NASA's Orion Multi-Purpose Crew Vehicle Program and Flight Test Management office, June 24 at Patrick AFB. The Orion spacecraft, built by Lockheed Martin, will serve as the exploration vehicle that will carry a crew to space, provide emergency abort capability, sustain the crew during space travel, and provide safe re-entry from deep space return velocities, according to NASA.
NAS Key West –

Military takes issue with illegal dumping

http://keysnews.com/node/67676

Keys News © June 24, 2015

BY ADAM LINHARDT

The Navy is warning residents who are leaving illegally parked boats, trailers, vehicles and yard debris among other litter on military property: remove it or lose it. Navy security has been busy leaving posted warnings on items being dumped on property on Geiger and Rockland Keys, stating owners have 30 days to remove the items or the Navy will remove it for them permanently, said Senior Chief Petty Officer Reginald Chambers, a military police supervisor who patrols base property. Chambers toured Boundary Lane in Geiger Key recently, pointing out rubble and scrap as examples of items being left on the government side of the road, where Navy property begins along the residential boundary line. There were old trailers, a few trucks and old dinghies among other odds and ends. “Citizens actually called the county about this area and they (the county) informed us,” said Naval Air Station Key West spokeswoman Trice Denny. ……

Other Items of Interest –

Governor’s Council Calls for Greater Engagement with California Installations, Communities
California officials need to step up their support for military missions in the state by strengthening ties with installations and their host communities, according to a report the Governor’s Military Council released last week. Beyond committing to a sustained focus on California’s 30-plus installations, the state also should focus support to related national security activities, including the aerospace industry, defense contractors, federal laboratories and homeland security missions. DOD spends about $70 billion annually in California and employs 360,000 Californians throughout the state. “California plays an essential role in our national defense,” said Ellen Tauscher, chair of the council. “Our military’s most important testing and training ranges are located here and as defense strategy shifts to the Pacific Region and embraces new technologies, California has become more important than ever to national security,” said Tauscher, a former congresswoman and undersecretary of State.

Ohio Lawmakers Approve $5M for Military Facilities Commission

The Ohio Legislature last week passed a two-year state budget with $5 million to invest in infrastructure projects at the state’s military facilities. The funds, which would create an Ohio Military Facilities Commission, are aimed at strengthening the state’s installations ahead of a looming BRAC round. “This prepares us for the inevitable consolidations and opportunities that we know are going to come up,” state Rep. Rick Perales (R) told the Dayton Business Journal. The funds would go to projects at installations across Ohio, including Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Rickenbacker airport in Columbus and Air National Guard bases in Springfield and Mansfield. Wright-Patterson, which employs about 26,500 workers, has an estimated $4 billion annual impact on the Dayton economy.
Liaison: America’s Defense Communities At Crossroads


By Jeff Mullin

America’s defense communities are at a crossroads, city of Enid military liaison Mike Cooper told the 2015 Defense Communities National Summit this week in Washington, D.C. Cooper, who is president of Association of Defense Communities, which hosted the summit, said several factors have put cities that are home to military facilities at a critical juncture. “The reason we’re at a crossroads is the budget and a lack of decisions,” Cooper said. “All of us know there’s a better way.” Congress has yet to pass a defense authorization bill for the 2016 fiscal year. The measure is going to a conference committee, and leaders hope it can be brought to a final vote in both the House and Senate before Congress heads home for its August recess. President Barack Obama has threatened to veto the bill in its current form, however, because Republicans on Capitol Hill want to use $38 billion in temporary war funds to get around mandatory spending caps on defense funding next year.........
TF members --

1. **Task Force Meeting This Week in Tampa** – The next meeting of the Florida Defense Support Task Force will be on Thursday, **July 16, 2015 at the Westin Tampa Harbour Island, 725 South Harbour Island Blvd., Tampa, FL 33602** beginning at 9:00 AM. Meeting agenda attached. For Task Force members – Meeting/read-ahead books have been FEDEX’ed. Please expect an email later today with minutes from the last meeting for review.

2. **Call In Number for Task Force Meeting** – For those calling in, the call in number for the open session is:

   **Open Session – 800-501-8979**  
   **Access code: 8784566**

3. **Florida Channel** – The Florida Channel will be televising our meeting in Tampa on Thursday.

4. **Attachments:**

   - Task Force Meeting Agenda
   - Governor TF Appointments
   - Bios for new Task Force members
   - Notes from bi-weekly TPG conference call
Regards, BG.

Bruce Grant
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, FLORIDA DEFENSE SUPPORT TASK FORCE

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Articles of Interest:

BRAC –

Pending Army Cuts Underscore Changing Attitudes about BRAC
With the Army expected this week to identify up to 30 installations that could lose thousands of personnel, defense communities are bracing for the worst. “We’re on pins and needles,” Carl McLaughlin, executive director of the Fort Drum Regional Liaison Organization, told the Washington Post. “To not create a Detroit-like scenario, we cannot lose soldiers. We’ll feel every soldier we lose,” McLaughlin said. A worst case outcome for Fort Drum would mean the loss of 16,000 soldiers and civilians at the post in New York’s North Country. Counting spouses and children, a third of Jefferson County’s population could disappear. It is not yet clear how many installations will lose a significant portion of their populations by the end of fiscal 2017 as a result of the Army restructuring that will shrink its active-duty end strength by 40,000 soldiers. But surprisingly, defense communities increasingly are favoring a new BRAC round rather than allowing the services to allocate budget-driven force structure reductions in a less-than-transparent fashion……..

Congressional Tide Has Turned on BRAC, Smith Says

Congressional opposition to approving a new round of base closures is loosening, even as this year’s Congress has resisted the Obama administration’s request for a BRAC in 2017, the top Democrat on the House Armed Services Committee said Thursday. “The hostility, the notion that this was completely unacceptable, which existed about a year ago is not there anymore amongst my fellow members is the way I would put it,” Rep. Adam Smith (Wash.), the most prominent advocate in Congress for a BRAC round, told reporters. Smith dismissed all of the standard arguments, saying they had run their course, reported CQ Roll Call……..
Rick Scott announces nine board appointments

http://www.saintpetersblog.com/archives/235199

Saint Peters Blog © July 10, 2015

By Phil Ammann

On Thursday, Gov. Rick Scott announced nine appointments to a variety of state boards.

Defense Support Task Force

Scott announced one appointment and three reappointments to the Florida Defense Support Task Force, a division of Enterprise Florida that oversees the state’s military missions and installations. Each appointment is for a term ending July 1, 2019.

Admiral Mark Fitzgerald, 64, of Fleming Island, is the president of Aragosto Global LLC and a retired admiral with the US Navy. He fills a vacant seat.

Major General Michael Calhoun, 61, of Lake Worth, is the Adjutant General of Florida. Calhoun was reappointed.

Barbara Stewart, 69, of Avon Park, is the financial manager of Trippensee & Company Inc and a former county commissioner for Highlands County. Stuart was reappointed.

Major General Joseph Taluto, 67, of Palm Beach Gardens, is the retired Adjutant General of New York. He was also reappointed.

DOD Budget–

Obama Reiterates Threat to Veto Defense Bill

http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/obama-reiterates-threat-to-veto-defense-bill/?utm_source=dc360&utm_campaign=e94c164079-
During a rare visit to the Pentagon, President Obama on Monday reiterated his threat to veto the fiscal 2016 defense authorization bill because it relies on a budget framework that would shortchange the nation’s future by restraining spending on non-military aspects of national security such as education and research. “We’re not going to eat our seed corn,” Obama said, reported CQ. The military has the best troops in the world in part because “we’ve got a strong economy and we’ve got a well-educated population and we’ve got an incredible research operation and universities,” the president said. “We shortchange those, we’re going to be less secure,” he said………

**Talks to Reach Compromise over Defense Bill Remain on Track**

Negotiations to hash out a compromise version of the fiscal 2016 defense authorization bill are progressing this week as members of the House and Senate Armed Services subcommittees meet to work out differences in each of their sections. “All the different panels are meeting today and tomorrow and then Friday we intend to wrap it up and be prepared to submit our final decisions,” Mike Rogers (R-Ala.), who chairs the House Armed Services Strategic Forces Subcommittee, told CQ Roll Call. Talks at the subcommittee level are not expected to address several high-profile issues which will be left for the chairmen and ranking members of the two Armed Services committees. Those include provisions dealing with Guantanamo detainees, acquisition reform, and compensation and benefits for military personnel………

**Lawmakers Blast US Army Force Cuts**

Lawmakers have blasted US Army force cuts as a result of sequestration. The cuts have led to a decline in the number of soldiers and a reduction in funding for research and development. The cuts have been criticized as being too deep and not sustainable in the long term. The US Army has been forced to make significant reductions in its personnel and equipment, which has raised concerns about the ability of the Army to carry out its missions effectively. The cuts have also raised concerns about the impact on the defense industry and the national economy.………
Lawmakers are lining up to decry an US Army plan to cut 40,000 and shrink the size of the force from 490,000 to 450,000 by 2017. The 450,000 figure was already known, but plans to draw down to that amount by 2017 is a year sooner than previously announced. The new plan, reported by USA Today, includes 17,000 civilian lay-offs, and downsized brigades at Fort Benning, Georgia, and Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in Alaska………

**Will Army Troop Cuts Be Congress’s Wake-Up Call On Sequestration?**


Army officers and officials hit Capitol Hill this afternoon to brief congressional staff on the coming round of personnel cuts. We’ve known for over a year that [the Army would cut 40,000 active-duty soldiers](#) — going down from 490,000 troops to 450,000 — but now the service is finally saying which units get cut. Further, unlike [previous reductions that focused on Europe](#), these 40,000 solders will come out of bases in the United States. So, for many members of Congress and the public alike, what’s been an abstract debate is about to get painfully real. Will news of [specific cuts to local bases](#) change the politics? At stake isn’t this current round of cuts, which it’s almost certainly too late to stop. The bigger issue is whether there’ll be [more cutbacks](#) when and if the [Budget Control Act](#) goes into full force next year………

**US Army Cuts Would Hit Nearly Every Base**
The US Army announced a plan to cut 40,000 troops that would impact nearly every Army installation, warning that the reductions could grow if Congress cannot reach a deal to avert sequestration budget cuts. The Army detailed plans to cut the active-duty force from 490,000 to 450,000 within two years. The end-strength target was made public months ago, but members of Congress were briefed Thursday on the specific bases and units impacted. Army Director of Force Management Brig. Gen. Randy George, at a press conference Thursday, attributed the decision to fiscal constraints resulting from the Budget Control Act of 2011 and sequestration.

Many critics of Army cuts ignored Pentagon warnings, supported sequestration

Some of the loudest critics of the proposed staffing cuts the Army announced Thursday at bases around the United States were the very members of Congress who four years ago voted to impose government-wide budget measures that the Pentagon warned then would compel it to slash the military. The Army’s announcement of plans to reduce its active duty force by 40,000 troops over the next two years was panned widely in Congress, especially by lawmakers from states with bases hit hard by the proposed cuts. Democratic Rep. Sanford Bishop criticized plans to eliminate 3,402 positions at Fort Benning in Georgia. Republican Rep. Renee Ellmers condemned the Army’s proposal to cut the number of troops at Fort Bragg in North Carolina by 842. Democrat Rep. Sanford Bishop and Republicans Renee Ellmers and Mac Thornberry complained about the drawdown. All voted for the budget bill that compelled it.
Defense Communities 360 © July 12, 2015

The Senate on Thursday agreed to form a conference committee with the House to hash out a compromise version of the fiscal 2016 defense authorization bill, marking the first time since 2012 that Congress has formally convened a House-Senate conference on the annual policy bill. Before approving the motion, the Senate rejected a Democratic proposal to instruct conferees to shift $38 billion in overseas contingency operations (OCO) funds back to DOD’s base budget. Both versions of the authorization bill follow the GOP budget framework which calls for stashing tens of billions of extra dollars in the department’s war account to elude the statutory spending caps. Democrats have opposed that maneuver in an attempt to strike a budget deal with Republicans to lift the budget caps on both defense and non-defense spending.

Space Coast –

**SpaceX rocket explosion not likely to slow launches for long**

Orlando Sentinel © July 5, 2015

By Scott Powers

SpaceX's rocket explosion last week may only briefly slow the company's ambitious launch schedule at Cape Canaveral but it could also give a boost to its competitors, experts say. On June 28, a Falcon 9 rocket, launched from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station and headed toward the International Space Station with more than 4,000 pounds of supplies, blew up 27 miles above the Atlantic Ocean. The $60 million rocket and its 4,000 pounds of cargo were destroyed. An HC-130 Hercules aircrew from Coast Guard Air Station in Clearwater drops flares to mark debris near Port Canaveral on Sunday, June 28. The crew assisted NASA vessels in debris recovery.
Residents in Northwest Florida know full well the importance of our nation's military presence in the region, both for the security we enjoy and for the economic impact, and that includes the contribution made to our economy by the modeling, simulation and training industry all across Florida. In the just-ended session of the Florida Legislature, our lawmakers once again made a commitment to the state's partnership with the military commands that is designed to keep and grow that presence and the industry that supports it. Legislators appropriated $20 million as a second installment in a long-term commitment to Florida's preeminence in this high-tech field. Special thanks go to Sen. Don Gaetz, along with Senate President Andy Gardiner, House Speaker Steve Crisafulli, and Rep. Ritch Workman and Rep. Erik Fresen who were key proponents of this wise state investment. That money will be used to see that adequate space is available in the University of Central Florida Partnership Complex at the Central Florida Research Park in Orlando, where representatives of the U.S. Navy, Army, Air Force and Marines work side-by-side with faculty and student researchers to assess and develop the latest training technologies to prepare our military men and women for combat and for a wide variety of essential, noncombat functions. MS&T has grown into a $5 billion a year industry for Florida and there are hundreds of companies - large and small - all over the state responding to contracts that are issued by these military commands in the Partnership Complex. For instance, Global Business Solutions Inc. of Pensacola, and DRS Training and Control Systems and Explotrain of Fort Walton Beach are leading players in the field. Not only do these companies meet the needs of the military, but also MS&T's role in business and
industry has been exploding as companies realize savings and training improvements because of what is being discovered and developed through this partnership.

MacDill AFB –

MacDill unit’s Ukraine work reminiscent of Cold War

http://tbo.com/list/military-news/macdill-units-ukraine-work-reminiscent-of-cold-war-20150707/

Tampa Tribune © July 8, 2015

By Howard Altman

At 31, Air Force Capt. Shannon Ryan is too young to remember the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union. But as an airman with the 927th Air Refueling Wing at MacDill Air Force Base, she spent a week in June helping show the Russians the west won’t back down. “It’s interesting to see everything come full circle,” Ryan said, “I’m proud to have been part of an operation that has an impact. It was a great experience to train with our NATO allies.” Last year, Russia annexed Crimea and has since sent troops into Eastern Ukraine and backed anti-government rebels. In response, a U.S.-led effort has sought to financially punish Russia with sanctions and to increase U.S. troop presence in the region.

Eglin AFB –
Jade Helm 15, heavily scrutinized military exercise, to open without media access


Washington Post © July 8, 2015

By Dan Lamothe

Jade Helm 15, the controversial Special Operations exercise that spawned a wave of conspiracy theories about a government takeover, will open next week without any media allowed to observe it, a military spokesman said. Embedded reporters won’t be permitted at any point during the exercise, in which military officials say that secretive Special Operations troops will maneuver through private and publicly owned land in several southern states. Lt. Col. Mark Lastoria, a spokesman for Army Special Operations Command, said his organization is considering allowing a small number of journalists to view selected portions of the exercise later this summer, but nothing is finalized………..

Strong Bond between Eglin AFB & Host Communities


Okaloosa EDC © July 6, 2015

Eglin Air Force Base is the beneficiary of long-standing support from the 14 municipalities that surround it. A series of mutually beneficial partnerships have helped preserve the base’s vital flight training mission and other activities, and sustain the region’s infrastructure and natural resources. For anyone flying into the Destin-Fort Walton Beach Airport, this close relationship becomes immediately apparent. Okaloosa County’s commercial service airport is located on land Eglin leases to it. The joint-use airfield accommodates more than a dozen types of military aircraft and all of the area’s civilian air traffic………..
Hurlburt Field –

**Flyover opens to drivers next week**


Northwest Florida Daily News © July 9, 2015

By KARI C. BARLOW | Daily News

If weather cooperates, the new U.S. Highway 98 flyover at Hurlburt Field will be partially operational by July 18. The Department of Transportation plans to shift westbound through traffic onto the new bridge. “Crews will be out the night of the 17th doing some striping and laying transition work,” DOT spokesman Ian Satter said. “All of this is based on weather conditions cooperating... It’ll be in the morning hours.” Crews will return the night of July 27 to prep the eastbound lanes of the flyover bridge. Eastbound through-traffic will shift on the morning of July 28. “We’re going to guide traffic,” Satter said. “People will be directed to go toward the flyover portion.”

US Southern Command –

**U.S. Army plans more cuts, report says**


Local 10 News © July 7, 2015

By Andrea Torres

The United States Southern Command has been grappling with the cumulative effect of budget cuts enacted over the past few years. Previous cuts in troops, ships, planes, Coast Guard cutters and other services have weakened operations, Gen. John F. Kelly said in a statement to Congress in March. At Southern Command's headquarters in Miami-Dade County's Doral neighborhood, "we have implemented a 13 percent reduction in civilian billets and an 11 percent reduction in
military ones," Kelly said. Now the U.S. Army plans to cut 40,000 more soldiers and 17,000 more civilian employees over the next two years -- so there would be 450,000 soldiers by the end of the 2017 budget year, USA TODAY reported Tuesday. The U.S. Army did not want to comment on the report, so it was unclear if the cuts were going to affect Southern Command again. This is after Kelly said that about 100 people from the Caribbean volunteered to join ISIS and had traveled to Syria……..

NS Mayport –

Ship preps at Mayport for speedy mission


News4Jax © July 7, 2015

By Chris Patenteau

A unique Navy ship is making a stop in Mayport before heading for deployment. It’s a high-speed, light-weight ship that can reach speeds of 40 knots to move tons of military cargo quickly. The captain said the joint high-speed vessel is actually more like an airplane than it is a ship. The ship is being loaded with vehicles, equipment and food to take along for a three-month deployment that will include a lot of training with other countries in Central America. —What we do is we go down there, we partner together, we train together, we operate together, and learn more from each other to enable us to operate routinely in the Naval realm,” said Capt. Bob Cepek, mission commander for the USNS Spearhead……..

Homestead ARB –

Officials scrap plans for controversial air show in Everglades
The threat posed by a biennial air show to the Everglades, the largest and most important wetlands area in the United States, is fading in the wake of Miami-Dade County Mayor Carlos Gimenez's announcement Wednesday that he would seek another site for the event. The plan to stage an air show in the Big Cypress National Preserve mobilized environmentalists and Everglades advocates, who are committed to protecting the vital wetlands from further human encroachment.

NSA Panama City –

New military medical clinics expected to open in March

Bay County is expected to have two new medical clinics for current and former military personnel in March, officials said. The new clinics are intended to increase the level of health care available to veterans and active service members, with a 28 percent growth in Veterans Affairs enrollment projected in the next 10 years. The Panama City Community Based Outpatient Clinic and Panama City Naval Branch Health Clinic, which will share adjacent space, have been in the works since 2014. Both clinics are expansions of current facilities at Naval Support Activity Panama City and are separately funded.
For many, what goes on behind the gates of Naval Support Activity Panama City remains a mystery. Our local base has taken on some high-tech tasks that should benefit everyone in the Navy. A large group of engineers, contractors and government employees spent the last 16 months installing new intelligence technology aboard the USNS Lewis B. Puller, a ship that's first in its class! "We installed three systems on the AFSB ship," Zena Le, Systems Engineer MLP AFSB said. "We installed a communications module on the F side of the ship, we installed two radio modules and then we installed an expeditionary system within the forward spaces of the ship." The system is known as C4I: command, control, communications, computers, and intelligence……

NAS Pensacola –

**Installations in Eastern States Sweep Pentagon Awards**

Defense Communities 360 © July 7, 2015

Defense Secretary Ash Carter on Monday announced the 2015 recipients of the Commander in Chief’s Annual Award for Installation Excellence:

- Army: Fort Stewart and Hunter Army Airfield, Ga.;
- Marine Corps: Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C.;
- **Navy: Naval Air Station Pensacola, Fla.**;
- Air Force: Joint Base Andrews, Md.; and

The award recognizes outstanding and innovative efforts of the people who operate and maintain U.S. military installations, Pentagon officials said. –Excellent installations enable better mission
performance and enhance the quality of life for military men and women and their families,” officials said in a statement announcing the winners. — Each winning installation succeeded in providing excellent working, housing and recreational conditions.” ………

**NAS Pensacola receives excellence award**


Pensacola News-Journal © July 6, 2015

By Rod Duren

Defense Secretary Ash Carter announced the five 2015 recipients of the Commander in Chief's Annual Award for Installation Excellence on July 6. Naval Air Station Pensacola was among those selected. The CIC's annual award recognizes outstanding and innovative efforts of those who operate and maintain U.S. military installations, according to the DOD's website. Among NASP's noteworthy achievements was air traffic control's first ever "zero discrepancy" evaluation; Navy Secretary's Gold Energy Award; installation command's "Five Star Accreditation" for MWR programs; family housing's two "A List Awards" for customer service excellence; Health, Safety and Fitness and Personal Excellence Partnership awards; and Operation Blessing International's recognition of volunteers who aided flood victims…………

Patrick AFB –

**Patrick AFB personnel volunteer to represent children**


Florida Today © July 10, 2015

By R. Norman Moody

Being on active duty and raising two children as a single mother does not keep Air Force Tech Sgt. Sherrill Pratt from advocating for other children in need. Pratt is one of several active duty
airmen and civilian personnel at Patrick Air Force Base who are part of Guardian Ad Litem, a group of volunteers trained as court advocates to provide a voice for abused, abandoned and neglected children. ―I talk to my kids about it and they understand,” Pratt said about the times she spends away from her own to help other children. ―It teaches them that you can go out and help others. It’s not just about you.”

NAS Key West –

**Improvement Plans in the Works for Special Forces Underwater Operations School**


DOD News © July 6, 2015

By Amaani Lyle

As humanitarian, training and operational missions continue in the Asia-Pacific region, the combat diving community’s most rigorous school will soon implement its area development plan in support of Defense Secretary Ash Carter’s ―force of the future” strategy. The development plan outlines an in-depth study of existing infrastructure improvements, specifically within the U.S. Army’s Special Forces Underwater Operations School’s Combat Diver Qualification, said Army Maj. Joshua Eaton, Commander of Charlie Company, 2nd Battalion, 1st Special Warfare Training Group (Airborne). The U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School runs the six-week course on Fleming Key at Naval Air Station Key West, Florida.

Defense Industry –
Defense Contractors Should Get A Boost From The New National Military Strategy


Seeking Alpha © July 12, 2015

Summary

- The military advantage of the U.S. has decreased, while the risk for potential conflict has increased.
- Both developments are bullish for defense contractors, many of whom have seen revenue and earnings go down.
- Lockheed Martin and Raytheon could benefit more than others due to the need for missile defense.

The Pentagon has recently updated the National Military Strategy ("NMS") after the previous one was released four years ago in 2011. The NMS basically describes the strategic goals of the armed forces in the United States. It lists, for instance, the most significant challenges to U.S. national interests. The latest one takes note of the many changes that have taken place in the security situation worldwide with respect to the United States……

Other Items of Interest –

Army plans to cut 40,000 troops


Army Times © July 7,2015

By Tom Vanden Brook
The Army plans to cut 40,000 soldiers from its ranks over the next two years, a reduction that will affect virtually all its domestic and foreign posts, the service asserts in a document obtained by USA Today. The potential troop cut comes as the Obama administration is pondering its next moves against the Islamic State militant group in Iraq and Syria. President Obama said Monday he and military leaders had not discussed sending additional troops to Iraq to fight the Islamic State. There are about 3,500 troops in Iraq. "This will not be quick — this is a long-term campaign," Obama said at the Pentagon after meeting top military brass in the wake of setbacks that have prompted critics to call for a more robust U.S. response against the Islamic State.

Communities Dodge Worst Case Scenarios as Army Spreads out Force Reductions

[Link to article](http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/communities-dodge-worst-case-scenarios-as-army-spreads-out-force-reductions/#)

Defense Communities 360 © July 10, 2015

All but a few Army installations will be able to avoid dramatic force reductions after the service on Thursday announced its latest round of restructuring needed to shrink its active-duty end strength from 490,000 to 450,000 soldiers in response to stringent spending caps imposed since fiscal 2013. The supplemental programmatic environmental assessment the Army released in June 2014 listed 30 installations that potentially could lose an aggregate of between 2,500 and 16,000 military and civilian personnel by the end of this second round of personnel cuts, but the bulk of communities avoided the worst case outcomes. Only three installations would lose more than 2,500 military personnel, and only six would lose more than 1,000 soldiers, officials said. The force structure reductions will occur over the next several years, with the Army’s active-duty end strength dropping to 450,000 by the end of FY 2018. The cuts in military personnel will be accompanied by a reduction of 17,000 Army civilians over the same timeframe, the Army News Service reported.

A total of 10 posts will suffer a loss of more than 500 soldiers (all are installations with brigade combat teams, except for Fort Leonard Wood):

- Fort Benning, Ga. — (net loss of) 3,402 soldiers
- Fort Hood, Texas — 3,350
- Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska — 2,631
- Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash. — 1,251
- Fort Bliss, Texas — 1,219
- Schofield Barracks, Hawaii — 1,214
- Fort Stewart, Ga. — 947
Mixed Reaction to US National Military Strategy


Defense News © July 12, 2015

By Aaron Mehta

Released with little fanfare July 2, when most of the national security world was focused on the upcoming holiday, the Pentagon's 2015 National Military Strategy serves as a window into a unique time for US security, as the Pentagon grapples with threats from state and non-state actors alike. However, analysts warn that the document talks too much in generalities while failing to provide much in the way of hard guidance for how the Pentagon should move forward on the major issues of the day. The strategy document, the first update since 2011, was penned by the office of the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Martin Dempsey.

Defense chief Ash Carter urges communities to embrace military

http://www.fayobserver.com/military/defense-chief-ash-carter-urges-communities-to-embrace-military/article_7129c45d-a0be-500d-ad0c-4637c29b5a9b.html

Fayetteville Observer © July 12, 2015

By Drew Brooks Military editor

Speaking to leaders from across the country at a major convention in Charlotte, Secretary of Defense Ash Carter urged communities to embrace their service members, veterans, military families and survivors. Carter told the annual convention of the National Association of Counties that their communities were the foundation of the "finest fighting force the world has every known." "Our men and women in uniform don't come from the Pentagon," he said. "They come from your communities." That's where the military recruits, Carter said. It's where soldiers,
sailors, airmen and Marines live while serving. And it's where they settle down after their military careers ……….

Communities Likely to Recover from Loss of Military Presence, Researcher Says


Defense Communities 360 © July 12, 2015

As about two dozen communities contemplate the impact of the Army’s announcement last week about new force reductions, a Cato Institute researcher highlights the ability of regions coping with significant cuts in military spending to bounce back. —Communities do adapt and recover, some more quickly than others, and many emerge after the transition period with a robust and more diversified economic base,” Christopher Preble, Cato’s vice president for defense and foreign policy studies, writes in a blog post. Preble’s preliminary conclusion comes at approximately the midway point of a research project assessing how communities responded after local bases were closed through either the BRAC process or other means. He also is looking at the impact of the closure of privately owned and operated facilities that primarily supplied DOD customers ……..

Text of National Veterans ID Bill

This bill was passed by Congress on July 7, 2015 and goes to the President next.

The text of the bill below is as of Jul 9, 2015 (Passed Congress/Enrolled Bill).

To amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to issue, upon request, veteran identification cards to certain veterans.

1.
Short title

This Act may be cited as the Veterans Identification Card Act 2015.

2.

Veterans identification card

(a)

Findings

Congress makes the following findings:

(1)

Effective on the day before the date of the enactment of this Act, veteran identification cards were issued to veterans who have either completed the statutory time-in-service requirement for retirement from the Armed Forces or who have received a medical-related discharge from the Armed Forces.

(2)

Effective on the day before the date of the enactment of this Act, a veteran who served a minimum obligated time in service, but who did not meet the criteria described in paragraph (1), did not receive a means of identifying the veteran’s status as a veteran other than using the Department of Defense form DD–214 discharge papers of the veteran.

(3)

Goods, services, and promotional activities are often offered by public and private institutions to veterans who demonstrate proof of service in the military, but it is impractical for a veteran to always carry Department of Defense form DD–214 discharge papers to demonstrate such proof.

(4)

A general purpose veteran identification card made available to veterans would be useful to demonstrate the status of the veterans without having to carry and use official Department of Defense form DD–214 discharge papers.

(5)
On the day before the date of the enactment of this Act, the Department of Veterans Affairs had the infrastructure in place across the United States to produce photographic identification cards and accept a small payment to cover the cost of these cards.

(b)

Provision of veteran identification cards

Chapter 57 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding after section 5705 the following new section:

5706.

Veterans identification card

(a)

In general

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall issue an identification card described in subsection (b) to each veteran who—

(1) requests such card;

(2) presents a copy of Department of Defense form DD–214 or other official document from the official military personnel file of the veteran that describes the service of the veteran; and

(3) pays the fee under subsection (c)(1).

(b)

Identification card

An identification card described in this subsection is a card issued to a veteran that—

(1) displays a photograph of the veteran;

(2)
displays the name of the veteran;

(3)
explains that such card is not proof of any benefits to which the veteran is entitled to;

(4)
contains an identification number that is not a social security number; and

(5)
serves as proof that such veteran—

(A)
served in the Armed Forces; and

(B)
has a Department of Defense form DD–214 or other official document in the official military personnel file of the veteran that describes the service of the veteran.

(c)
Costs of card

(1)
The Secretary shall charge a fee to each veteran who receives an identification card issued under this section, including a replacement identification card.

(2) (A)
The fee charged under paragraph (1) shall equal such amount as the Secretary determines is necessary to issue an identification card under this section.

(B)
In determining the amount of the fee under subparagraph (A), the Secretary shall ensure that the total amount of fees collected under paragraph (1) equals an amount necessary to carry out this section, including costs related to any additional equipment or personnel required to carry out this section.

(C)
The Secretary shall review and reassess the determination under subparagraph (A) during each five-year period in which the Secretary issues an identification card under this section.

(3)

Amounts collected under this subsection shall be deposited in an account of the Department available to carry out this section. Amounts so deposited shall be—

(A) merged with amounts in such account;

(B) available in such amounts as may be provided in appropriation Acts; and

(C) subject to the same conditions and limitations as amounts otherwise in such account.

(d)

Effect of card on benefits

(1)

An identification card issued under this section shall not serve as proof of any benefits that the veteran may be entitled to under this title.

(2)

A veteran who is issued an identification card under this section shall not be entitled to any benefits under this title by reason of possessing such card.

(e)

Administrative measures

(1)

The Secretary shall ensure that any information collected or used with respect to an identification card issued under this section is appropriately secured.
The Secretary may determine any appropriate procedures with respect to issuing a replacement identification card.

(3)

In carrying out this section, the Secretary shall coordinate with the National Personnel Records Center.

(4)

The Secretary may conduct such outreach to advertise the identification card under this section as the Secretary considers appropriate.

(f)

Construction

This section shall not be construed to affect identification cards otherwise provided by the Secretary to veterans enrolled in the health care system established under section 1705(a) of this title.

(c)

Clerical amendment

The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 5705 the following new item:

5706. Veterans identification card.

(d)

Effective date

The amendments made by this Act shall take effect on the date that is 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.
TF members --

1. **Next Task Force Meeting July 16th in Tampa** – The next meeting of the Florida Defense Support Task Force will be on Thursday, **July 16, 2015 at the Westin Tampa Harbour Island, 725 South Harbour Island Blvd., Tampa, FL 33602** beginning at 9:00 AM. For Task Force members -- If you have not already done so, please confirm attendance with Marcy for Wednesday night dinner, Thursday meeting and base tour on Thursday afternoon. Draft meeting agenda attached.

2. **Call In Number for Task Force Meeting** – For those calling in, the call in number for the open session is:

   **Open Session – 800-501-8979**  
   **Access code: 8784566**

3. **Attachment:**

   - Draft Task Force Meeting agenda – July 16, 2015
   - Just Released -- National Military Strategy 2015
   - Flyer for Military, Defense and Veterans Opportunities Summit on August 6 in Orlando – Hosted by the Florida Chamber Foundation

Regards, BG.

Bruce Grant

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, FLORIDA DEFENSE SUPPORT TASK FORCE
Articles of Interest:

FDSTF –

**Richter appointed as Florida Defense Support Task Force**


Political Fix Florida © June 30, 2015

By Jenna Buzzacco-Foerster

A Naples Republican has been tapped to head up the Florida Defense Support Task Force. Senate President Andy Gardiner on Tuesday announced Sen. Garrett Richter has been appointed to the Florida Defense Support Task Force. Gardiner, R-Orlando, also designated Richter to serve as the chairman of the task force. —A highly decorated veteran of the Vietnam War, Garrett Richter is a steadfast champion of our men and women in uniform,” said Gardiner in a statement. —He understands the impact Florida’s military installations have on our economy and the role
military families play in communities across our state.” The task force aims to preserve, protect and enhance the state’s military missions and installments…………

Grants – Task Force and DRG/DIG –

Scott announces $900K in local defense grants


Pensacola News-Journal © June 30, 2015

Governor Rick Scott today announced more than $900,000 in defense grants for Northwest Florida. This includes: Escambia County was awarded $170,000 through Florida’s Defense Reinvestment and Infrastructure Grant Programs, Santa Rosa County was awarded $360,000 through Florida’s Defense Reinvestment and Infrastructure Grant Programs and $41,310 through the Florida Defense Support Task Force, Okaloosa County was awarded $300,000 through Florida’s Defense Reinvestment and Infrastructure Grant Programs, and Walton County was awarded $38,000 through Florida’s Defense Reinvestment Grant Program……..

Governor Scott announced $400,000 in defense grants for Bay County, nearly $40,000 for Walton County


My Panhandle © June 30, 2015

Today, Governor Rick Scott announced that Bay County was awarded $280,000 through Florida’s Defense Reinvestment and Infrastructure Grant Programs. The funding will be used to support and sustain Naval Support Activity Panama City and Tyndall Air Force Base, with its $2.6 billion in defense economic impact in Bay County. Governor Scott also announced that Bay
County will receive $120,000 through the Florida Defense Support Task Force. Governor Scott said, “We want Florida to be the most military-friendly state in the country, and these important investments help us accomplish that goal. These grants will continue to ensure Bay County has all the necessary tools to support our military and create more jobs for Florida.” The Florida Defense Grants Programs are vital for our military and defense industry, and strengthen Florida’s workforce through the highly skilled former military personnel who enter the employment market each year. I am proud to play a part in supporting our military installations and communities, and appreciate what our service men and women do to protect our state,” said Bill Johnson, president & CEO of Enterprise Florida.

Bay area receives more than $600K in defense grants


WTSP © June 30, 2015

The Tampa Bay area will be receiving more than $600,000 in defense grants to help support programs vital to our military and defense industry. A $175,000 grant for the Tampa Bay Defense Alliance provided by the Florida Defense Support Task Force will be used to execute a plan to champion MacDill Air Force Base and build strong community relationships between the base and the community to protect it from closure. As a result, more than 68,000 jobs the defense industry supports in this region will be protected.

Gov. Scott approves Florida defense grants


News4Jax © June 30, 2015

By Harrison Barrus

Clay County was awarded $160,000 through Florida’s Defense Reinvestment and Infrastructure Grant Programs and $400,000 through the Florida Defense Support Task Force. Jacksonville is set to receive $464,000 through Florida’s Defense Reinvestment and Infrastructure Grant Programs. We are proud to award these defense grants to Northeast Florida. Through these grants, Clay and Duval counties will be able to keep working and put Florida on a path to be the most military-friendly state in the country,” Scott said. Clay and Duval Counties were two of 11
counties to receive a Defense Reinvestment Grant, which is designed to support relationships between military installations and their community. A $70,000 grant in Clay County will be used to support the Camp Blanding Joint Training Center and to sustain the defense industry’s $499.5 million economic impact in Clay County.

NWF gets $900,000 in defense grants


Northwest Florida Daily News © June 30, 2015

Gov. Rick Scott announced Tuesday Northwest Florida is receiving more than $900,000 in defense grants. “We want Florida to be the most military-friendly state in the country, and these important investments helps us accomplish that goal,” Scott said. “These grants will continue to ensure Northwest Florida has all the necessary tools to support our military and create more jobs for Florida.”

Jacksonville Receives Nearly Half A Million Dollars For Navy Projects


WJCT News © July 2, 2015

By Erica Protsman

Jacksonville has received nearly half a million dollars in state grants to go toward military base projects. Jacksonville Mayor Lenny Curry said in a press release the grants will help toward the city’s goal of playing a larger role in the nation’s defense. Florida Gov. Rick Scott announced one grant will go toward an ongoing project to create a buffer at the Westside’s Whitehouse Naval Airfield. A second grant will help with road improvements at Naval Station Mayport to help ease traffic congestion along State Road A1A. The city of Jacksonville says the grants further strengthen the defense industry’s economic impact in the area and support more than 108,000 jobs in Duval County.
Florida Grants to Help Communities Strengthen Local Installations


Defense Communities 360 © July 5, 2015

Thirteen defense communities in Florida will receive more than $3 million to enhance 19 installations through a variety of activities, Gov. Rick Scott (R) announced last week. The bulk of the funding, $2.5 million, was awarded through Florida’s Defense Infrastructure and Reinvestment Grant Programs, according to a release from the governor’s office. Eleven counties received a total of $850,000 in defense reinvestment grants, which support relationships between military installations and their community and promote economic diversification strategies in defense-dependent communities. Nine counties were awarded a total of $1.6 million in defense infrastructure grants for encroachment, transportation and access, utilities, communications, environment and security projects…….

DOD Budget–

Democrats Counting on Strategy for FY’16 Spending to Bring GOP to Bargaining Table

http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/democrats-counting-on-strategy-for-fy16-spending-to-bring-gop-to-bargaining-table/?utm_source=dc360&utm_campaign=3e5470e93a-RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_04f8ff45e8-3e5470e93a-55784537&ct=t%28RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN%29#

Defense Communities 360 © July 2, 2015

It’s too soon to tell whether the Senate Democrats’ strategy of blocking the chamber from bringing appropriations bills to the floor will achieve the party’s goal of forcing the GOP to the negotiating table to work out a deal to lift the spending caps on both defense and non-defense spending for fiscal 2016. It carries some risk as demonstrated by Senate Democrats’ move last month to stop the Senate from considering the FY 2016 defense spending measure. Afterwards Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) criticized Democrats for recently approving the defense authorization bill but then turning around and voting against the legislation that
would actually fund the military. But Democratic leaders believe their strategy is the best way to reach a compromise with Republicans over next year’s spending bills.

Space Coast –

**SpaceX Explosion Underlines USAF Concern**


Defense News © June 29, 2015

By Aaron Mehta

Sunday's explosion of a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket headed to resupply the International Space Station has cast into stark relief one of the challenges facing the Air Force as it moves to a competitive military launch environment — what happens if a military launch fails, and forces a competitive company to pause work? It is a concern first brought up publicly at April's National Space Symposium in Colorado Springs by Gen. John Hyten, the head of US Air Force Space Command. Hyten warned that a failed launch is inevitable and argued that the service needs to figure out how to handle the industrial base issues that will come with it. Hyten pointed out that a military launch failure in the past would cause the provider to be shut down for however long it took to find the issue and make sure it was corrected.

Eglin AFB –

**Pentagon says damning report of F-35 troubles ‘doesn’t tell the entire story’**

The F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, the $400 billion futuristic jet program that so many love to hate, found itself, once again, in the crosshairs this week when a popular military blog published a report from a test pilot who apparently found its performance less than stellar. “Test pilot admits the F-35 can’t dogfight,” read the headline in War is Boring. “New stealth fighter is dead meat in air battle.” By now, after years of media beating up the most expensive weapons program in the history of the U.S. military, the Pentagon’s joint program office and Lockheed Martin, the prime contractor, have well-oiled media response teams that are quick to rush to the plane’s defense. And they wasted no time as the War is Boring report gained traction in military circles…….

**Strong Bond between Eglin AFB, Host Communities Helps Preserve Base’s Military Missions**


Eglin Air Force Base is the beneficiary of long-standing support from the 14 municipalities that surround it. A series of mutually beneficial partnerships have helped preserve the base’s vital flight training mission and other activities, and sustain the region’s infrastructure and natural resources. For anyone flying into the Destin-Fort Walton Beach Airport, this close relationship becomes immediately apparent. Okaloosa County’s commercial service airport is located on land Eglin leases to it. The joint-use airfield accommodates more than a dozen types of military aircraft and all of the area’s civilian air traffic. A partnership among the Okaloosa County Commission, the Okaloosa Defense Support Initiative and the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity allowed Eglin to preserved 1,500 acres on its northern border and ensure that residential development would not encroach on the base’s F-35 Joint Strike Fighter flight corridors and test and training areas. The loss of that mission would have jeopardized $332 million in on-base military construction funding and $38 million in base operating support funds. The neighboring communities also have amended local plans and codes to limit incompatible development outside of Eglin…….
Here’s what training is like for the Air Force’s most elite operators


We Are the Mighty © July 1, 2015

By David Nye

America has some of the world’s most elite special operators and they get a lot of press. But on most of the missions that Special Forces, SEALs, and other top operators conduct, they bring a very special airman. The Air Force combat controller moves forward with other special operators, swimming, diving, parachuting, and shooting with their brethren. But, they act as an air traffic controller and ground observer while doing so. They can also conduct missions with other Air Force special operators, seizing enemy airports and controlling air power for follow-on forces. In his book –Kill Bin Laden,” former Delta Force commander Dalton Fury writes: The initial training “pipeline” for an Air Force Special Tactics Squadron Combat Controller costs twice as much time and sweat as does the journey to become a Navy SEAL or Delta operator……..

Mayport-based ship returns from operation Southeast Watch


News4Jax© July 3, 2015
The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Valiant returned to their homeport in Naval Station Mayport Friday following a 10-week deployment to the Florida Straits and Windward Passage. The 210-foot ship and its 80-member crew were welcomed by a throng of happy family members. During the patrol, Valiant and other Coast Guard assets worked with Customs and Border Protection to detect, interdict and rescue individuals attempting to illegally enter the United States. Less than an hour before it docked at Mayport, the crew of the Valiant rescued five people whose 29-foot boat was taking on water about six miles offshore. The Valiant and a 45-foot Coast Guard response boat from Mayport responded to a distress call from that the boat was headed into the St. Johns River.

NAS Whiting Field –

**Naval Air Station Whiting Field Runways To Receive Repairs**

http://wuwf.org/post/naval-air-station-whiting-field-runways-receive-repairs

WUWF © June 29, 2015

By Joshua Morton

NAS Whiting Field has two main air fields: North and South. In the North field, they conduct pilot training for fixed wing aircraft, primarily the T-6 Texan. In the South field, they conduct training for TH-57 helicopters. Two of the runways in their South field have been scheduled to have some repairs done to them, beginning in a few months. Jay Cope, Public Affairs Officer for NAS Whiting Field, says the repairs are standard and to be expected after so many years. “After time, you’re going to notice some cracks and some chipping and some erosion on the sides of the runways,” says Cope. “That’s just kind of a given.”

**Whiting acquires more land for buffering**

Whiting Field Naval Air Station has purchased 335 acres of easements near the north and south fields to create more buffering for the base. Buffering through land purchase prevents new development that could be impacted by flight tracks, noise corridors, accidents zones and other military-related engagements on base. "When air bases are built, they tend to build them in outlying and unpopulated areas," said Jay Cope, Whiting Field Naval Air Station public relations officer. "You try to keep air stations removed from heavy and dense populations, but oftentimes you have things being built closer and closer to the fence line. Buffering prevents residential developments from being built in accident prone places." Cope said while safety is a No. 1 priority, the most likely times aircraft incidents occur are during takeoffs and landings. Buffering reduces the chances of incidents happening near residential areas while also reducing noise levels.

MCSF Blount Island –

The key to providing 'logistics solutions for the warfighter'

http://www.bizjournals.com/jacksonville/news/2015/07/01/the-key-to-providing-logistics-solutions-for-the.html

Jacksonville Business Journal © July 1, 2015

By Jensen Werley

In an industry like the military, which has been described as 90 percent logistics, it's a special thing to be renowned for your logistics capabilities. That's what's happening here in Jacksonville: Blount Island Command and the Marine Corps Support Facility coordinate and manage the logistics effort from the Maritime Prepositioning Force. The command showed off its expertise during a presentation to the Logistics Advisory Group on Tuesday, where commanding officer Colonel Matt Crabill discussed how his command operates and executes logistics from the Marine Corps.
Other Items of Interest –

Pentagon Releases New National Military Strategy


Defense News © July 1, 2015

By Aaron Mehta

The Pentagon has released a new National Military Strategy, the first update to that document since 2011 — and one that warns non-traditional threats are on the rise. The strategy is being updated to reflect the new global security situation, one in which the US is facing near-peer adversaries like Russia and China while simultaneously having to handle diffuse militant groups like the Islamic State. "Since the last National Military Strategy was published in 2011, global disorder has significantly increased while some of our comparative military advantage has begun to erode," Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Martin Dempsey wrote in his introduction to the strategy document ……..

Lt. Gen. Robert Neller tapped as next commandant of the Marine Corps

http://www.defensenews.com/story/military/2015/07/01/neller-to-be-tapped-for-commandant/29567019/

Defense News © July 1, 2015

By Hope Hodge Seck and Aaron Mehta

Lt. Gen. Robert Neller is the Obama administration's choice to succeed Gen. Joseph Dunford as 37th commandant of the Marine Corps, Secretary of Defense Ash Carter announced Wednesday. Neller, 62, now serves as commander of Marine Corps Forces Command in Norfolk, Virginia, where he oversees deployment planning and execution and East Coast Marine bases. He also commands Marine Corps Forces Europe. A 40-year Marine infantry officer, Neller has seen operational experience during wartime and peace, with deployments to Iraq, Somalia and Panama …………. 
State funding for schools serving military children gets a boost


Northwest Florida Daily News © July 5, 2015

By KATIE TAMMEN

It was a Tuesday morning when the unique needs of students with parents in military crystallized for Tim Wyrosdick. The calendar said Sept. 11, 2001 and Wyrosdick was the principal of Navarre High School. The population of students tied to the military, specifically Hurlburt Field and the 1st Special Operations Squadron, was high. “Students became very nervous,” said the now-superintendent of Santa Rosa County Schools. “And for the next two years, we saw parents in and out of homes at the drop of a hat.” Earlier this year, he stood before part of the Florida legislature at the request of Sen. Don Gaetz and asked for a boost in state funding for schools serving military children………

U.S. Defense Officials To Examine Military Children's Education In Communities Hosting Military Installations


Ischoolguide© July 4, 2015

The U.S. military is examining the economic standards and public schools of communities that host military installations. Defense officials have formed a team that will look into issues related to the education of military children in community schools outside the gates. The United States military has formed a group that will take a closer look at the economic standards and public schools of communities hosting military installations. Nonpartisan think tank, The Stimson Center, released a study last week that showed such communities could lose their military bases for having schools that offer low-quality education. The group said the military prioritizes quality education when it comes to making base closure decisions. "If host communities do not offer soldiers' children a consistently high-quality education, they risk the economic challenges that result from losing support of a major employer," according to the study, titled "The Army
Army Study Spurs Local Leaders to Improve School Quality

http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/army-study-spurs-local-leaders-to-improve-school-quality/?utm_source=dc360&utm_campaign=ba44eb15af-RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_04f8ff45e8-ba44eb15af-55784537&ct=t%28RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN%29#

Defense Communities 360 © July 5, 2015

The bulk of public school systems serving Army children fall broadly within the middle range when compared to other schools within their state, according to an Army-sponsored review of the quality of public schools and student achievement. The Army never released the 2014 study by WestEd, but officials have discussed the results with local school districts, Military Times reported last week. The study evaluates 393 public schools that serve 200 or more Army children on factors such as academic performance, attendance, student-teacher ratio, quality of teachers, graduation rate, and participation rates and performance on the ACT and SAT tests. WestEd researchers only compared the performance of schools serving Army dependents against state-wide norms, so it doesn’t help the Army or military families compare school systems across the nation. Because academic standards vary across states, some schools with Army-connected students may do relatively well compared to other schools in states that have lower standards…….
July 27, 2015 – FDSTF Update

TF members --

1. **August Task Force Meeting in Ft. Walton Beach** – The next meeting of the Florida Defense Support Task Force will be on Thursday, **August 20, 2015 at the Holiday Inn Resort, 1299 Miracle Strip Parkway SE, Fort Walton Beach, FL 32548** beginning at 9:00 AM. The Florida Defense Alliance (FDA) will hold their meeting at the same location the day prior (August 19th) and there will be a joint reception with FDA and FDSTF and local defense community leaders beginning at 1700 on August 19, 2015 at the hotel.

2. **Attachments:**
   - 2015 Florida Veteran Legislative Summary
   - Notes from bi-weekly TPG conference call
   - Letter from the SECDEF to Senator McCain

Regards, BG.

**Bruce Grant**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, FLORIDA DEFENSE SUPPORT TASK FORCE

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Articles of Interest:
BRAC –

Former base-closing chairman sees new round coming


Tampa Tribune © July 16, 2015

By Howard Altman

The head of a group advising communities about how to protect military installations from shuttering during Pentagon cost-cutting measures said he is certain Congress will approve another Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission by 2019. “If I was a betting man, between now and 2019, I’d say 100 percent,” said Anthony Principi, chairman of the Principi group, when asked about the odds Congress will approve a new commission, commonly called BRAC, during the next few years. Principi is familiar with the process. A former secretary of veterans affairs, he was chairman of the 2005 BRAC. He answered questions posed by the Tribune after the monthly meeting of the Florida Defense Support Task Force, which was holding its 36th meeting — the second in Tampa since its launch in 2012 — at the Westin Tampa Harbour Island Hotel.

DOD Budget–

Lawmakers brace for fight over Pentagon funding

http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/lawmakers-brace-for-fight-over-pentagon-funding/article/2567957

Washington Examiner © July 13, 2015

By Charles Hoskinson

Congressional Republicans are pushing ahead with their plan to bypass mandatory spending caps and give the Pentagon money for operations and maintenance that military leaders say they urgently need but insist they don't want. The $38 billion inserted into a war-funding account not subject to the caps has become the latest in a string of summer budget battles that could lead to another government shutdown. Republicans admit the idea is just a quick fix but say it's urgently
needed to keep the U.S. military's edge in an increasingly dangerous world while Washington's leaders try for a fourth year in a row to untangle a budget mess: mandatory sequestration cuts — half of which come from defense — that never were intended to take effect. But Democrats are demanding negotiations on a permanent solution, and President Obama has threatened to veto any bill that authorizes or appropriates what the White House has derided as a "gimmick."

Wake Me Up When September Ends: America’s Defense Budget Blues

http://warontherocks.com/2015/07/wake-me-up-when-september-ends-americas-defense-budget-blues/

War on the Rocks © July 15, 2015

By Matt Vallone

Despite the House of Representatives steadily passing a series of appropriations bills, real congressional action on fiscal year (FY) 2016 defense spending is unlikely to start before September. When we last left the 114th Congress, the House and Senate were attempting to avoid the unnecessary disruption caused by gridlock and inaction by passing a budget resolution and working through “regular order” to fund the government. These efforts were met with initial success, as Republicans were able to cobble together majorities in both chambers large enough to pass a Republican budget resolution. There were two key factions that had to be kept on board in order to do so. Budget hawks were assured that the caps of the Budget Control Act would be maintained. Concurrently, defense hawks were appeased by adding almost $40 billion into the Overseas Contingency Operations account to provide a boost in defense spending.

John McCain expects defense budget by week’s end


Washington Times © July 15, 2015

By Jacqueline Klimas

Sen. John McCain said Wednesday that he expects negotiators to reach an agreement this week on the annual defense policy bill, though a presidential veto still threatens to derail the bill. The national defense authorization act, also known as the NDAA, sets yearly policy priorities for the Defense Department touching every piece of the military from troop pay to acquisition reform to what platforms the services will purchase. I think we will be able to come up with a conference
report this week, so we can have it on the floor of the House and Senate before we go into recess,” Mr. McCain, Arizona Republican, said in a speech at The Heritage Foundation.

**Defense Bill Talks Slowed over Military Compensation Issues**

[Link](http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/defense-bill-talks-slowed-over-military-compensation-issues/?utm_source=dc360&utm_campaign=548ff9cecf-RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_04f8ff45e8-548ff9cecf-55784537&ct=t%28RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN%29#)

Defense Communities 360 © July 19, 2015

Progress by House and Senate conferees negotiating a compromise version of the fiscal 2016 defense authorization bill slowed last week due to disagreements over service members’ benefits and other key issues. As a result, the target date for the House to vote on a conference report has slipped to the week of July 27, reported CQ Roll Call. If the conferees finish work on a final version of the defense policy bill in time for the House to take it up next week, the Senate still would have time to clear a conference report the following week before starting its August recess. One of the primary hurdles is a dispute over DOD’s proposal to trim service members’ housing benefits. The Senate version adopts the department’s plan to slow the rate of increase in the basic allowance for housing (BAH) over the next several years until rates cover only 95 percent of personnel’s out-of-pocket costs. That version also includes language limiting the BAH for service members who live together, a change that has drawn criticism because it would reduce benefits for married couples who both serve in the military.

**Conference Agreement on Defense Bill May Be Delayed**

[Link](http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/conference-agreement-on-defense-bill-may-be-delayed/?utm_source=dc360&utm_campaign=c36a4429af-RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_04f8ff45e8-c36a4429af-55784537&ct=t%28RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN%29#)

Defense Communities 360 © July 23, 2015

Lawmakers’ goal to hash out a compromise version of the fiscal 2016 defense authorization bill before Congress’ August recess may be in jeopardy, according to multiple sources on Capitol Hill. As recently as last Friday, the chairmen of the House and Senate Armed Services committees were hoping to complete negotiations in time for the House to take up a conference report next week, with the Senate clearing it the following week. But even as talks among House-Senate conferees continue this week, several congressional staff members have told Inside Defense that lawmakers may not agree on compromise legislation until they return to
Washington in September. With no legislative deadline occurring in August, lawmakers may be less willing to make concessions so quickly, the sources told the publication………

**Congress to Take up CR in September, Boehner Says**


Defense Communities 360 © July 24, 2015

Lawmakers most likely will rely on a continuing resolution (CR) to keep the government open when the new fiscal year starts Oct. 1, House Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio) said Thursday. “It’s pretty clear, given the number of days we’re going to be here in September, that we’re going to need a CR of some kind,” Boehner said. The speaker did not address how long he envisioned a stopgap measure lasting, reported CQ Roll Call. “No decisions have been made about that,” he said. “We’ll deal with it when we get back in September.”……..

**MacDill AFB –**

**MacDill wants you to share your air base stories**


WTSP © July 16, 2015

By Kathryn Bursch

Chip Diehl's life forms a circle. He was born on MacDill Air Force Base and came back to command the base in 2001. Now, the retired Air Force Brigadier General is one of the people leading the charge to celebrate MacDill's 75th anniversary in the spring of 2016. "Hopefully, I'm just a cheerleader," says Diehl. "That's all I wanted to do, is to continue to sing the accolades and all the good news that's coming out of MacDill Air Force Base."…………..
Eglin AFB –

**Ten Signs The F-35 Fighter Program Is Becoming A Smashing Success**


Forbes © July 13, 2015

By Loren Thompson

Summer is the silly season for defense coverage in the nation’s capital. With much of official Washington gone, journalists have to work harder to find anything worth reporting. When they uncover an item that sounds like it might be newsy, they get as much mileage out of it as they can. One approach is to take the latest glitch (real or imagined) in the Pentagon’s biggest weapon program and use it as a pretext for revisiting past issues — even though most of those issues have long since been resolved. The F-35 fighter is an easy target because its budget dwarfs funding for other programs, and the plane thus is a lightning rod for every conspiracy theorist’s fears about the machinations of the military-industrial complex. Few of the reporters on the defense beat realize that all of the legacy fighters sustaining America’s global air power today were subjected to the same sort of withering scrutiny during their own development……..

**Engineer's discovery could save Air Force millions**


Northwest Florida Daily News © July 24, 2015

By KELLY HUMPHREY

If you're a taxpayer, you might want to send Rachel Abrahams a thank you note. The young research engineer at the Air Force Research Lab Munitions Directorate recently developed a new alloy with all the mechanical properties of the material currently used for many munitions, but at half the price. While Abrahams is modest and self-effacing — "I'm just an overpaid blacksmith," she said with a laugh — she can't help but take delight in the potential impact of her accomplishment. "What's pretty neat about it is that normally it takes about 10 years to develop a new material like this," she said. "With this one, in five months we went from a prototype the size of a coffee can to a scaled up version at around 250,000 pounds."……..
Hurlburt Field –

**U.S. 98 Flyover sets new traffic path**


By Marketta Davis

After two years and a $14 million budget, the U.S. 98 Flyover at Hurlburt Field in Navarre has opened lanes for through-traffic. "The first thing people are going to see is that eastbound traffic will be able to use the bridge to get over towards (Mary Esther)," said Ian Satter, a Florida Department of Transportation spokesperson. "And next week, the eastbound lanes will open up."

Satter said the area is still an active construction zone and the project will move forward. "Construction underneath the bridge will continue now that traffic is being opened on the bridge," said Dan Wilcoxen, Military Construction Projects Chief, 1st Special Operations Civil Engineer Squadron, Hurlburt Field……….

**AFSOC retiring two thirds of its C-145 fleet**


Air Force Times © July 18, 2015

By Brian Everstine

Air Force Special Operations Command is moving its new C-145 training aircraft to the boneyard as it reduces its fleet to depend more on leasing aircraft for training. The Air Force announced this week the 919th Special Operations Maintenance Group is moving 11 of its C-145s from Duke Field, Florida, to the boneyard at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona. The service is keeping five C-145s at the base for the 6th Special Operations Squadron at the base, which is tasked with training militaries across the globe, AFSOC Commander Lt. Gen. Bradley Heithold said in March……….
From “Star Wars” gunships to the changing face of special ops: A conversation with Lt. Gen. Bradley Heithold

http://www.nwfdailynews.com/article/20150719/NEWS/150719756

Northwest Florida Daily News © July 19, 2015

By Kelley Humphrey

In an age when the demands on the military’s unconventional forces have never been greater, the responsibility for the wellbeing of the men and women of the Air Force Special Operations Command falls on Lt. Gen. Bradley Heithold, AFSOC commander and one of the highest ranking active duty military officers in Northwest Florida. Born in California, Heithold enlisted in the Air Force right after high school in 1974 and served for three years as an avionics technician before becoming an ROTC cadet at the University of Arkansas. He was commissioned as a second lieutenant in 1981………..

Regional Air Force, Army units providing support to Jade Helm 15


By Rod Duren

The Army Special Operations Command will train with other military units over an eight-week period — which began July 15 and will continue through Sept. 15 — in a multi-state training exercise called Jade Helm 15 and includes Northwest Florida. While multi-state training exercises aren’t unique within the military, the size sets Jade Helm 15 apart from others, according to an ARSOC release back in April. It will take place across seven states: Arizona, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Mexico, Texas and Utah. The diverse terrain of the seven states replicates areas Special Operations forces………..

NS Mayport –

USS Vicksburg Returns To Mayport
USS Vicksburg (CG 69) returns to her Mayport, Florida homeport Saturday, following a seven-month deployment during which the crew exercised and served with 61 ships and aircraft from 18 nations on three continents and logged 30,000 nautical miles. Led by Capt. Lyle Hall, the guided-missile cruiser spent the majority of her deployment assigned as the flagship for Rear Adm. Brad Williamson and Standing NATO Maritime Group Two (SNMG-2), with his embarked, multi-national, NATO staff. The group operated in the Mediterranean, Black, North, and Baltic Seas. From December to June, the ship and the task group provided the Alliance’s primary maritime presence throughout the European operational theater. Vicksburg participated in 10 passing exercises and three major exercises with NATO allied and partner nations, including Operation Active Endeavor, which helped develop the prowess of Vicksburg Sailors and their interoperability with crews from multiple ships, commands, and nations.

First littoral combat ship headed for Mayport launches Saturday

By John Bachman

The first littoral combat ship set for Mayport launches Saturday in Wisconsin. A million pieces welded together in northern Wisconsin came together to form the future of Mayport. Action News got exclusive access last winter to the shipyard where the littoral ships are built. Eight of them are headed for home ports in Jacksonville. "There's going to be a thousand extra people here. This holds 600. There will be a need for more capacity," Commodore Paul Young of LCS Fleet Command said. The ships will bring much-needed hope to Mayport. "That's why I'm very excited. We'll be having a packed house," said William Pough of Platinum Cuts Unlimited. The USS Little Rock is the first ship headed this way.

300 sailors on USS New York return to Mayport

By Michael Yoshida
Hundreds of local sailors are back with their families and friends. Sunday morning, the USS New York returned to its home port of Naval Station Mayport. The ship and its crew were deployed for eight months and they came home to plenty of hugs, kisses and tears of joy. After sailing thousands of miles it was an emotional day as the USS New York returned for reunions and first meetings. “I’m so ready, so ready,” said Kristina Casavant. The USS New York finally making its way back home was a welcome sight Casavant shared with her 2-month-old daughter, Lilian. Casavant was one of 13 new mothers eager to greet the ship.

USS Iwo Jima, Ft. McHenry return to Mayport after eventful deployment


Florida Time-Union © July 21, 2015
By Clifford Davis

The three ships and roughly 2,300 sailors of the Iwo Jima amphibious ready group, or ARG, reunited at the docks of Mayport Naval Station on Monday after an eventful seven-month deployment to the Middle East. The USS New York (LPD-21) returned Sunday. The USS Iwo Jima (LHD) and the USS Fort McHenry arrived Monday. Shortly after the ships departed in December, a major crisis erupted in Yemen when the U.S.-backed government was overthrown by Houthi rebels in February — threatening the U.S. embassy.

Mayport-based ship USS The Sullivans damaged during training exercise


ActionNewsJax © July 22, 2015
By Catherine Varnum

The Navy revealed on Wednesday that the USS The Sullivans was damaged by an explosion during a training exercise on Saturday off the coast of Norfolk, Virginia. No sailors were hurt aboard the guided-missile destroyer, which is based at Naval Station Mayport. Action News has reached out to the Navy to find out when the ship will be heading back home after the explosion. The U.S. Naval Institute said the missile exploded shortly after launching and a small fire broke out on the port side of the ship. Sailors reacted promptly, fighting the fire. A spokesman from Mayport said the debris from that explosion caused damage to the ship.
Visions emerge for a new Mayport Village


Florida Times-Union © July 23, 2015

By Amanda Williamson

Imagine: a cloud of fog rolling in over the slate-colored water of the St. Johns River, so close to the ocean that the mist seems filled with salt. Barely visible on the horizon, a fishing boat slices through the river's glassy surface, embarking on its daily quest to catch seafood. The rest of the fleet still waits, secured to nearby docks. Sunlight begins to stretch slowly across the quiet Mayport Village, touching the hotel veranda where visitors — cups of coffee in hands — are shaking the last bit of sleep from their bodies. The owner of the retail establishment next door crosses the riverfront boardwalk, casually tossing the coffee-sipping tourists a greeting. She enters her shop, its window decorated with beach-themed merchandise………

Tyndall AFB –

Tyndall’s Last QF-4 Takes Off


WTVY © July 24, 2015

Early this morning the last remaining QF-4 from the 82nd Aerial Target Squadron departed Tyndall Air Force Base. Piloted by Lt. Col. Todd Houchins, commander of the 53rd Test Support Squadron, the QF-4 will fly cross-country to Holloman Air Force Base, N.M., where the jet will remain for its final missions. The F-4 Phantom was originally used as a fighter aircraft during the Vietnam War, but began serving Tyndall as a QF-4 aerial target in 1997. The departure of the QF-4 marks the full transition for the 82nd ATS to the QF-16. Like the QF-4, the QF-16 is a full-scale aerial target that can be flown manned or unmanned. Unlike the QF-4, the QF-16 provides more realistic training for newer, 5th generation aircraft………

NSA Panama City –
Naval Support Activity Panama City Hosts Local Teens for Worldwide Summer Camp


WTVY © July 15, 2015

Naval Support Activity Panama City (NSA PC) is no stranger to hosting a variety of personnel from all around the world and all walks of life, but for the last two years NSA PC has had the unique opportunity to host teens from Navy bases around the world and even a few teens from their own backyard. Commander, Navy Installations Command (CNIC) Child and Youth Programs (CYP) have a unique opportunity for teens affiliated with Navy installations to apply for a Summer Camp Scholarship Program (SCSP). Out of the 24 teens selected for the Scuba Diving and Water Adventures Camp, five are local-area teens. “Last year I applied for this SCSP and I didn’t make it,” said Timothy Jansen, son of Keller Jansen the Information Technology Director at the Naval Diving and Salvage Training Center (NDSTC) and retired Navy Sailor from Lynn Haven, “but this year I applied and made it and I’m so happy to take part in this experience and meet new teens.”

Florida National Guard –

Governors order National Guardsmen to be armed


Military Times © July 19, 2015

By Gary Fineout

Governors in at least a half-dozen states ordered National Guardsmen to be armed in the wake of an attack on two military facilities in Tennessee, and Florida Gov. Rick Scott went a step further Saturday by immediately relocated recruiters to armories. In an executive order, the Republican governor said he wants Guard recruiters to move from six storefront locations into armories until state officials can evaluate and make security improvements, including possibly installing bullet-proof glass or enhanced surveillance equipment.
NAS Whiting Field –

Whiting moves from zero tech to busiest enterprise


By Marketta Davis

Having welcomed the likes of “To Kill a Mockingbird” actor Gregory Peck and American Major League Baseball left fielder Ted Williams, Whiting Field Naval Air Station has come a long way over the years. And on Wednesday, base personnel will honor its legacy and accomplishments after turning 72 years old July 16. Built on the backs of German POWs, Whiting was formed in 1943 and named a naval air station in 1946. It was the sixth of the auxiliary fields that were built specifically for the war efforts and has progressively taken control of the other auxiliary fields, making it the busiest naval air station in the world……..

Patrick AFB –

A 'Four-Star' Visit Hosted by a 'First Class' Team


Patrick AFB © July 17, 2015

Commentary by Brig. Gen. Nina Armagno, Commander, 45th Space Wing

What a thrill it was to be able to host General John E. Hyten, Commander, Air Force Space Command, his wife, Laura, and Chief Master Sgt. Douglas McIntyre, the AFSPC Command Chief, to "Team Patrick-Cape" earlier this week as we prepared for the GPS IIF-10 launch
mission. From a breakfast with a wide variety of civilian, enlisted and commissioned Airmen, to a stop at the Airmen Leadership School, to witnessing a demonstration by our Honor Guard, to a behind-the-scenes look at the 45th Medical Group's Satellite Pharmacy and visits with members of the 45th Civil Engineer and Security Forces Airmen, Tuesday was a day several young Airmen - and one 45th Space Wing Commander - will remember for a long, long time………

NAS Key West –

Navy: Truman Waterfront cleanup done

http://keysnews.com/node/68431

Keys News © July 25, 2015

BY ADAM LINHARDT

Workers should be ready to put shovels in the dirt for the long anticipated Truman Waterfront project by the end of this year, as Navy and environmental engineers have completed the cleanup of the area, officials said. Naval Air Station Key West officials and contractors hired to oversee the removal of metal-laden soil from the waterfront announced the project completion during the Navy’s recent annual Restoration Advisory Board meeting last week, which includes the Navy, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and community members……..

MCSF Blount Island –

Shortened river deepening plan has supporters ... But how to move TraPac is the question


Jacksonville Business Journal © July 17, 2015

By James Crichlow
A proposed 11-mile plan for dredging the river is raising as many questions as it's answering. One of the biggest questions is what will happen with TraPac Inc.'s massive Asian container terminal that came to Dames Point about seven years ago and would have to be moved if the dredging did not go the final two miles of the original planned 13. That might not be as unfeasible as some may think. "It's definitely doable," said Lake Ray, a state representative and civil engineer. Ray said there are significant logistics questions that would come with moving a facility like TraPac's, such as relocating other facilities to make room for it. (He said TraPac chose Dames Point in the first place because it had greenfield space, so the terminal could be built from the ground up.)

Other Items of Interest –

**Editorial: On the Edge of Cutting Too Deep**


Defense News © July 13, 2015

The US Army's announcement that through 2017 it's cutting end strength by 40,000 more troops made headlines last week, but was hardly a surprise. For years, service leaders have warned that spending caps would lead to a smaller force. The only question was where those cuts would come from. End strength stands at about 490,000 troops today, down from 566,000 in 2010. By the end of 2018, troops will have been cut from nearly every US and overseas base, shrinking the active force to 450,000 troops. And without more funding, service leaders made it clear that further cuts are on the table, making all the more likely a 420,000-soldier Army, as hinted at by the latest Quadrennial Defense Review…………..

**Community Support for Military Families, Veterans Will Need to Evolve, Carter Says**


Defense Communities 360 © July 14, 2015
Communities will need to find new ways to support military families and veterans as the military adapts new strategies and personnel policies, Defense Secretary Ash Carter told the National Association of Counties’ (NACo) annual conference in Charlotte, N.C., on Saturday. Carter mentioned two changes the military is considering as it designs new personnel policies to build and retain the Force of the Future. “Transition out of the military will look different than it did 70 years ago, or, for that matter, 10 years ago,” he said, reported DOD News. “It’ll mean that in the future, some might only serve for a time, while others may spend 25 years moving back and forth between national service and other opportunities.” Officials also are exploring adjustments that would reduce the frequency of moves for service members, allowing military families to stay in one community longer and establish more stable lives……

Education Overhaul Calls for Tracking Military Kids’ Performance

http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/education-overhaul-calls-for-tracking-military-kids-performance/?utm_source=dc360&utm_campaign=c043bc75d6-RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_04f8ff45ec8-c043bc75d6-55784537&ct=t%28RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN%29#

Defense Communities 360 © July 15, 2015

Language in the House and Senate versions of legislation to overhaul the No Child Left Behind law would require states for the first time to track the academic progress of military children. Tracking the performance of military children in school would help policymakers assess whether the nation’s education laws are working, said Sen. Patty Murray (D-Wash.), who sponsored an amendment in committee in April to add a military child identifier to the Senate bill. The House passed its version of the bill replacing the current K-12 education law last week; the Senate is debating its measure this week. Both versions contain language requiring states to collect data on military children, reported Military Times. “A military student identifier will let us know how military kids are doing in school and enable communities to develop programs and resources to help kids succeed, said Eileen Huck, government relations deputy director for the National Military Family Association……

Report: Nearly 1 in 3 young adults too fat for military


Military times © July 15, 2015

By Roxana Hegeman
The nation's obesity epidemic is causing significant recruiting problems for the military, with one in three young adults nationwide too fat to enlist, according to report issued Wednesday by a group of retired military leaders. The nonprofit, non-partisan group called Mission: Readiness (Military Leaders for Kids) is promoting healthy school lunches in Kansas and across the nation as a way to combat the problem. In Kansas, 29 percent of teenagers are overweight, according to figures it cites from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. About a third of American children and teens are considered obese or overweight…….

Transgender troops policy change raises many questions


Military Times © July 19, 2015

By Andrew Tilghman

When Dwayne Villanueva joined the Army at 17, he thought it would help to overcome his nagging desire to become a woman. “It’s a hypermasculine environment and I thought that by joining the military it would make me more masculine,” Villanueva recalled in a recent interview. “I thought joining the military would help suppress those feelings or take them away, as far as wanting to be a female. It didn’t work.” Today, Villanueva, an Army corporal at Tripler Army Medical Center in Hawaii, identifies as a woman, having changed her name to Laila both legally and in official Army records…….

The military steps up for transgender service members

https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-military-steps-up-for-transgender-service-members/2015/07/16/e676c25a-2a4c-11e5-a5ea-cf74396e59ec_story.html

Washington Post © July 16, 2015

LESS THAN five years after the repeal of “don’t ask, don’t tell,” the U.S. military is taking the next step toward treating all service members fairly. Defense Secretary Ashton B. Carter announced Monday that next year, after a six-month study, transgender Americans will be allowed to serve openly in the armed forces. It’s a long overdue shift toward justice for the country and those who defend it. An estimated 15,500 transgender people serve in the military today, with the constant worry that sharing their identity with one person too many will result in discharge and dishonor. This forced secrecy does material harm to transgender troops hesitant to report health issues or instances of sexual assault for fear of being discovered……
Virginia Installations Poised for Growth, Governor’s Commission Concludes

There are a variety of actions Virginia officials can take — including investing in infrastructure on and outside military bases, and taking advantage of DOD’s new shared services authority — to expand the missions at its military installations, according to a recent report released by the Governor’s Commission on Military Installations and Defense Activities. The commission’s 20 recommendations are intended to leverage changes in military policy to position the commonwealth to continue innovation and leadership in its military operations. The report, which was based on a “strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats” analysis, focuses on four key areas of opportunity:

- improving how the nation develops its military leaders;
- advancing research, testing, evaluation and development of emergent technologies;
- investing in infrastructure to foster the growth of new missions; and
- maximizing the value and use of existing facilities and resources across all branches of service and all sectors……..

Hampton Roads Shipyard to Lay off 1,500-Plus Workers

Newport News Shipbuilding, the largest industrial employer in Virginia, told employees last week it plans to lay off at least 1,500 workers through 2016 in response to a temporary drop in work. “We do not yet know the extent of the reductions, but in 2015, it will be more than 500 people. In 2016, it will likely be more than 1,000 people,” shipyard employees were told in a letter from the company’s president, Matt Mulherin. “The layoffs this fall will be followed by more in 2016 — as workload drops across the yard,” the letter said, reported the Virginian-Pilot. The moves come as the shipyard is scheduled to complete work on three aircraft carriers over the next 18 months — construction of the first-in-class USS Gerald R. Ford, the midlife overhaul of the Abraham Lincoln and the inactivation of the Enterprise. The shipyard’s workload is expected to increase in 2017 when the George Washington is scheduled to arrive for a refueling and
overhaul, a job that takes more than three years. The company’s workforce exceeds 23,000. It is the only shipyard where U.S. nuclear-powered aircraft carriers are built and refueled.
TF members --

1. **August Task Force Meeting in Ft. Walton Beach** – The next meeting of the Florida Defense Support Task Force will be on Thursday, **August 20, 2015** at the **Holiday Inn Resort, 1299 Miracle Strip Parkway SE, Fort Walton Beach, FL 32548** beginning at 9:00 AM. The Florida Defense Alliance (FDA) will hold their meeting at the same location the day prior (August 19th) and there will be a joint reception with FDA and FDSTF and local defense community leaders beginning at 1700 on August 19, 2015 at the hotel.

2. **Attachments:**

   - FDSTF Contract Extension Letter **DTF 14-05**, Bay EDA-LambdaRail Project, (new end date **06/30/16**).

Regards, BG.

**Bruce Grant**  
**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, FLORIDA DEFENSE SUPPORT TASK FORCE**

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**Articles of Interest:**
McCain, Thornberry to Continue Talks over Defense Bill

http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/mccain-thornberry-to-continue-talks-over-defense-bill/?utm_source=dc360&utm_campaign=e474622273-RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_04f8ff45e8-e474622273-55784537&ct=t%28RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN%29#

Defense Communities 360 © July 31, 2015

Senate Armed Services Chairman John McCain (R-Ariz.) and his House counterpart, Mac Thornberry (R-Texas), are expected to continue negotiations over the fiscal 2016 defense authorization bill during Congress’ August recess with the goal of completing a conference report in September. “We’re not going to stay in town, but there are phones and all kinds of ways of communicating and engaging,” McCain said. The two committee leaders planned to meet Thursday night to see if they could make progress on some of the most contentious issues separating the two sides, reported CQ Roll Call. Differences over military benefits have proven to be among the negotiation’s most difficult hurdles, as the Senate version embraces cost-saving proposals to slow the rate of increase in service members’ basic allowance for housing and raise Tricare prescription co-pays that the House rejects.

Congress Will Aim to Approve CR after August Recess


Defense Communities 360 © July 31, 2015

One of Congress’ primary goals when it returns to Capitol Hill in September will be clearing a continuing resolution (CR) to keep the federal government open when the new fiscal year begins Oct. 1. Leaders of both chambers have now acknowledged what has become readily apparent with the appropriations process at a standstill in the House and Senate. On Thursday, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) said discussions about a stopgap funding bill for fiscal 2016 will take place in September. “When we come back after August we’ll discuss the way forward on getting the government funded,” McConnell said, reported CQ Roll Call.

How Pentagon war fund became a budget buster Washington can't resist
By Warren Strobel

The number of U.S. troops deployed in battle zones is at its lowest level since before the 2003 invasion of Iraq. Still, Congress has authorized a 38 percent increase in the war budget over last year. The contradiction is the legacy of an emergency war fund, started in the aftermath of the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks, that has become a favorite Washington way to sidestep the impact of fiscal constraints on military spending. The Overseas Contingency Operations account, or OCO, has been tapped to fund tens of billions of dollars in programs with questionable links, or none, to wars, according to current and former U.S. officials, analysts and budget documents.……….

Eglin AFB –

Air Force Secretary Acknowledges Wide Range of Problems with F-35

by Richard Sisk

Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James has admitted to a wide range of past and present problems with the F-35 while maintaining that the fifth-general will eventually guarantee the U.S. continued air supremacy over rivals. "The biggest lesson I have learned from the F-35 is never again should we be flying an aircraft while we're building it," James said at the Aspen Security Forum in Colorado last week. In development stages, "People believed we could go faster, cheaper, better" by designing and building the F-35 concurrently, "and that the degree of concurrency would work. Indeed it has not worked as well as we had hoped and that's probably the understatement of the day," James said.……

County mulls putting airport bid on shelf

Northwest Florida News © August 2, 2015
By KARI C. BARLOW

Two weeks after asking the Air Force to grant it ownership of the Destin-Fort Walton Beach Airport property, Okaloosa County is backing away from the request. County Administrator John Hofstad said he will recommend to county commissioners on Tuesday that the board take a "strategic pause" in its efforts to acquire the title to the 130.8-acre airport. "We do believe there is a way we can all come to the table," he said. "What we are hearing is the Air Force would be more receptive to us working through our partners like the Defense Support Initiative and the Tri-County Partnership.

Marines Declare F-35B Operational


Defense News © July 31, 2015

By Aaron Mehta

In a milestone for the F-35 joint strike fighter, the US Marine Corps today declared the F-35B jump-jet model to have achieved initial operational capability (IOC). The news means that the Marines consider the F-35B model – one of three designs of the multi-role fighter — to be an active plane that can perform in operations the same way any other active aircraft in its arsenal can. The plane was declared operational by Gen. Joe Dunford, the outgoing Marine Corps commandant — and incoming Chairman of the Joint Chiefs — in a July 31 announcement. "I am pleased to announce that VMFA-121 has achieved initial operational capability in the F-35B, as defined by requirements outlined in the June 2014 Joint Report to Congressional Defense Committees," Dunford said in a statement. "VMFA-121 has ten aircraft in the Block 2B configuration with the requisite performance envelope and weapons clearances, to include the training, sustainment capabilities, and infrastructure to deploy to an austere site or a ship. It is capable of conducting close air support, offensive and defensive counter air, air interdiction, assault support escort and armed reconnaissance as part of a Marine Air Ground Task Force, or in support of the Joint Force." ………

Hurlburt Field –

New generation gunship arrives at Hurlburt Field
Hurlburt Field receives the first Air Force Special Special Operations Command AC-130J, also the first of the newest generation of gunship, today complete with a flyover and a taxi underneath a fire truck water arch. The AC-130J, a heavily armed ground-attack aircraft, is one of the Air Force’s most advanced weapons. The gunship is known for its ability to shoot a large amount of cannon fire at night and is equipped with smart bombs………

Reaping the rewards: How private sector is cashing in on Pentagon’s ‘insatiable demand’ for drone war intelligence

Some months ago, an imagery analyst was sitting in his curtained cubicle at Hurlburt Field airbase in Florida watching footage transmitted from a drone above one of the battlefields in the War on Terror. If he thought the images showed someone doing anything suspicious, or holding a weapon, he had to type it in to a chat channel seen by the pilots controlling the drone’s missiles. Once an observation has been fed in to the chat, he later explained, it’s hard to revise it – it influences the whole mindset of the people with their hands on the triggers. –As a screener anything you say is going to be interpreted in the most hostile way,” he said, speaking with the careful deliberation of someone used to their words carrying consequences. He and the other imagery analysts in the airbase were working gruelling 12-hour shifts: even to take a bathroom break they had to persuade a colleague to step in and watch the computer screen for them. They couldn’t let their concentration or judgement lapse for a second. If a spade was misidentified as a weapon, an innocent man could get killed………

US Southern Command –

U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command & U.S. Fourth Fleet
More than 75 military personnel, including 54 members of partner-nation navies, assembled July 27 on Naval Station Mayport for PANAMAX 2015, an exercise aimed at developing strong working relationships between multinational forces to ensure the defense of the Panama Canal. The exercise, which is scheduled to run July 27 – Aug. 7, includes participants from 19 nations: Belize, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, France, Jamaica, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the United Kingdom, and the United States. "This exercise allows countries to create friendships and come together as a multinational force while combating common threats," said Chilean Rear Adm. Ronald McIntyre, the Combined Forces Maritime Component Commander for the exercise. "This training will ensure that regional security and stability work for the prosperity of our nations………

NAS Jacksonville –

Jacksonville area military families see big jump in housing costs

By Jensen Werley

Any family's decision to purchase a home is a difficult choice filled with a myriad of moving parts and complexities. But for military families, there is another level of uncertainty due to unplanned reassignments and higher-than-average home values near bases. Home prices, in general, are about 35 percent more expensive around military bases than the average median U.S. home. But in Jacksonville, the problem is even more exasperated because the city has experienced one of the highest year-over-year increases in housing costs, according to a recent study of cities containing the 18 largest military bases by Zillow, a real estate research firm………
Surface Squadron Stands Up for Mayport-Based Ships

http://www.seapowermagazine.org/stories/20150729-surface-squadron.html

SeaPower Magazine © July 29, 2015

By RICHARD R. BURGESS

The Navy has combined two commands in Mayport, Fla., as the executive agent for surface combatants based at Naval Station Mayport, except for littoral combat ships and amphibious warfare ships, which will be governed by separate squadrons. Commander, Destroyer Squadron 14, has been disestablished and in its place, Commander, Naval Surface Squadron 14, has been established, with the new squadron also absorbing the Commander, Naval Surface Forces, Atlantic Cruiser/Destroyer Readiness Support Detachment. The new squadron’s mission will be to man, train, equip and maintain the assigned ships, and provide combat-ready surface forces for strike group or independent operations………

Homestead ARB –

Gov. Rick Scott: Florida companies made $151 million at Paris Air Show


Miami Herald © July 29, 2015

By Nicholas Nehamas

Florida aviation and defense companies made $151 million in export sales at the Paris Air Show last month, according to a news release from the office of Gov. Rick Scott. Scott said the industry would create 350 new jobs in Florida, including 55 in Miami-Dade County where global commercial aerospace firm GA Telesis plans to relocate one of its distribution centers. Several South Florida firms traveled with Scott to the air show in Paris, held from June 15 - 21. Among them were Aerospace Precision (Hollywood), Avionica (Miami), Delta International Inc. (Miami), FLG Technics (Davie), Florida Aeronautics Inc. (Pompano Beach) and Pan American Tools Corp. (Fort Lauderdale)………

NSA Panama City –
Navy base welcomes new commander

http://www.newsherald.com/article/20150731/NEWS/150739810

News-Herald © July 31, 2015

Naval Support Activity Panama City (NSA PC) welcomed a new commanding officer at a change of command ceremony Friday. Cmdr. Douglas W. Huggan relieved Cmdr. Christopher C. Serow at the morning ceremony, with Capt. Scott Gray, Chief of Staff for Commander, Naval Region Southeast, the guest speaker at the ceremony. Gray honored Serow for his exceptional leadership while leading NSA PC. “Cmdr. Serow’s name is synonymous with pride in this community,” Gray said. “He has done a wonderful job of collaborating with Bay County leadership to manage complex compatible land-use issues.” Serow’s work on the Joint Land Use study was recognized at the highest levels of the Navy and will have a tremendous impact on the future of the installation, Gray said. ………

LCS Module Testing: Some Ups, Some Downs


Defense News © August 2, 2015

By Christopher P. Cavas

The complicated job of testing and evaluating the major warfare modules for the Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) program is making strides, said a key US Navy officer, but reliability and weight issues still need to be solved, particularly with the anti-submarine warfare (ASW) and mine countermeasures (MCM) warfare packages. Key problems with the MCM module revolve around reliability issues, while the ASW package is overweight, Capt. Casey Moton, program executive officer for LCS mission modules, said July 30 at a Mine Warfare Association luncheon near the Pentagon. The MCM module began tests in April aboard the LCS Independence in the Gulf of Mexico, Moton said, and was scheduled to wrap up in September. But more time is needed to work out the bugs………

Patrick AFB –

Patrick AFB rescuers assist in search for missing teens
Air Force Reserve search and rescue personnel from the 920th Rescue Wing at Patrick Air Force Base joined the Coast Guard in the search for two teen boaters who have been missing since July 25. Austin Stephanos and Perry Cohen, both 14, were reported missing when they failed to return from a fishing trip Friday. U.S. Coast Guard search and rescue crews found the boys' 19-foot, single-engine boat capsized 67 miles east of Ponce de Leon Inlet Sunday afternoon, more than 180 miles from where they were last seen buying fuel for their boat near Jupiter, Florida.

NAS Key West –

**B-1s blast into Boca Chica Field**

Keys News © July 31, 2015

BY ADAM LINHARDT

The men and women of the 7th Bomb Wing prefer to do their jobs quietly, Air Force Lt. Col. Nick Yates said Wednesday on the tarmac at Boca Chica Field, oddly surrounded by a slew of curious military service members and their families. “It doesn’t matter who does it as long as the job gets done,” Yates said while flanked by the legendary B-1 Lancer, a Cold War-era supersonic aircraft envisioned by military planners as a nuclear-delivery vehicle to be used against the former Soviet Union. The B-1, or “Bone” as it is known by the men and women who fly them, was one of three bombers in Key West this week for surveillance missions in support of Joint Interagency Task Force South operations. The B-1 no longer carries nuclear munitions but high-tech, 500- to 1,000-pound GPS and laser-guided bombs, as well as high-tech surveillance equipment.
Having tried just about every other approach to reforming the Pentagon’s much-reviled system for purchasing weapons, Congress is now moving to embrace the lessons of the marketplace. That’s the implication of news this week that a House-Senate conference reconciling competing versions of the 2016 National Defense Authorization Act will adopt sweeping changes to the defense acquisition system. “Acquisition” is the term bureaucrats use for buying stuff. But judging from the reports the armed services committees in each chamber produced in preparing their defense spending plans for the fiscal year beginning October 1, Congress has had enough of bureaucrats. It is looking for a wholesale change in the culture of the acquisition system……..

Top 100: Defense Revenues Down, but Industry Prevailing

Lagging defense spending and the large-scale drawdown of US troops in the Middle East spelled another year of decreased revenues for defense contractors. But industry has largely avoided the dramatic upheavals of previous industrial downturns, with mergers and acquisitions being driven more by opportunistic business decisions than panic over a dwindling pot of money. Lockheed Martin maintained its chokehold on the top position in this year's Defense News Top 100 — our annual ranking of the world's largest defense companies — with 2014 defense revenues of $40.128 billion out of $45.6 billion total revenues. That was down $366 million, or -0.1 percent, from last year's defense revenues of $40.494 billion. Of the top 10 firms, only United Technologies reported higher defense revenues with $13.02 billion, a 9.5 percent increase from the year before……..

For list of Top 100 Defense Companies, go to: http://people.defensenews.com/top-100/
**Change The Culture And Acquisition Policies At DoD**

http://breakingdefense.com/2015/07/change-the-culture-and-acquisition-policies-at-dod/

Breaking Defense © July 29, 2015

By Beth McGrath

Frustration in Congress, the Defense Department and the defense industry with the long times it takes to deliver weapons because of too much bureaucracy has sparked a set of reforms in the House and Senate versions of the 2016 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA ). But there’s something missing: better alignment of information technology (IT) solutions with business objectives and a more innovative culture that supports new ideas and risk. Many of the reforms proposed by the House and Senate Armed Services committees not only focus on improvements to the acquisition process, but also start to simplify what has become a highly complex and often arcane, bureaucratic system. HASC Chairman Mac Thornberry has placed needed emphasis on reducing or eliminating unnecessary layers of regulation and oversight, which complement the the Pentagon’s Better Buying Power initiatives already underway……

Other Items of Interest –

**Lockheed F-35’s Reliability Found Wanting in Shipboard Testing**


Bloomberg News © July 28, 2015

by Anthony Capaccio

The Marine Corps’ version of Lockheed Martin Corp.’s F-35 fighter demonstrated poor reliability in a 12-day exercise at sea, according to the U.S. military’s top testing officer. Six F-35Bs, the most complex version of the Pentagon’s costliest weapons system, were available for flights only half of the time needed, Michael Gilmore, the Defense Department’s director of operational testing, said in a memo obtained by Bloomberg News. A Marine Corps spokesman said the readiness rate was more than 65 percent. While the exercise on the amphibious assault ship USS Wasp resulted in useful training for Marines and Navy personnel, Gilmore wrote in the assessment dated July 22, it also documented that “shipboard reliability” and maintenance “were likely to present significant near-term challenges.”………..
Massachusetts Steps up Base Promotion Efforts

http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/massachusetts-steps-up-base-promotion-efforts/

Defense Communities 360 © July 29, 2015

Massachusetts Gov. Charlie Baker (R) is traveling to Washington, D.C., this week to meet with senior members of the Senate Armed Services Committee and the Pentagon’s top installations official to promote the state’s military facilities. Baker is meeting with two Senate Armed Services members from New England — Jack Reed (D-R.I.), the committee’s ranking member, and Kelly Ayotte (R-N.H.), who chairs the committee’s panel responsible for BRAC policy. At DOD, the governor will meet with John Conger, acting assistant secretary of defense for energy, installations and environment.

Bill opening Gulf waters to oil drilling advances in Senate


Tampa Tribune © July 31, 2015

By Howard Altman

Every day and night, U.S. military aircraft take off from bases across the southeast and fly over the eastern Gulf of Mexico. With 134,000 miles of military airspace, the gulf is one of the Armed Forces’ most important training areas and the place where pilots are learning to fly the newest fighter — Air Force and Navy F-35 Lightning IIs, more than 40 stationed at Eglin Air Force Base in Pensacola. A bill that passed the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee on Thursday threatens to interrupt that training. Among its provisions, the Energy Policy Modernization Act of 2015 calls for changing the limits on where oil and natural gas drilling and exploration can take place.

Senate panel passes bill lifting Gulf drilling ban

http://www.nwfdailynews.com/article/20150730/NEWS/150739901

Northwest Florida Daily News © July 31, 2015

A Senate panel has approved energy legislation that would lift the 40-year-old ban on crude oil exports and open some areas of the Outer Continental Shelf, including more areas of the Gulf of
Mexico, to oil and gas exploration. Republican Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, chairman of the panel, championed the plan to lift the restrictions. It passed by a party-line vote of 12-10. Murkowski said lifting the ban would turn the U.S. into an energy superpower. Democrat Maria Cantwell of Washington, who opposes lifting the ban, describes the votes as an important first step in a long journey.

Boeing Shuffles Leadership for Struggling KC-46 Program


Defense News © July 30, 2015

By Aaron Mehta

Hit with a major cost overrun charge and left with little room for error on its KC-46 tanker program, Boeing is bringing in some emergency help for the program. Scott Fancher, the company's head of development programs at Commercial Airplanes, has been tasked with righting a program that forms the backbone of Boeing's military aviation future. In a letter to employees, newly minted Boeing President and CEO Dennis Muilenburg said he was tasking Fancher to "provide senior executive oversight and increased management support to the tanker program."

Senate confirms Dunford as next Joint Chiefs Chairman


Defense News © July 30, 2015

By Leo Shane III

The Senate confirmed Marine Gen. Joseph Dunford Jr. as the next chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on Wednesday, after a brief dispute between Pentagon leaders and the chamber's leading critic of military sexual assault policy. The spat between Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y., and military officials had nothing to do with Dunford's credentials but rather centered on data of sexual assaults at large military bases, information Gillibrand has been seeking for years. She stalled the confirmation process for about two days until Defense Secretary Ash Carter offered her assurances Wednesday morning that the information would be made available soon.
Carter: Future Force Depends on Military Child Education


DOD News © July 31, 2015

By Amaani Lyle

Defense Secretary Ash Carter today thanked military children for their sacrifices and championed a family-focused approach to educational pathways for them and their service member parents. Speaking on the final day of this year’s Military Child Education Coalition seminar here, Carter said that as a former university professor, he realizes the importance of education as it relates to a richer quality of life, a vibrant democracy, and from his current perspective as defense secretary, to national security and building the future force. "It’s true that a capable, dynamic force of the future will depend on maintaining an unmatched operational edge and unmatched capabilities,” the secretary said………..

Florida OKs faster concealed weapons permits for military members, vets


Washington Times © August 1, 2015

By Kellan Howell

Florida is expediting concealed weapons permits for active-duty service members and veterans in reaction to the shootings at military recruiting centers in Chattanooga, Tennessee, that left five dead. Adam Putnam, the Republican commissioner of the state’s Department of Agriculture and Consumer Safety, said he want to issue the permits within 30 days to qualified active-duty military and honorably discharged veterans. State law only requires permits to be issued within 90 days, The Tampa Tribune reported Friday………..
TF members -- 

1. **Task Force Meeting This Thursday in Ft. Walton Beach** – The next meeting of the Florida Defense Support Task Force will be on Thursday, **August 20, 2015 at the Holiday Inn Resort, 1299 Miracle Strip Parkway SE, Fort Walton Beach, FL 32548** beginning at 9:00 AM. Meeting agenda is attached. The Florida Defense Alliance (FDA) will hold their meeting at the same location the day prior (August 19th) and there will be a joint reception with FDA and FDSTF and local defense community leaders beginning at 1700 on August 19, 2015 at the hotel.

2. **Congressman Miller to Attend Task Force Meeting** – We are honored to have Congressman Jeff Miller attend our Task Force meeting on Thursday.

3. **Call In Number for meeting:**

   **Open Session – 800-501-8979**                      **Access code: 8784566**

4. **Florida Defense Alliance (FDA) Meeting – August 19th** – The Florida Defense Alliance meeting will also be at the Holiday Inn Resort in Ft. Walton Beach beginning at 9:00 AM Central Time. Agenda attached.

5. **October Task Force Meeting Cancelled** -- Because of the Special Legislative Session in October and Legislative Committee Weeks in October, the Chairman has decided to cancel the October Task Force meeting. The next Task Force meeting will be held on September 17, 2015 in St. Augustine.

6. **Attachments:**

   - Florida Defense Task Force Meeting Agenda – August 20, 2015
   - Florida Defense Alliance (FDA) Meeting Agenda – August 19, 2015

Regards, BG.
Articles of Interest:

DOD Budget–

**Quick Agreement over CR Needed to Avoid Shutdown following Hectic September**


Defense Communities 360 © August 11, 2015

A busy September for Congress punctuated by debate over the Iran nuclear deal, high-priority highway and cybersecurity bills, and the pope’s visit likely will result in lawmakers getting only one shot at passing a continuing resolution (CR) to keep the government open after Sept. 30. Because of the time Congress will be devoting to other priorities when it returns to Washington after Labor Day, neither the House nor the Senate will have the luxury of amending the CR they receive from the other chamber and sending it back for a second vote, reported CQ. “The highway bill, the cyber bill, the other things that need to get done, and the Iran resolution, and the highway bill are going to take a lot of time,” Sen. Roy Blunt (Mo.), vice chairman of the Republican conference, told the publication……..
Defense cuts, sequestration continue to dog military families, survey shows

Almost three-quarters of military families expect to feel the financial effects of defense spending cuts and sequestration, a new survey found. About 40 percent of that 72 percent said they expect to be extremely or very affected, according to a June survey from the First Command Financial Behaviors Index. The index tracks trends among military service members and the general population, and since 2011 has been focused on sequestration. Specifically, 79 percent of Navy and Coast Guard families said they expect to be financially affected. Top concerns about sequestration include increased responsibility for healthcare costs and reductions in retirement benefits, annual pay raises and personal expense benefits. The report found more than half of military families are worried about job security, compared to 28 percent of the general population.

Army Reserve Chief Open to Funding By OCO Hike

The chief of the Army Reserve said he would be open to budget relief through the emergency war-time fund known as OCO, a controversial plan offered by Republicans in Congress to bypass federal budget caps imposed in 2011. Lt. Gen. Jeffrey Talley is the latest senior Army official to profess openness to the measure, following the incoming Army chief of staff, Gen. Mark Milley, who told lawmakers at his confirmation hearing last month that he would accept dollars from the overseas contingency operations account if it was the only means available. US President Barack Obama has threatened to veto the National Defense Authorization Act over a Republican effort to add $38 billion to the Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) account as a way to bypass Budget Control Act caps and ensure the Pentagon gets the funding it has requested. Defense Secretary Ash Carter has criticized the plan as a slapdash way to fund national security and "a road to nowhere."
Report: F-35 Inferior to Older US, Foreign Fighters


Military.com © August 11, 2015

The F-35 Lightning II passed a major milestone last month when the Marine Corps declared it operational, but the accomplishment has not silenced critics. A Washington think tank released a report Tuesday that found the 5th-generation jet – billed as the world's most advanced fighter – will be outmaneuvered in dogfights with current Russian and Chinese jets as well as the U.S. aircraft it is slated to replace. The report comes after details were leaked last month on a test flight where the F-35 was bested in most aerial maneuvering by an F-16. "The F-35 will find itself outmaneuvered, outgunned, out of range, and visible to enemy sensors," according to Bill French, a policy analyst with the National Security Network, a progressive think tank that claims to challenge overly militarized conservative defense policies. "Staying the present course [on the aircraft program] may needlessly gamble away a sizable margin of American airpower at great expense and unnecessary risk to American lives." 

Rockwell Delivers First Gen 3 Helmet for F-35


Defense News © August 12, 2015

By Lara Seligman

Marking a milestone for the joint strike fighter program, Rockwell Collins this week delivered the first Generation 3 helmet for the F-35. The Generation 3 Helmet-Mounted Display System (HMDS), which was handed over to the Joint Program Office Tuesday in a ceremony at the company's headquarters in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, is crucial to the F-35's advanced suite of technologies. It provides a 360-degree digital view of what's going on around the aircraft, essentially letting the pilot "look through" the cockpit floor and walls. All the information pilots need to complete their missions is projected on the helmet's visor.
Completed flyover has cut travel time

http://www.nwfdailynews.com/article/20150815/NEWS/150819471

Northwest Florida Daily News © August 15, 2015

By JENNIE McKEON and KATIE TAMMEN | Daily News

What was once a highly misunderstood proposal to alleviate traffic woes on U.S. Highway 98, is now changing the lives of the nearly 50,000 drivers on a daily basis. Since both lanes of the overpass at the entrance of Hurlburt Field opened late last month, drivers have reported fewer traffic bottlenecks and shorter commutes. “Feedback from the stakeholders has been primarily positive,” said Ian Satter, a spokesman for the Florida Department of Transportation. “...There have been stakeholders who have expressed skepticism regarding the length of the acceleration lanes……..

NS Mayport –

Navy, Marine Corps collaborate for Marine Prepositioning Force Exercise


DVIDS © August 12, 2015

By Sgt. Shawn Valosin

Service members participating in the MPFEX are conducting an in-stream offload of the USNS 1st Lt. Jack Lummus, using Improved Navy Lighterage Systems to carry cargo from the anchored ship to shore. “MPFEX 15 allows us to further develop on the many different skill sets needed to safely execute MPF operations,” said Navy Lt Amy Kenny, the Maritime Prepositioning Force Officer with NBG-2 and lead planner for the exercise. “We have personnel from over six different naval commands both active duty and reserve carrying out operations across Naval Station Mayport, BIC, and aboard the USNS Lummus. The skill sets we are developing include: managing the Roll-on/ Roll-off Discharge Facility (RRDF) to allow for RO/RO operations in-stream, craftmasters flexing in to the RRDF and taking loads alongside the ship, the Beach Party Team managing beach landings, and the Tactical Operations Center supervising the whole operation and monitoring throughput. These are only a few of the many training objectives we are accomplishing during MPFEX 15.” ........
PANAMAX Comes To A Close At Mayport

http://mayportmirror.jacksonville.com/2015-08-12/story/panamax-comes-close-mayport

Mayport Mirror © August 12, 2015

Rear Adm. George Ballance, commander, U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command/U.S. 4th Fleet (COMUSNAVSO/C4F) presided over the PANAMAX 2015 closing ceremonies at the Ocean Breeze Conference Center at Naval Station (NS) Mayport, Aug. 5. PANAMAX is one of the largest multinational training exercises in the world. The annual U.S. Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM) sponsored exercise focuses on ensuring the defense of the Panama Canal, crucial to the unrestricted flow of global maritime commerce. During the exercise, Chilean Rear Adm. Ronald McIntyre served as the exercise’s Combined Forces Maritime Component Commander (CFMCC). As such, McIntyre had operational control of all maritime components in and around the Panama Canal. Additionally, more than 50 partner nation participants came to NS Mayport to assist with operations and crisis action planning during the exercise. .................

Tyndall AFB –

Tyndall AFB to pay Bay County $1 Million+ in Past-Due Water Bills

http://www.wjhg.com/home/headlines/Appeals-Court-No-Appeal-for-Tyndall-Water-Rates--321639252.html

WJHG © August 12, 2015

By: Leanna Scachetti

Years of legal wrangling between Bay County and Tyndall Air Force Base is finally coming to an end. Late Tuesday afternoon, an appeals court ordered the federal government to pay Bay County for underpaid water bills from Tyndall Air Force Base dating back to 2007. According to the settlement, Bay County will get more than $750,000 in the first of two judgements in the case. In 2007, Bay County raised water rates to all of its wholesale customers, of which Tyndall is one. Tyndall officials refused to pay the increase, claiming the base was operating as an unregulated utility and not subject to the rate increase. In 2009, Bay County once again raised rates and, once again, Tyndall refused to pay the entire increased amount........
Florida National Guard –

689th Asphalt Detachment cases colors

https://www.dvidshub.net/news/172685/689th-asphalt-detachment-cases-colors#.VcpOyfk008I

DVIDS © August 11, 2015

While their name, the 689th Asphalt Detachment has only been in existence since 2007, the asphalt platoon has always paved the way as an integral part of what is now the 868th Engineer Company. Much of the asphalt laid by the detachment can be seen around Camp Blanding Joint Training Center (CBJTC), most recently the completion of the Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) runway and the repaving of the internal road network at the Special Forces Compound. It is therefore fitting, that the 689th’s colors were cased for a final time during a ceremony held on post. ........

NAS Whiting Field –

Beechcraft delivers latest T-6 military training aircraft to US Navy


Naval Technology © August 11, 2015

Textron-based Beechcraft Defense has delivered its 900th T-6 military training aircraft to the US Navy's Training Air Wing 5 based at Whiting Field in Milton, Florida. The latest delivery marks the 224th T-6B military trainer delivered to the navy as part of the joint primary aircraft training system (JPATS) programme. Beechcraft Defense president Russ Bartlett said: "Building the most efficient and effective military flight trainer is of utmost importance to us. "Having logged more than 2.5 million flight hours globally, and now delivering 900 aircraft, the Beechcraft T-6 continues to prove it is one of the most utilised and trusted aircraft training platforms in the world." The T-6B, a derivative of the T-6A military trainer aircraft, features an integrated glass cockpit and an advanced Esterline CMC Cockpit 4000 avionics suite, offering advanced training capabilities........
Avon Park –

Cleanup in range, on target

[link]

Highlands Today © August 11, 2015

By Paul Catala | Highlands Today

Jet fighters and war planes go through daily aerial maneuvers at the 106,000-acre Avon Park Air Force Range. But somebody has to take care of the munitions debris and unexploded ordnances from training exercises, and that job falls to the bombing range’s Explosive Ordnance Disposal troops and Base Operations Support-hired contractor personnel. July 22 marked the end of the summer cleanup and maintenance period at the bombing range and ends a process that requires detailed pre-planning and step-by-step protocol. From January to February and June to July, the training areas are closed to ground training so existing targets can be repaired or new ones can be constructed, roads and drainage ditches fixed, and new sections of roads or runways installed or existing ones modified………..

Defense Industry –

Defense Contractors to Obama: Enough With the Executive Orders

[link]

Defense One © August 11, 2015

By Charles S. Clark

On the heels of a news leak about a pending presidential directive requiring federal contractors to offer paid sick leave, four major contractor groups on Tuesday wrote to top White House officials asking them to ease up on executive orders —di the foreseeable future.” With the White House issuing more contractor-specific orders, the rapid growth in compliance requirements is becoming untenable,” said the letter to Chief of Staff Denis McDonough and Senior Adviser Valerie Jarrett. —The impacts, inefficiencies, and in many cases, unintended consequences are
such that the interests of the American taxpayer are being significantly and negatively impacted.”

Is Lockheed Martin too big to fail?


Politico © August 12, 2015

By Leigh Munsil and Austin Wright

Lockheed Martin, the Pentagon’s largest and most diverse contractor, already nabs nearly 10 cents of every contract dollar and has long perfected the strategy of spreading jobs on weapons programs in key states and congressional districts. Now its recent agreement to buy helicopter manufacturer Sikorsky Aircraft for $9 billion — its biggest acquisition in nearly two decades — represents not only an expansion into a new area of defense: It would also lock down one of the last remaining pieces in its already unrivaled political map. The purchase of the Connecticut company, a sale that is widely expected to receive approval from government regulators, would stake a major claim for Lockheed Martin in New England, one of the few areas of the country where it has had relatively little presence — and few staunch political allies.

US Navy considers reduced annual F-35C buy


Flight Global © August 12, 2015

By: James Drew

The US Navy believes budget pressures and competing priorities could drive it to purchase fewer Lockheed Martin F-35Cs per year in the 2020s, and a worst-case scenario could see it procure as few as 12 aircraft per year, or one squadron. Naval Air Forces commander Vice Adm Mike Shoemaker says the current plan is to purchase around 20 carrier variants per year in the 2020s, but depending on the resources available, annual output could fall to anywhere between 12 and 20 aircraft. “I think the current realities of the budget and other priorities inside the navy may drive something between those two numbers, but we’re still on the path to [initial operational capability] for our first squadron in 2018,” Shoemaker said at the US Centre for Strategic and International Studies in Washington.

Program managers targeted for 'accountability'
For most individual service members, the renewed push on Capitol Hill to reform the military's acquisitions system will have little impact on their day-to-day life. But for the thousands of senior officers who rotate through "program manager" billets that help the Defense Department develop and buy new weapons systems and other military gear, the proposed law could have a direct — and potentially disturbing — impact. Increasing "accountability," lawmakers say, is the primary impetus for changing the rules for how the military buys its equipment from the private sector. Political support for acquisition reforms have intensified as budget pressures are forcing the Pentagon to make hard decisions about modernization programs.

Other Items of Interest –

SC passes significant military friendly legislation in 2015

Lost in the fight over the Confederate flag and impasses on ethics reform and road funding, the General Assembly took steps toward making South Carolina more military friendly. Legislators passed seven bills supporting the military, some in the waning moments of the legislative session. They included extending the property tax exemption on the vehicles of disabled veterans to their surviving spouses and charging in-state college tuition to service members who leave the service while in South Carolina. With the military sharply downsizing after 13 years of war in Iraq and Afghanistan, a new round of Base Realignment and Closure – called BRAC – could come as soon as 2019. States that show the most support for troops and their families by their laws could stand in better stead with the Pentagon than those that don’t, military backers say.
Maryland and Connecticut this year enacted legislation exempting some or all of military pensions from state income tax, furthering a keen competition among states to attract military retirees. Military retirees are highly desirable, as they typically seek civilian employment, generating income taxes and bolstering the economies of the states they live in, reported Stateline.org. The legislation signed by Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan (R) exempts the first $10,000 of retirement pay from state taxation. Only retirees’ first $5,000 of pay had been exempt previously. The change will cost Maryland $2.7 million in fiscal 2016 and about $3 million annually in subsequent years, according to state estimates. Local taxes, which are tied to the state tax, would drop by $2 million annually…….

Military Times publishes annual Benefits Guide for troops, vets and families

Military Times is publishing its annual Benefits Guide, a one-stop resource on the dizzying array of pay and benefits programs offered to active-duty and reserve component service members, retirees, veterans and their families. It has everything they need to know to get the most out of their government benefits. The guide is a living document, updated each year with changes made by the Pentagon, the Veterans Affairs Department and Congress. A 20-page special pullout detailing highlights of this year's Benefits Guide is included in all Aug. 17 print editions of Air Force Times, Army Times, Marine Corps Times and Navy Times…….

Carter Crafts Close Team of Chiefs to Finish Out Obama Years

With a background that includes infantry command and Special Forces, Gen. Mark Milley on Friday will become 39th Army chief, taking over for Gen. Raymond Odierno, perhaps the most outspoken military general in recent years. Milley is more than qualified for the job. But the
personal bond he formed with Defense Secretary Ashton Carter years ago on a flight over Afghanistan certainly helped. "I had a lot of opportunities to observe Mark on the ground leading our coalition of allies and partners and helping the Afghan people prepare to take responsibility for their own security," Carter said as he announced Milley's nomination in May.

**Installations, Local Partners in Three States Win DOD Awards for Habitat Protection**

[Link to article](http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/installations-local-partners-in-three-states-win-dod-awards-for-habitat-protection/?utm_source=dc360&utm_campaign=bf73c1e1b4-RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_04f8ff45e8-bf73c1e1b4-55784537&ct=t%28RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN%29#)

Defense Communities 360 © August 14, 2015

Conservation projects in Georgia, Maine and Nevada intended to protect buffer lands at four military installations in collaboration with local agencies and nonprofits will receive a total of $6.2 million, DOD's Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) Program announced earlier this week. The three 2015 REPI Challenge award winners are Fort Benning/Fort Stewart, Ga.; Naval Air Station (NAS) Fallon, Nev.; and the Naval Shipyard Portsmouth Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape (SERE) School, Maine. The three partnerships will leverage their DOD awards with more than $21 million in other funding to protect a total of 28,050 acres. The REPI Challenge aims to protect large parcels of land through cost sharing from local and private partners to preserve compatible land uses that support military readiness, while also protecting critical wildlife habitats and threatened and endangered species. The competition places a premium on harnessing the creativity of the private sector to leverage unconventional sources of funding, attract philanthropic support and take advantage of market-based approaches to land and resource conservation. …….
August 24, 2015 – FDSTF Update

TF members --

1. **Next Task Force Meeting September 17, 2015 in St. Augustine** – The next meeting of the Florida Defense Support Task Force will be on Thursday, September 17, 2015 in St. Augustine. We are still working on the details/logistics of the meeting location. However, we have rooms blocked at the Doubletree Hotel in St. Augustine for Task Force members. The meeting will begin at 9:00 AM. The Florida National Guard will be celebrating their 450th anniversary during September. More details to follow in the next update.

2. **October Task Force Meeting Cancelled** -- Because of the Special Legislative Session in October and Legislative Committee Weeks in October, the Chairman has decided to cancel the October Task Force meeting.

Regards, BG.

**Bruce Grant**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, FLORIDA DEFENSE SUPPORT TASK FORCE

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Articles of Interest:

FDSTF –

**Miller: The world continues to be a dangerous place**
By KELLY HUMPHREY

U.S. Rep. Jeff Miller visited Fort Walton Beach on Thursday, where he took part in a meeting of folks dedicated to protecting and enhancing Florida’s military installations. Miller helped open the meeting of the Florida Defense Support Task Force, where he gave the group an update on efforts to pass a defense funding bill and other military issues. “We thought we would wrap up the authorization bill before recess, but some issues regarding compensation are still being negotiated,” he said. “But at this point there are no BRAC (Base Realignment and Closure) rounds established in the House or the Senate, which is a good thing.” Among the issues being negotiated by members of the House and Senate Conference Committee is the proposed changes to the Basic Allowance for Housing for dual-service married couples……..

In the District

**Florida Defense Support Task Force**
Florida plays a vital role in our national security posture, and more than $73 billion and 750,000 Florida jobs support our Nation’s military. To foster the continued military value and relevance of the more than 20 military installations that call Florida home, the Florida legislature established a Florida Defense Support Task Force, charged with the mission of preserving, protecting, and enhancing Florida’s military missions and installations. Last week, I visited with the Task Force during its meeting in Fort Walton Beach. The event provided an important opportunity to share information across local, state, and federal levels, as we seek to ensure Florida remains the leader in our Nation’s defense now and in the future. This shared goal is no small task, and I appreciate all of the hard work, dedication, and collaboration of the members of the Task Force.
Enterprise Florida releases economic development results for 2014-15


Enterprise Florida on Aug. 20 released updates on economic development efforts in its 2014-15 fiscal year, which included the creation of more than 33,000 total jobs and $2.74 billion in capital investment in the state. Additional highlights for the past fiscal year included:

- Projected export sales of $906.4 million, a 10.5 percent increase over fiscal-year 2013-14.
- The Florida Defense Support Task Force awarded $2 million in local defense communities to protect Florida’s military installations and missions.
- Enterprise Florida assisted 28 small businesses with financing, and administered $4.8 million in loan guarantees and $12.5 million in loan participations……….
Bernanke: Near Term Deficit Woes Don't Justify Defense Cuts


Defense News © August 17, 2015

By Andrew Clevenger

Short-term deficit reduction is not a good reason to cut federal military spending, and defense spending cuts under sequestration likely hurt the US economic recovery, former Federal Reserve chairman Ben Bernanke said Monday during a discussion of the defense economy. Speaking at an event hosted by the Brookings Institute, where he is a distinguished fellow in residence, Bernanke said that it was important to keep US defense spending in context and avoid over-simplified comparisons to other militaries………

Sources: Congress Mulls Full-Year Continuing Resolution


Defense News © August 23, 2015

By Joe Gould and Aaron Mehta

With a Sept. 30 deadline looming, the Pentagon is coming to grips with the reality that it will be operating under the stop-gap spending measure known as a continuing resolution for the near future. But sources warn that lawmakers are mulling the nearly unprecedented step of passing a yearlong continuing resolution (CR), which could throw carefully constructed acquisition and sustainment plans into chaos and leave industry gasping for new opportunities. The defense world has become used to operating under continuing resolutions in recent years. Since 2009, CRs have been used every year, and in fiscal 2011, Congress passed seven, ultimately funding the government for six months — a special headache for Pentagon budgeteers — before a deal was reached………
Army, SOCOM to take on daily drone missions


Military Times © August 17, 2015

By Andrew Tilghman

The Pentagon will significantly expand the number of daily drone sorties conducted around the globe during the next several years and will for the first time expand the mission beyond the Air Force, a defense official said. The plan reflects a high-level recognition that the Air Force's remotely piloted vehicle fleet can no longer meet the forcewide demand for combat air patrols flown by drone pilots, mainly due to severe pilot shortages. "Demand exceeds supply in this type of mission," Navy Capt. Jeff Davis, a Pentagon spokesman, said Monday. The new plan aims to ratchet up the number of daily drone flights from the current level of about 60 each day to 90 by 2019, a goal that will affect long-term planning for budgets and manpower, Davis said……..

Raytheon contracted to provide mission support to USSOCOM


Army-Techonolgy.com © August 21, 2015

Raytheon has received a multiple-award contract to provide mission support to the US Special Operations Command (USSOCOM). The indefinite-delivery, indefinite-quantity SOCOM-Wide Mission Support (SWMS) contract has a maximum ceiling of $900m, and requires Raytheon Blackbird Technologies to provide professional, programme management, and technical services to special operations forces (SOF) across the globe. The Group A SWMS contract vehicle is designed for large companies to work as prime contractors, and includes a five-year ordering period……..
LRS Federal receives Air Force Fence-To-Fence environmental compliance contract to support Eglin AFB, FL

http://www.prweb.com/releases/2015/08/prweb12910415.htm

PR Web © August 20, 2015

LRS Federal (LRS), a Maryland-based engineering and construction company, was awarded a $9.8M contract to provide environmental compliance services at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida. The Air Force Civil Engineer Center awarded this contract to provide environmental operations and services to support the Air Force Environmental Quality program. LRS is partnered with two leading federal contractors, Leidos and Navarro, in executing this contract. Eglin Air Force Base (AFB) is home to the 96th Test Wing and encompasses 464,000 acres of land and 120,000 square miles of water ranges. The Test Wing and its 40 associate units accomplish their mission while coexisting with 106 rare and endangered plant and animal species found in 34 distinct ecosystems. More than 227,000 acres of Eglin’s reservation are open for recreation to 16,000 military personnel, 15,300 civilian employees, 72,000 family members and retirees, and the general public.

Navy To Test F-35C Off Eisenhower in October


Navy Times © August 20, 2015

By Lara Seligman

The US Navy is planning at-sea testing of the carrier variant joint strike fighter in the first few weeks of October aboard the aircraft carrier USS Eisenhower, according to several sources. The upcoming sea trials will mark the second phase of developmental testing for the Lockheed Martin-made F-35C. During the test period, the team will evaluate the aircraft’s ability to launch and recover from the carrier, and its performance in suboptimal conditions and during night operations.

US Southern Command –

U.S. SOUTHCOM vs. Caribbean Narco-Pirates
By W. Alejandro Sanchez

On March 12, 2015, Marine General John Kelly, commander of U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM), testified before the Armed Services Committee about the security challenges that the United States and its Western Hemispheric allies face throughout the continent. In his Posture Statement, the general noted that SOUTHCOM is the U.S. military’s “lowest priority Geographic Combatant Command, hence the maxim ‘doing less with less’ has a disproportionate effect on our operations, exercises, and engagement activities.” One particular focus of General Kelly’s remarks was transnational crime, specifically drug trafficking that originates in South America and crosses the Greater Caribbean towards the United States. There are several types of transnational crime occurring throughout Caribbean waters; due to space constraints, this commentary will only focus on the transportation methods utilized to move drugs throughout the Caribbean Sea and what this means for the security of the United States and its allies.......
Guillory, who resigned at the end of Brown’s term. “I just think it created an overall atmosphere of cooperation.”

NS Mayport –

**Despite removal of commanding officer, Mayport-based USS Shamal still on guard**


Florida Times-Union © August 19, 2015

The commanding officer of a Mayport-based patrol coastal ship with a crew of 30, was relieved of her duties by the U.S. Navy on Tuesday after preliminary findings of an ongoing investigation into inappropriate behavior. A loss of confidence in Lt. Cmdr. Alisha Hamilton's ability to command the USS Shamal was cited, and she has temporarily been reassigned pending final results of an investigation. The Shamal was part of an order of 14 Cyclone-class ships that were commissioned in the early 1990s — at a cost of $20 million apiece — the Navy’s goal was to use them to transport SEAL teams ashore. Commissioned on Jan. 27, 1996, in Baton Rouge, La., the Shamal and others ships in its class proved far too large for secret infiltration missions. Several of them, including the Shamal, were loaned to the U.S. Coast Guard to become cutters; one even was donated to the Philippines…………

Avon Park Air Force Range –

**Convention celebrates airborne operations**


Fayetteville Observer © August 23, 2015
Paratroopers past and present gathered in Florida earlier this month to celebrate the 82nd Airborne Division and the 75th anniversary of airborne operations. The annual 82nd Airborne Division Association Convention was held in Orlando Aug. 13-15. The convention, the 69th for the organization, was meant to "rekindle friendships, enjoy camaraderie with old friends and active-duty troops, and to conduct the business of the association," officials said. Present-day paratroopers participated as a color guard, performed as part of the All American Chorus and made a commemorative jump at Avon Park Air Force Range, Avon Park, Florida……..

NSA Panama City –

Bay County Commissioners Extend Barefoot Palms Buy Back Contract

http://www.wjhg.com/home/headlines/Bay-County-Commissioners-Extend-Barefoot-Pams-322223032.html

WJHG © August 19, 2015

By: Kelly Baumgarten

In 2010, Bay County purchased Barefoot Palms, an abandoned apartment complex near Naval Support Activity Panama City. It cost nearly $3 million. They believed it would protect the base from encroachment and they could use the land for naval activities, creating more jobs for residents. The Navy was supposed to pay the county back in five years, but hasn't. The sales contract has a buy back provision, so the sellers agreed to buy the property again by November. Commissioners voted to extend the date of the buy back for another year so they have time to work with the state and federal government. Bay County Commissioner Mike Thomas thinks it will benefit the economy in the long run…….

NAS Pensacola –

Parachute water survival moves to Fairchild


Air Mobility Command © August 18, 2015

by Tech. Sgt. Joshua Strang
Detachment 2, 66th Training Squadron, 336th Training Group at Naval Air Station Pensacola, Florida, relocated to Fairchild Air Force Base, Washington. Detachment 2 was responsible for conducting the three-day Parachute Water Survival Course that provides training to aircrew members who fly in aircraft with parachute egress capability and teaches crews disentanglement, drop and drag, and descent into water procedures. In the current flying training pipeline, personnel attend survival, evasion, resistance and escape training at Fairchild AFB. In the past, individuals would go TDY to NAS Pensacola for water survival training. Lt. Col. Clint Rea, the 66th TRS commander, said the 66th TRS consolidated the course with the existing non-ejection water survival course currently taught at Fairchild AFB. "Foundational water survival training is a core function of the 66th Training Squadron and a key part of our heritage," Rea said. "Having this course at Fairchild will ensure this legacy of excellence continues with robust training, readiness and combat capability not only for the Air Force, but combatant commanders as well."

Florida National Guard –

**SJRWMD approves Alligator Creek flow enhancement project**


Clay Today Online © August 20, 2015

The St. Johns River Water Management District is bolstering its partnership with Clay County government and Camp Blanding on a project to increase water flows to Alligator Creek, thus increasing recharge to the Floridan aquifer and potentially bolstering downstream flows. The District’s Governing Board on Aug. 11 authorized District Executive Director Ann Shortelle to enter into an access agreement with Camp Blanding to install, operate, maintain and inspect a water conveyance structure on Alligator Creek below Lowry Lake. The Board’s action also authorized Shortelle to enter into an agreement with Clay County for the county to operate and maintain the new structure. The District is responsible for construction of the project.

**Hearon relinquishes command to Slayden**


DVIDS © August 20, 2015

By Sgt. Valeria Pete
The Florida Army National Guard’s 164th Air Defense Artillery Brigade welcomed a new brigade commander during a large ceremony at the Camp Blanding Joint Training Center Parade Field, Friday, Aug. 7. Family, friends and dignitaries were present as Col. Matthew Hearon, outgoing commander of the 164th ADA Brigade, passed the organizational colors to incoming commander Col. Grant Slayden. Distinguished guests in attendance included The Adjutant General of Florida, Maj. Gen. Michael A. Calhoun, and former commanders of the 164th ADA, such as Brig. Gen. (retired) Frank Laudano, and Maj. Gen. (retired) James D. Tyre, who retired last year from the position of Assistant Adjutant General (Army) of Florida………

NAS Key West –

**Texas Special Operations Detachment jumps into Key West**

[https://www.dvidshub.net/news/173870/texas-special-operations-detachment-jumps-into-key-west#.Vdd66Jc008I](https://www.dvidshub.net/news/173870/texas-special-operations-detachment-jumps-into-key-west#.Vdd66Jc008I)

DVID © August 21, 2015

By Maj. Robert Cowart

As the ramp opened up, the smell of salty air and humidity filled the C-130. It was almost as thick as the enthusiasm displayed by the Texas Army National Guardsmen on board. The soldiers, part of the Special Operations Detachment – Africa (SOD-A), 71st Troop Command, conducted a long-range airborne insertion into the waters near Key West, Fla., July 24, 2015. The exercise was a culmination of a three-year process, which executed the unit’s Mission Essential Task List training; a training plan designed to take units from an untrained status, to proficient and finally to a trained status – all leading to the unit’s ability to conduct its wartime mission………

Defense Industry –

**Lockheed welcomes U.S. plan to use its combat system for frigates**


Reuters © August 21, 2015
Lockheed Martin Corp on Friday welcomed the U.S. Navy's decision to use Lockheed's integrated combat system for future frigate-class ships to be built beginning in fiscal 2019, saying it would allow greater commonality across the entire Navy fleet. "It's great news," Joe North, vice president of Littoral Ships and Systems at Lockheed, told Reuters in a telephone interview. "Now we get to move out and get the fleet on one system." Neither the Navy nor Lockheed provided an estimate for the value of the combat system, but North said each system accounted for less than 10 percent of the cost of the ship. The last three ships ordered by the Navy ranged in price from $345 million to $441 million.........
TF members --

1. **Task Force Meeting Next Week in St. Augustine** – The next meeting of the Florida Defense Support Task Force will be on Thursday, September 17, 2015 at the Doubletree by Hilton – St. Augustine Historic District, 116 San Marco Ave., St. Augustine, FL 32084. The meeting will begin at 9:00 AM. Draft agenda attached.

2. **Call In Numbers – Open Session – 800-501-8979** Access code: 8784566

3. **Attachments:**
   - Meeting agenda
   - TPG Monthly Report

Regards, BG.

**Bruce Grant**  
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Articles of Interest:

BRAC –
‘Time for a New BRAC,’ Principi Says

http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/time-for-a-new-brac-principi-says/?utm_source=dc360&utm_campaign=0d71870ae4-RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_04f8ff45e8-0d71870ae4-55784537&ct=t%28RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN%29#

Defense Communities 360 © September 4, 2015

In a post marking the 10th anniversary of the final report of the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure Commission, Anthony Principi, who served as the panel’s chairman, makes the case for a new round. The previous five BRAC rounds allowed the Defense Department to align its infrastructure with the needs of the armed forces, a process the department needs to undertake again, Principi writes in the Hill’s Congress Blog. “In this time of great fiscal constraint, we cannot continue to deny DOD the opportunity to rationalize its vast excess infrastructure,” he says. While acknowledging that voting to authorize a BRAC round is not easy for lawmakers, Principi highlights the potential communities have not only for recovering from a closure, but for finding new uses for military sites that can produce a greater number of jobs than were lost. Congress’ failure to approve additional base closures creates the potential for a “stealth BRAC,” under which realignments and closures take place outside of a formal base closure round. In addition, budget constraints are forcing DOD to trim the size of its forces, cut training and operations and maintenance costs, and defer modernization — all of which will have an adverse impact on the communities and businesses that bring military communities to life.” Communities would fare better under a formal BRAC round that provides transparency regarding decision-making and the means to advocate before an independent BRAC Commission, Principi states. The 2005 Commission reversed DOD closure recommendations in several cases based on what it learned from community leaders and base visits. “After a decade of inaction, now is the time to do what’s right for our men and women in uniform. Spending dollars on infrastructure that does not serve their needs is inexcusable,” Principi says.

Congress Needs to Reconsider BRAC Stance, O’Hanlon Argues

http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/congress-needs-to-reconsider-brac-stance-ohanlon-argues/?utm_source=dc360&utm_campaign=3fcf5e967f-RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_04f8ff45e8-3fcf5e967f-55784537&ct=t%28RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN%29#

Defense Communities 360 © September 2, 2015

Lawmakers have resisted many of the cost-saving reforms proposed by the Pentagon in recent years to cope with tight fiscal constraints, including its request to hold one or more rounds of base closures. With the economy improved, though, Congress should rethink its opposition to the Obama administration’s request to hold a BRAC round in 2017, Michael O’Hanlon, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, argues in a commentary published by the National Interest.
After DOD conducted five rounds of closures through 2005 — saving up to $12 billion annually — Congress has soured on the process, even as DOD estimates it has at least 20 percent more infrastructure than needed for a force structure reduced by 40 percent since the Cold War.

DOD Budget–

**GOP Leaders Hope to Avoid Standoff over Funding**

[http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/gop-leaders-hope-to-avoid-standoff-over-funding/?utm_source=dc360&utm_campaign=a1ee7e990e-RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_04f8f45e8-a1ee7e990e-55784537&ct=t%28RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN%29#](http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/gop-leaders-hope-to-avoid-standoff-over-funding/?utm_source=dc360&utm_campaign=a1ee7e990e-RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_04f8f45e8-a1ee7e990e-55784537&ct=t%28RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN%29#)

Defense Communities 360 © September 7, 2015

With summer vacation over for Congress, one of the more urgent pieces of business for congressional leaders will be passing a continuing resolution (CR) by Sept. 30 to avoid a government shutdown, an effort likely to be complicated by the intersection of conservatives’ attempt to use the CR to defund Planned Parenthood and the Republican presidential primary. With three GOP presidential candidates — Sens. Ted Cruz (Texas), Marco Rubio ( Fla.) and Rand Paul (Ky.) — seemingly eager for a showdown over the issue, “there’s real potential for fireworks in the Senate in September,” Matt Mackowiak, a GOP strategist and president of Potomac Strategy Group, told the Hill.

**Defense issues dominate Congress' return to DC**


Military Times © September 4, 2015

By Leo Shane III

Summer vacation is all but over, and Congress already had a lot of defense homework for its fall session. National security issues are expected to dominate much of the discussion on Capitol Hill for the rest of September, with controversial votes in both chambers throughout the month. But whether that means any progress will be made on the annual defense budget bills remains to be seen. Here are the top issues on the schedule:
Column: 'Former DoD Comptroller Pleads For End To Budgetary Chaos'*


Defense News © September 3, 2015

By Joe Gould

Robert Hale said he never picked his own headlines as the Defense Department comptroller, but this is the one he wanted to punctuate in his remarks Wednesday at a think tank here. Another might be: "Former DoD Comptroller Puts Budget Chaos in Human Terms." Hale helmed the Pentagon's finances from 2010 to 2014. His final year, he said, was "nearly constant budget turmoil." Beltway phases like "sequestration," "continuing resolution" and "furlough" in the real world meant worried public servants, millions of taxpayer dollars wasted and sleepless nights for himself — all of which he recalls in a white paper that reads like a memoir…….

Poll: Washington Insiders Expect Full-Year CR


Defense News © September 8, 2015

By Joe Gould

Congress’ budget morass will be solved with a “do-nothing” full-year continuing resolution to fund the government, rather than a Murray-Ryan type deal or a grand bipartisan bargain to remove sequestration, according to a Washington think tank poll. The online poll showed more than 500 respondents predicting the full-year CR, versus 200-plus predicting a “Murray-Ryan 2.0” and roughly 150 predicting a grand bargain. Behind predictions of a Republican-crafted budget, the president’s budget came in last by a wide margin. Experts with the Center for Strategic and International Studies split over whether the Democrats and Republicans in Congress would reach a Murray-Ryan 2.0-style compromise or pass one or more funding measures to fund the government at 2015 levels. The 2013 deal named for Sen. Patty Murray and Rep. Paul Ryan temporarily lifted spending caps for two years…….

Budget Insanity: America's Self-Inflicted Defense Drama

As Congress and the President return to town, Washington is sleepwalking towards another budgetary showdown that could result in sharp cuts in defense and other government spending or even another government shutdown. At a time when the nation has real crises and other urgent, weighty matters to consider—from the Iran nuclear deal to the fraying ceasefire in Ukraine to the upcoming visit of President Xi of China and climate change—we do not need a self-inflicted wound. To be sure, everyone is aware that the federal government may be headed for the brink. But few seem to think it within their power to step back. As things stand, the Budget Control Act of 2011 will sharply limit defense funding—reducing FY 2016 funding by about $34 billion compared to the President’s request, coming on top of a several years of decline in defense accounts—unless a new law is passed to soften the constraints. The law also limits non-defense spending. The Murray-Ryan compromise of 2013 has now run its course and no longer will apply to the 2016 budget year, which begins October 1…….

Defense Bill Remains on Schedule, Thornberry Says

Despite the need to hash out differences over several issues centered on military benefits, Congress is on track to complete the fiscal 2016 defense authorization bill, Mac Thornberry (R-Texas), chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, told reporters Tuesday. “I think we’ve made progress and hopefully we will have a conference report available to come to the floor soon,” Thornberry said, reported CQ Roll Call. The chairman would not discuss specific disagreements but expressed optimism that work on the annual policy measure would be finished shortly…….

Pentagon Moves Ahead With HQ Staff Cuts

Despite the need to hash out differences over several issues centered on military benefits, Congress is on track to complete the fiscal 2016 defense authorization bill, Mac Thornberry (R-Texas), chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, told reporters Tuesday. “I think we’ve made progress and hopefully we will have a conference report available to come to the floor soon,” Thornberry said, reported CQ Roll Call. The chairman would not discuss specific disagreements but expressed optimism that work on the annual policy measure would be finished shortly…….
With Congress and the White House still at loggerheads over the defense budget, Pentagon personnel strategists are proceeding with a more-severe version of an existing plan for cuts to headquarters staff—angering a major union in the process. On Aug. 24, Deputy Defense Secretary Robert Work sent all military departments and services a memo titled “Cost Reduction Targets for Major Headquarters,” ordering preparation for a 25 percent cut in appropriations from 2017-2020 for all major Defense headquarters activities, the Office of the Defense Secretary, the Joint Staff, and the Defense agencies and field activities……

Space Coast –

**45th SW supports 4th Mobile User Objective System satellite launch**


Air Force © September 2, 2015

45th Space Wing Public Affairs

The 45th Space Wing helped successfully launch the fourth Mobile User Objective System satellite aboard a United Launch Alliance Atlas V rocket Sept. 2.

"Here at the 45th we measure success one launch at a time," said Brig. Gen. Wayne Monteith, the 45th SW commander. "With this being my first launch as the 45th SW commander, I can tell you the road to achieving that success is no small task. It takes a blended team of military, civilian and contracted professionals driving toward the same objective of getting that rocket into space. I am proud of the hard work our team put into today's launch and it goes without saying that there's nothing more exciting than being a part of a team that provides assured access to space ... that's our charge. We did it today, we'll do it tomorrow and there's nothing quite like it."……

Team Orlando –

**26 speakers planned for Orlando's Florida Simulation Summit**

Orlando is on a mission to prove there's much more to the area than just roller coasters, Mickey Mouse and water parks. Hopefully, a September event will prove that. Orange County Mayor Teresa Jacobs and the Orlando-based National Center for Simulation will host the Florida Simulation Summit in Orlando at the Orange County Convention Center on Sept. 16. The event, which runs from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., will have speakers from the modeling, simulation and training industry. The summit will highlight Florida's multibillion-dollar simulation industry and help identify opportunities for businesses to commercialize simulation. Beyond defense, modeling and simulation also can be used for video game development, medical training, education, transportation and manufacturing. That being said, it's no surprise that some of the speakers are executives of local well-known gaming companies such as EA Tiburon and N-Space.

MacDill AFB –

MacDill contract initiative could boost Tampa economy


Tampa Tribune © September 6, 2015

By Howard Altman

A new military contracting program designed to maximize competition and improve performance might also send more business Tampa’s way. The program would provide a broad array of knowledge-based services, education training and management support to U.S. Special Operations Command, based at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, and is worth up to $1.5 billion over five years. Socom, which oversees the military’s commando forces, is still adding the final touches to the new Socom-Wide Mission Support program. But as it stands, SWMS could grant three Tampa-based joint ventures exclusive rights to bid on about a third of the work. SWMS is planned as a replacement for a 2010 program that drew criticism from the Pentagon’s Office of Inspector General — in part for a lack of accountability. Socom disputed the findings.

MacDill Air Force Base: 75 Years of Service

Fox 13 News © September 8, 2015

MacDill Air Force Base has been an integral part of the Tampa Bay area for 75 years. FOX 13's Lloyd Sowers took a look at the base's past, present, and future in this popular special that aired on Labor Day. You can re-watch the entire show here………..

Hurlburt Field –

DoD 101: Air Force Air Commandos, Navy Ships, SEALs


DOD Live © September 2, 2015

By Cheryl Pellerin, DoD News, Defense Media Activity

This week 23 civilians were guests of Defense Secretary Ash Carter as members of the 67-year-old Senior Leader Engagement Program. All week they experienced things few civilians see up close — unclassified activities of the Air Force Special Operations Command, an unclassified brief on Navy SEAL capabilities and training, and Navy aircraft and warships. At Hurlburt Field on the Florida Panhandle, AFSOC Commander Lt. Gen. Bradley Heithold and his staff gave SLEP members an overview of the organization — America’s Air Commandos: Anytime, Anyplace — and its airmen, aircraft and capabilities. The civilians saw heavy guns carried on the AC-130U ground-attack gunship and tried out full-motion pilot/battle-management simulators. Next they got an intel/mission brief before loading onto two V-22 Osprey tilt rotor military aircraft with members of the special tactics team. They were on their way to witness simulated evening operations and a close-in airpower demo that obliterated field grass and rusted-out hulks of cars……..

NS Mayport –

USS Simpson to be decommissioned
There's a major transition happening right now at Naval Station Mayport which will mark the end of an era. The USS Simpson is the last frigate to be decommissioned at Mayport to make room for a newer class of ships called littoral combat ships. The paintings that once adorned the walls of the USS Simpson are now in bubble wrap ready to be packed away. Walk in the hallways, and there's an eerie silence for a ship that was once home to more than 200 sailors. Commanding Officer Casey Roskelly took Action News Jax on a tour, each room carrying its own memory.

USS Carney departs Mayport for Spain

It was an emotional day as family and friends gathered to say goodbye to their loved ones heading overseas. The U.S.S. Carney left Naval Station Mayport on Sunday morning and deployed to Spain. It's the last of four U.S. ships to leave Mayport for Spain. The sailors will be supporting naval operations in the Mediterranean Basin and in the Atlantic Ocean. People with loved ones on board the U.S.S. Carney moved closer as the ship left for Spain. It was a somber day for many of the families including Maria Pickard. Her husband is Kenneth Pickard and he’s is the captain of the ship.

Mayport to host two 'ships of the future'

Nearly 200 sailors are gearing up for Jacksonville to get its first —ship of the future,” as Mayport Naval Station moves staff into its brand new littoral combat ship headquarters this month. Captain Paul Young, head of the LCS squadron that will eventually be home-ported in Mayport,
said that right now he has a staff of over 130, plus the crew members. That's up from where it was about this time last year, when he had about 30 people working for him.

Tyndall AFB –

4 US stealth F-22 Raptors are on their way Germany


Business Insider © August 28, 2015

By David Cenciotti

Four F-22A Raptor stealth jets will arrive at Spangdahlem air base later on Friday to start a deployment in Europe in support of Operation Atlantic Resolve. The aircraft, belonging to 325th Fighter Wing, from Tyndall Air Force Base, Florida, and using the radio call sign "Tabor 11," are accompanied by two air spares and supported by several tankers along the way, according to the information posted by some very well informed users on Scramble forum. As happened to the first A-10 Theater Security Package in May, Spangdahlem will be the first stop for the US Raptors that are expected to visit other Eastern Europe air bases.

Our View: Is government addicted to Shell Island intervention?

http://www.newsherald.com/article/20150827/OPINION/150829354

News Herald © August 27, 2015

There is nothing like a little government intervention to mess up a perfect good time. It seems that government, too often, is prone to one of the following actions: intervening where it is not needed or where it is not wanted; intervening where a small problem might exist in an overwhelming and unnecessarily harsh manner; or intervening while at the same time doing a poor job of communicating its reasoning, methodology or goals clearly and openly with the public. As The News Herald’s John Henderson reported on the front page of Tuesday’s News Herald, “Boaters blast Shell Island proposal,” St. Andrews State Park officials, as part of their 10-year update of the park’s management plan, are discussing updated rules that have left Shell Island enthusiasts angry.
NSA Panama City –

**New Grant Will Allow More Ships to Stop at NSA Panama City**


WJHG © September 3, 2015

By: Brianna DiPilato

Bigger ships and more sailors could soon make their way to Naval Support Activity Panama City. A recent Task Force grant for more than $100,000 was approved this week. The grant will help fund research for a new turning basin just outside of Alligator Bayou. Ultimately, it will open up the port making way for larger ships that need to do work on the base. One of the grant's writers, John Skaggs, says the new basin would be a win-win for the Navy and the community. "Right now, they [the Navy] are spending a lot of money on gas just driving back and forth between our operating area and Pensacola, so you'll save money there. It'll also give the ability for them to come in for the sailors and them to get off and actually spend money out in our community," Community Planning and Liaison Officer Skaggs said………

Florida National Guard –

**Army Commission Aims to More Closely Link Active, Reserve Components**

http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/army-commission-aims-to-more-closely-link-active-reserve-components/

Defense Communities 360 © September 9, 2015

One aim of the National Commission on the Future of the Army will be to craft recommendations to help the active Army, National Guard and Army Reserve work together more effectively. "Fractures between the three components of the Army are unhealthy," Carter Ham, the retired Army general who heads the commission, told the Gazette during the panel’s visit last week to Colorado Springs. "It is the total force of the Army that has to work in concert." The solution may require a radical redesign of each of the components, he said. The commission likely will call for a larger role for part-time troops as the Army shrinks its active-duty force to 450,000 soldiers. Ham envisioned reserve component units able to respond more quickly than our current models."………
NAS Whiting Field –

**CNIC visits Whiting Field NAS**


Pensacola News Journal © September 5, 2015

Vice Adm. Dixon Smith, Commander Navy Installations Command, and Rear Adm. Mary Jackson, Commander Navy Region Southeast, visited Whiting Field Naval Air Station on Aug. 20 as they finish up a sweep of the installations along the Gulf Coast. Whiting Field and Pensacola Naval Air Station served as the final two stopping points for Smith before he returned to CNIC. The two air stations were named the 2015 Installation Excellence award recipients in the small and large categories, respectively. Something he alluded to immediately in his comments to the assembled senior staff to kick-off his visit. “First and foremost, congratulations on receiving the Installation Excellence Award,“ Smith said. “You ought to be very proud of that accomplishment.”……

Patrick AFB –

**920th Rescue Wing Maintenance Reservists ‘Rescue’ Aircraft**


Space Coast Daily © September 2, 2015

By Tech. Sgt. Abigail Klein, 920th Rescue Wing Public Affairs

While most of the 920th Rescue Wing’s mission is focused on rescue, including aiding the Coast Guard in the search for two 14-year-old boys reported missing July 25, the Reserve Airmen of the 920th Maintenance Group also play a special role on land--repairing and maintaining rescue aircraft. Reservists assigned to the 920 MXG constantly work on HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopters to aid in both the unit’s combat rescue and humanitarian mission……
Defense Industry –

Watchdog: Pentagon Should Integrate Military Services' Efforts at 'Better Buying Power'

http://www.govexec.com/contracting/2015/08/watchdog-pentagon-should-integrate-military-services-efforts-better-buying-power/119882/

Government Executive © August 31, 2015

By Charles S. Clark

After five years and several iterations of the Better Buying Power efficiency initiative, the Defense Department still is not effectively using portfolio management to optimize $1.4 trillion in weapon system investments, the Government Accountability Office has concluded. In areas such as shipbuilding, programs are too often duplicative while affordability studies get ignored due to fragmented governance, unsustained leadership and ‘perceived lack of decision-making authority,’” auditors wrote in a new report.

Other Items of Interest –

Missouri Law Creates Office to Advocate for Military Installations

http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/missouri-law-creates-office-to-advocate-for-military-installations/?utm_source=dc360&utm_campaign=3f5e967f-RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_04f8ff45e8-3f5e967f-55784537&ct=t%28RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN%29#

Defense Communities 360 © September 2, 2015

Legislation recently enacted in Missouri will establish an Office of Military Advocate, an organization responsible for promoting the military services and installations within the state, as well as creating a strategic plan to sustain the military’s presence. The office, which will be housed within the Missouri Department of Economic Development, also will support the state Military Preparedness and Enhancement Commission, reported the Marshall Democrat-News. The advocate would serve as the liaison between state and federal branches of government, and keep Missouri officials and defense communities up-to-date regarding BRAC actions and
potential downsizing, according to a press release from Gov. Jay Nixon (D). The military advocate will be appointed by the governor for a six-year term, according to a bill summary…….

U.S. Military Is Saving Lives By Allying With Clean Energy Developers


Forbes © September 1, 2015

By Ken Silverstein

The New Energy Economy is boasting an old ally — the U.S. military, which is increasingly employing renewable energies and high technologies. With the U.S. armed forces moving in, the question then becomes how such a market place will unfold and who will be the major players in it. The U.S. Department of Defense is modernizing its military bases both domestically and around the world because it is saving lives, and money. Because it must remain on its toes, the military is continually moving generators and fossil fuels — resources that can run low and endanger the well-being of existing operations. By carrying sustainable sources of power with them, soldiers are reducing their risks while also cutting their emissions…….

Size matters: Is the U.S. Navy really too small?


CNN © September 8, 2015

By Zachary Cohen

For decades, the United States has had the world's largest and most advanced naval fleet, positioning ships and aircraft carriers in strategic locations across the globe to protect national interests and facilitate free trade. But as rival nations, such as China and Russia, expand their own naval capabilities, and with China's increasingly aggressive posture in the South China Sea, GOP presidential candidates are warning voters that America's dominance of the world's oceans could end unless lawmakers add significantly more ships to its arsenal to bring the fleet size closer to historic levels. Former military officials and defense experts, however, say that weighing the current size of the Navy against past ship levels is a misleading comparison that misses the broader point: making sure the Navy is capable of achieving U.S. strategic goals, which depend as much on technological capability and force deployment as the raw number of ships. While many analysts think the Navy needs to grow, others think it's large enough -- given its global dominance -- and that funding realities mean there's a limit to how much it could expand in any case…….
TF members --

1. **Task Force Meeting This Week in St. Augustine** – The next meeting of the Florida Defense Support Task Force will be on Thursday, September 17, 2015 at the **Doubletree by Hilton – St. Augustine Historic District, 116 San Marco Ave., St. Augustine, FL 32084**. The meeting will begin at 9:00 AM. Draft agenda attached.

2. **Call In Numbers – Open Session – 800-501-8979** Access code: 8784566

3. **Attachment**: Meeting agenda

Regards, BG.

**Bruce Grant**  
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**Articles of Interest:**

Public Private Partnerships –

**Base community partnership initiative kicks off with 'field of dreams'**

The ongoing clearing of a ball field located near Patrick AFB's south housing area is the first step of innovation for Team Patrick-Cape's partnership initiative with the community.

A memorandum of agreement, effective Sept. 1, between the 45th Space Wing and Satellite Beach, Florida, provided the foundation for the community's long-term use of one of the wing's multi-purpose athletic fields located in South Patrick Housing. "As good stewards of the community, we see it as our responsibility to pursue useful and effective partnerships that deliver needed community services, in turn, building and fostering a greater sense of community for our Airmen, their families and our neighbors," said Brig. Gen. Wayne Monteith, 45th Space Wing commander. The first initiative was in action once a memorandum of agreement was signed locally in July and Satellite Beach began mowing their new field……..

DOD Budget–

**Pentagon Deputy Orders Deep Funding Cuts across Headquarters Activities**

http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/pentagon-deputy-orders-deep-funding-cuts-across-headquarters-activities/#

Defense Communities 360 © September 10, 2015

Major DOD headquarters activities will need to plan for a 25 percent reduction in funding for fiscal years 2017 to 2020, according to a recent memo from Deputy Defense Secretary Robert Work. –We anticipate Congress will require a 25 percent reduction in the funding of DOD headquarters in lieu of the 20 percent requirement previously established by the department,” Work’s memo stated. –Even if Congress fails to act, the department needs the savings that will be achieved through this reduction to fund higher priority requirements in support of the warfighter and to address underfunded strategic needs,” it said. The cuts apply to major DOD headquarters activities across the military departments, the office of the secretary of defense, Joint Staff, defense agencies and field activities, and the combatant commands. Work’s memo followed the completion of a task by the deputy chief management officer to define major DOD headquarters activities.”……..

**US Air Force FY17 Budget: Expect Consistency As CR Looms**

As the US Air Force plans out its fiscal 2017 budget, sources say to expect few deviations from last year's layout. "Stay the course" appears to be the strategy employed by the service this year, a far cry from the dramatic program cuts and drama of two years ago. It's a choice driven by two factors: the belief that the service has made the right strategic decisions, and knowledge that inside the Pentagon, there is little room left to cut. In an exclusive interview with Defense News, Gen. Mark Welsh, Air Force chief of staff, laid out the service's thinking as it formulates the next budget plan……

Kendall: 'Full-year CR Would Be Devastating'


Defense News © September 12, 2015

By Joe Gould

Defense Department acquisition chief Frank Kendall said Friday a yearlong continuing resolution to fund the government "would be a devastating thing" for the Pentagon, as he hoped for a bipartisan deal to fund defense at the president's requested levels. Congress has for years passed short-term funding measures in lieu of approving a budget which set spending at the previous year's levels, and — without further legislation — bar production jumps and new start acquisition programs. "A full-year CR would be devastating," Kendall said. "We also have a number of things that we need to get on with in terms of rates of production increase in terms of moving to the next phases of program life-cycles. All of that will be put into question under a yearlong CR. It would be a devastating thing for the department. I understand that it is an easier route in some ways politically, but the consequences of that are very severe."……

House Strategy for Avoiding Shutdown Expected Soon

http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/house-strategy-for-avoiding-shutdown-expected-soon/?utm_source=dc360&utm_campaign=858ce4d862-RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_04f8f45e8-858ce4d862-55784537&ct=1%28RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN%29#

Defense Communities 360 © September 13, 2015
With time running short before the Oct. 1 deadline for clearing a continuing resolution (CR) to keep the government open in fiscal 2016, congressional Republicans have not yet settled on a plan for avoiding a shutdown. The primary obstacle they need to surmount is the insistence of conservative lawmakers to use the stopgap to eliminate federal funding for Planned Parenthood. Leadership has not announced a timeline for the CR, but some lawmakers suggested a short-term CR could be unveiled this week, reported CQ Roll Call. “We get a little closer every day,” said Rep. Tom Cole (R-Okla.), a senior appropriator……..

Eglin AFB –

At Crossroads, F-35 Still Faces Challenges


Defense News © September 10, 2015

By Lara Seligman

Over the past five years, the F-35 joint strike fighter has overcome massive cost overruns, schedule delays and a host of technical snags. The US Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps jets are now on track to meet key deadlines, and proponents of the program brag that costs have remained steady since 2010. But as the Pentagon prepares for a new challenge — tripling production of the next-generation fighter jet — F-35 program leaders are bracing for an uphill climb. Next year, F-35-maker Lockheed Martin will deliver 43 aircraft to the services. During the three years after that, the Pentagon will ramp up production to more than 120 aircraft each year, according to Lt. Gen. Chris Bogdan, head of the F-35 joint program office. The JPO is concerned the F-35 manufacturing base will not be able to keep up with such a drastic surge, he said……..

F-35s hone dog fighting skills at Top Gun for 1st time


Navy Times © September 11, 2015

By Meghann Myers
The Navy's sole F-35C squadron made its first trip to the hallowed strike fighter ground here to hone tactical skills and fly for the first time with F/A-18 Hornets. Strike Fighter Squadron 101's "Grim Reapers" wrapped up two weeks of training with Top Gun fliers at Fallon's Naval Strike Air Warfare Development Center on Friday, the fleet replacement squadron's latest step in putting the F-35C Lightning II through its paces toward its initial operating capability in 2018. "The first thing is, it's cool. The cool doesn’t wear off," pilot Lt. Cmdr. Patrick "Turtle" Rice said on Thursday. "It’s just a lot of new toys."………..

NAS Key West –

Secretary of Navy to visit Key West on Thursday

http://keysnews.com/node/69476

Keys News © September 9, 2015

BY ADAM LINHARDT

The top boss of the Navy is scheduled to visit Naval Air Station Key West for the first time Thursday for a tour of base operations. NAS Key West sailors are busy this week preparing for the arrival of Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV) Ray Mabus, who will be in town for about two hours touring Boca Chica Field and operations at the Truman Waterfront. Mabus will take an up-close view of Key West’s only home squadron, the Composite Fighter Squadron 111 (VFC-111), also known as the Sun Downers, as well as visiting squadrons flying the Harrier and the F/A-18 Super Hornet — the latter being the most common jets seen over Boca Chica Key outside of the F-5N Tiger II jets flown by the Sun Downers………..

Defense Industry –

Top 100 for 2015

http://people.defensenews.com/top-100/

Defense News © September

Currency conversions for non-US firms were calculated using average market conversion rates over each firm's fiscal year to mitigate the effects of currency fluctuations……….
TF members --

Next Task Force Meeting in Tallahassee – The next meeting of the Florida Defense Support Task Force will be on Thursday, November 19, 2015 at the Doubletree by Hilton – 101 S. Adams St., Tallahassee FL. The meeting will begin at 9:00 AM.

Regards, BG.

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Articles of Interest:

DOD Budget–

Long-Term CR Would Impact F-35 Software Development


Defense News © September 14, 2015

By Lara Seligman
The US Air Force is concerned that development of follow-on software for the F-35 joint strike fighter could be in peril if the Pentagon is forced to operate under a stop-gap spending measure next year. Development of the as-yet undefined Block 4 software, which will come online sometime in the 2020s, would feel the impact of a long-term continuing resolution (CR), Maj. Gen. Jeffrey Harrigian, director of the F-35 integration office, told reporters on Monday during the Air Force Association’s annual conference. “There will clearly be an impact if we’re in a yearlong CR,” Harrigian said. “That will be a long-term issue to both our production and then, as we’ve thought about it, some of our follow-on development plans will also be impacted.”

Budget fix would fall below spending caps for 2016


Military Times © September 14, 2015
By Andrew Tilghman and Leo Shane III

The ongoing political fight over how to fully fund the defense budget could end up forcing the Pentagon’s available funds even lower than the fiscal 2016 spending caps lawmakers wanted to avoid. But the unexpectedly low "base budget" that is part of the emerging fix could be padded with the temporary war funds that are at the heart of the political stalemate, softening the blow of those lost funds and allowing the Defense Department to carry on with most of its current plans for the fiscal year that starts Oct. 1. The fiscal 2015 budget cycle ends Sept. 30. Congress must adopt a budget for fiscal 2016 by then or approve a "continuing resolution" to extend this year’s spending levels into October and avoid a government shutdown.

Official: Sequestration could bring Army to 'breaking point'


The Hill © September 14, 2015
By Rebecca Shabad

The U.S. Army could be forced to a "breaking point" if spending cuts return in full force, a top defense official is warning. In an interview published Monday by Stars and Stripes, Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness Brad Carson discussed how sequestration is affecting different parts of the military. “If sequestration holds, it’s possible the Army could be forced down to 420,000 [active-duty soldiers],” said Carson, who previously
served in Congress. "The Army's near breaking point if you go that low, I think." Even as the demand continues for military missions in Iraq and Syria, the cuts are affecting military readiness for these operations, he said…….

Carter: Long-Term CR Forces 'Irresponsible' Cuts


Defense News © September 16, 2015

By Aaron Mehta

If Congress decides to push a long-term continuing resolution budget measure, it will simply be settling for "sequestration-level funding under another name," warned Secretary of Defense Ash Carter. Such a move would force "irresponsible" choices on the Pentagon, at a time when the Pentagon is facing low-end threats like ISIL and high-end threats from Russia and China. Speaking at the annual Air Force Association conference outside of Washington Wednesday, Carter spoke strongly about the budget situation facing the Pentagon as Congress nears the end of the fiscal year without a clear direction on funding…….

Deal to Raise Budget Caps Likely, McConnell Says

http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/deal-to-raise-budget-caps-likely-mcconnell-says/?utm_source=dc360&utm_campaign=ff2da3fb43-RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_04f8f45e8-ff2da3fb43-55784537&ct=t%28RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN%29#

Defense Communities 360 © September 17, 2015

Congress most likely will strike a deal relaxing the Budget Control Act spending caps to break this year’s budget impasse, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) said Wednesday. McConnell blamed Senate Democrats for blocking votes on fiscal 2016 appropriations bills that failed to provide spending relief for non-defense agencies commensurate with the extra spending provided in the Republican budget framework for the Pentagon, reported the Hill. –It is my hope that we will end up having a continuing resolution into later this year, which will give time for us to engage with the administration in determining how much we’re going to spend and where we’re going to spend it,” McConnell said. –Unfortunately, this is the inevitable result of Senate Democrats not allowing us to proceed to any of the appropriations bills,” he said……
Prospects Dim for Quick Agreement on Defense Bill


Defense Communities © September 17, 2015

Talks between House and Senate conferees over the fiscal 2016 defense authorization bill have slowed, despite a recent breakthrough over cuts to service members’ basic allowance for housing. Negotiators are stuck on several issues involving military compensation, including increases in Tricare co-pays and retirement benefits, Rep. Adam Smith (D-Wash.), ranking Democrat on the House Armed Services Committee, told CQ. Smith said the principals behind the talks — the chairmen and ranking members of the two Armed Services committees — did not meet last week, a sign that the remaining issues are not particularly close to being resolved. “Basically we’re stuck at the moment,” he said……

Pentagon Bracing for Possibility Congress Relies on Full-Year CR


Defense Communities 360 © September 17, 2015

While remaining hopeful that lawmakers reach a budget agreement raising the spending caps for defense and non-defense agencies, Deputy Defense Secretary Robert Work also is bracing for the potential that DOD is forced to operate under a continuing resolution (CR) for all of fiscal 2016. It’s not an outcome Work looks forward to, though, as a full-year CR would simply extend funding levels from FY 2015, which would fall well short of the department’s current spending needs. It also would greatly restrict defense officials’ flexibility by blocking new start weapons and construction projects, interfere with multi-year procurement programs and cast doubt on funding levels for the next fiscal year, reported CQ Roll Call……

U.S. budget woes send 'wrong message' to potential foes: Defense Secretary

http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/09/17/us-usa-military-budget-idUSKCN0RH03020150917

Reuters © September 17, 2015
U.S. Defense Secretary Ash Carter on Wednesday warned that continued uncertainty about U.S. military spending levels would send "the wrong message at the wrong time" when Russia and China are rapidly advancing their technologies. Carter told the annual meeting of the Air Force Association that failure by the U.S. Congress to pass a budget before the end of the fiscal year on Sept. 30 could trigger a return to difficult spending cuts and a $38 billion shortfall in funds needed for new weapons, training and operations. The Pentagon has already made many tough choices and trade-offs about the size of its armed forces, new capabilities and readiness levels as a result of mandatory budget cuts known as sequestration in recent years, Carter said. But security threats continued to grow around the world, and U.S. forces were now also engaged in a long-term fight against Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, he said…….

**Pentagon Warns of F-35 Cuts Under Full-Year Stopgap Spending**


Bloomberg © September 17, 2015

By Anthony Capaccio

The Pentagon would cut purchases of Lockheed Martin Corp.’s F-35 by a third if the current deadlock over the next year’s U.S. spending ends in a full-year stopgap bill, according to Comptroller Michael McCord. “It would be illegal to buy” more than the 38 stealth fighters being purchased this year, McCord said in an interview. “So there’s 19 planes we are not buying if we are in a full-year” extension of current spending. It was an early warning from the Defense Department on what it considers the worst-case outcome of current federal spending conflicts within Congress and between lawmakers and the White House: Gridlock probably would lead to a short-term “continuing resolution” to keep the government operating when the fiscal year begins on Oct. 1 -- or to reopen it after a brief shutdown…….

Space Coast –

**SpaceX wins new Cape Canaveral launch contracts**


Florida Today © September 14, 2015

By James Dean
SpaceX on Monday announced wins of two contracts to launch Spanish and Saudi communications satellites from Cape Canaveral in 2017 and 2018. A satellite for Hispasat will launch on SpaceX's Falcon 9 rocket, launched from pad 40 at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station. Saudi Arabia's Arabsat 6A will launch on a Falcon Heavy rocket flying from pad 39A at Kennedy Space Center. "We are pleased to add these additional launches to our manifest," SpaceX President and Chief Operating Officer Gwynne Shotwell said in a press release. "The diversity of our missions and customers represents a strong endorsement of our capabilities and reflects SpaceX’s efforts to provide a breadth of launch services to our growing customer base."………..

MacDill AFB –

One drone flew close to MacDill jet, another struck near fence


Tampa Tribune © September 14, 2015

By Howard Altman

A drone flew within 20 feet of an Air Force KC-135 in April as the tanker approached MacDill Air Force Base — one of two recent incidents involving drones and MacDill and among several involving Tampa-area airports, according to a Federal Aviation Administration database. The database was used in an analysis released today by a drone hobbyist group to counter the portrayal of the unmanned aerial systems as air traffic hazards. The incident involving the quadcopter drone and the KC-135 aerial refueling tanker posed no danger to crew or aircraft, said Tech. Sgt. Ali Rose, a spokeswoman for the 6th Air Mobility Wing at MacDill. The other MacDill incident involved a drone crash reported by air traffic controllers near a base perimeter fence. There was no property damage, according to FAA data…..

Could more cuts be coming to MacDill?


Tampa Tribune © September 16, 2015

By Howard Altman
The Pentagon wants military headquarters like U.S. Central Command and U.S. Special Operations Command, both based at MacDill Air Force Base, to cut personnel. But what that means in Tampa is hard to say. Centcom officials would only say they have reduced their headquarters budget by nearly 35 percent, to $485 million from $744 million two years ago. Socom officials say that since that last round of cuts were ordered by then-Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel in 2013, it has cut about 26 percent of the 1,000 military and civilian positions on its core headquarters staff. On Aug. 26, Assistant Defense Secretary Robert Work issued a memo calling for cuts to military headquarters, including Centcom and Socom. In his memo, Work ordered a 25 percent budget reduction in funding for all military headquarters, from the Office of Secretary of Defense, to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to the combatant commands like Centcom and Socom. The cuts, he said, are “without regard” to congressional action and will cover a period from October 2016 to September 2020.

Eglin AFB –

F-35 could deploy quickly after IOC next year, general says


Air Force Times © September 14, 2015

By Phillip Swarts

The F-35 could deploy overseas as soon as it reaches initial operating capability in 2016, said Maj. Gen. Jeffrey Harrigian, director of the Air Force's F-35 Integration Office. "When you're at CENTCOM, you don't request a specific jet, you request the capability," Harrigian said Monday at the Air Force Association's Air and Space Conference. "When we declare IOC, the F-35 will be on the list of capabilities that will be available." The decision of when F-35s will be deployed lies with Gen. Hawk Carlisle, who leads Air Combat Command, Harrigian said.

When the military needs snow, it goes to Florida

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=I486zADa

AP © September 20, 2015

By MELISSA NELSON-GABRIEL
Dressed in winter parkas, boots and gloves, engineers for Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company used trucks equipped with special sensors, computers and weights as they drove wide circles through a snow-packed field in 10-degree weather on a recent afternoon. Scientists from the Akron, Ohio, based tire maker traveled nearly 1,000 miles in search of the cold and snowy conditions needed for the early September testing. They found what they were looking for in the Florida Panhandle. The test engineers spent their evenings barefoot on the famous white sand beaches that line the Gulf of Mexico and they spent their days driving over crunchy, white snow inside the world's largest climate lab where the temperature was set at an exact 10 degrees

Team Orlando –

Central Florida simulation industry summit seeks to stave off 'threat'


Orlando Sentinel © September 16, 2015

Orange County Mayor Teresa Jacobs says Central Florida finds itself in a high-stakes battle to keep simulation companies from leaving, as states like Alabama and Virginia push their respective sectors. The Florida Simulation Summit — which on Wednesday highlighted the area's simulation contributions to sectors outside of defense, such as entertainment, medicine and education — can serve as an opening salvo meant to display the region's strength. "There is a threat because they have vacant space and military commands could operate less expensively," Jacobs said of simulation communities in other regions. "I'm a strong believer that the best defense is a strong offense and that's what we are doing here." While Jacobs said the area's simulation industry is not in trouble, she said she wanted to show off the diverse companies that have set up shop in Central Florida

Intersection: Central Florida’s Simulation Industry

http://www.wmfe.org/intersection-central-floridas-simulation-industry/52659

WMFE © September 15, 2015

By Matthew Peddie

Computer simulation is a multi billion dollar industry in Central Florida. Tomorrow, thousands of experts head to Orlando for the start of the Florida Simulation Summit. Ahead on Intersection-
we’ll discuss what’s driving simulation and how it’s being used in everything from the defense industry to Disney. Simulators can help trainee air force pilots learn to fly fighter planes without ever leaving the ground; new doctors can practice their skills without the risk of harming a patient, and simulation is now an important part of how theme parks design new rides.

Tyndall AFB –

**U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Issues Proposed Rule on Waters at Tyndall AFB, Florida**
Targeted News Service © September 14, 2015

Summary

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) is proposing to amend its regulations by revising an existing restricted area regulation and establishing a new restricted area along portions of the Tyndall Air Force Base (AFB) facility shoreline that will be activated on a temporary basis. The duration of temporary restricted area activations will be limited to those periods where it is warranted or required by specific and credible security threats and will be inactive at all other times. The restricted area will be partitioned using 23 pairs of coordinates to facilitate quick geographic recognition. Tyndall AFB is surrounded on three sides by water with approximately 129 miles of unprotected coastline. This includes several areas where the lack of security or lack of restriction on access to these areas leaves Tyndall AFB personnel and resources vulnerable to unauthorized activities. This amendment is necessary to implement an enhanced threat security plan for Tyndall AFB which will allow temporary activation of one or more portions of the restricted area as necessary to provide the appropriate level of security required to address the specific and credible threat triggering the need for activation.

Comment period opens for Tyndall waterway proposal


News Herald © September 16, 2015

By Valerie Garman

A proposal that would give Tyndall Air Force Base the ability to temporarily restrict waterways during a security threat is now available for public comment in the Federal Register. While the original proposal, first published in 2013, was met with backlash from local boater’s rights advocates, a revised version published Monday incorporates changes drawn from a series of town hall meetings held as a result of the outcry. “We’ve reviewed the new waterways proposal and we are very, very thankful to Tyndall,” said Stephanie Somerset, who heads the
nonprofit citizens group Friends of Shell Island. —Tyndall listened to a lot of the input they were
given and made some significant changes.”

NSA Panama City –

**Take a Dive into a Day at NSA Panama City's Dive School**

http://www.wjhg.com/home/headlines/Take-a-Dive-into-a-Day-at-NSA-Panama-Citys-Dive-School-328109941.html

WJHG © September 17, 2015

By: Brianna DiPilato

"The sea is very treacherous, it doesn't care if you're man, woman, black, white or whatever, it
will kill you just the same. So we make sure these students are ready," Commanding Officer of
the Naval Diving and Salvage Center, Commander Hung Cao said. Take one step up the stairs of
the Naval Diving and Salvage Training Center, and you won't know what way to look first. At
any given time about 1,300 students are learning how to dive and how to survive. Naval Support
Activity Panama City trains members from all five branches of the military. On a typical day,
you'll see members of the Air Force special tactics team tackle combat diving on the pool deck.
Meanwhile, one floor up, a Navy explosive ordinance class trains in the base's state of the art
training pool. Across the building, members of the Coast Guard, Navy and Army are working
together……..

NAS Pensacola –

**Security posture heightened at Pensacola NAS**


Pensacola News-Journal © September 17, 2015

By Marketta Davis
Those planning to visit the National Naval Aviation Museum, climb the Pensacola Lighthouse or watch the Blue Angels will need to set aside extra time to get on base as heightened security measures have been put in place. Pensacola Naval Air Station’s gate security has implemented a 100-percent I.D. check for all those boarding the installation, which has resulted in heavier traffic conditions over the past few weeks and unexpected delays for visitors unaware of the tighter procedures. Folks attending the Blue Angels Homecoming Show Nov. 6 and 7 should also expect stringent security measures because there will be no special accommodations made for the show, said Patrick Nichols, Pensacola Naval Air Station public affairs………

Florida National Guard –

CPO selectees come together on obstacle course


Florida Times-Union © September 16, 2015
By ASC(AW/SW) Justo Valverde and AZC(AW/SW) Marilyn Buford

On Aug. 28, Navy chief petty officer selectees from NAS Jacksonville, NS Mayport, and NRD Miami gathered at Camp Blanding Joint Training Center for what would be one of the most rewarding physical and mental challenges that they had to face during the entire CPO 365 Phase II. The morning started at 5 a.m. with the selectees preparation of an enjoyable breakfast that was offered to all chief petty officers – both active duty and retired – that had come to support the event. By 8 a.m. the different teams of selectees fell in to formation to recite the Sailor’s creed along with all the genuine CPOs. Soon after, several teams in formation were given the command by the genuine CPO in Charge to start marching toward the woods, where they would have to pick the equipment that would help them to succeed in every one of the challenges that they would face………..

Army Chief to Reopen Debate on Aviation Restructuring

http://www.nationaldefensemagazine.org/blog/Lists/Posts/Post.aspx?List=7e996cd7-cbb4-4018-baf8-8825eada7aa2&ID=1960&RootFolder=%2Fblog%2FLists%2FPosts

National Defense Magazine © September 16, 2015
By Sandra I. Erwin
The Army’s controversial plan to remove combat helicopters from the National Guard as part of a larger cost-cutting effort is nowhere close to a done deal. The proposal was unveiled by Army leaders in 2013 and billed as a painful but financially necessary move in order to save $12 billion over the next decade. Since day one, though, the plan became a lightning rod and has created a deep rift between the Army leadership and the politically well-connected Army National Guard. So it was no surprise when the new Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. Mark A. Milley got the question last week following a keynote speech at the annual conference of the National Guard Association of the United States in Nashville, Tennessee. “I have to take a hard look at it,” Milley said of the aviation restructuring. It would have been tempting to pander to the audience and promise to reverse the decision, Milley said, but cautioned that he is not ready to make a final ruling. He assured the crowd that he will withhold judgment until he has a chance to review a blue-ribbon commission report on the subject early next year………

Patrick AFB –

**Fire suppression foam activates in Patrick AFB hangar**


Florida Today © September 16, 2015

By J.D. Gallop

Investigators are trying to determine what set off a fire suppression system today that quickly filled a Patrick Air Force Base hangar housing two HH-60G Pavehawk helicopters. Officials with the 920th Rescue Wing were working to see if the military equipment sustained any damage as a result of the heavy foam that was activated and sprayed into the hangar. The incident happened about 10 a.m. after the fire suppression unit went off in the maintenance hangar used to store and repair the multi-million dollar helicopters, typically used in both rescue and military operations. The foam — used to smother flames in a fire — is made of a highly expansive chemical detergent that thickens when activated and can be sensitive on the skin for some people. Officials also said there was no immediate ecological impact……..

**Air Force welcomes commercial space customer Blue Origin to Launch Complex 36**
The 45th Space Wing expanded commercial space launch operations by welcoming Blue Origin to the Eastern Range during a media event held at Space Launch Complex 36 at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, Florida, Sept. 15, 2015. During the Blue Origin event, Jeff Bezos, founder of Blue Origin and Amazon.com CEO, announced his intent to build rockets on the Space Coast and launch them from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station. The company has been collaborating with the 45th Space Wing, Space Florida and other agencies to construct a manufacturing facility in Exploration Park near the Kennedy Space Center and then launch rockets from the Air Force station as soon as 2019……..

Defense Industry –

**Industry to Congress: Make a Budget Deal**


With 15 days left in September for Congress to reach a budget agreement, five powerful military trade associations signed a letter urging congressional leadership to avoid a government shutdown or an extended continuing resolution "trap." The five organizations are calling for a bipartisan, multiyear deal, of the sort crafted in 2013 by Rep. Paul Ryan, R-Wis., and Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., which temporarily lifted spending caps for two years. The letter accused Congress of playing "the game of budget chicken," quoting recent remarks by Defense Secretary Ash Carter. "We had hoped that meaningful negotiations would already be underway, but the media has reported little progress," the letter, dated Sept. 14, said. "Members of Congress have increasingly alluded to the possibility of an extended, or even a yearlong [continuing resolution]."……..
TF members --

1. **Next Task Force Meeting in Tallahassee** – The next meeting of the Florida Defense Support Task Force will be on Thursday, November 19, 2015 at the **Doubletree by Hilton – 101 S. Adams St., Tallahassee FL.** The meeting will begin at 9:00 AM.

2. **Attachment** – Notes from bi-weekly TPG conference call.

Regards, BG.

**Bruce Grant**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, FLORIDA DEFENSE SUPPORT TASK FORCE

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Articles of Interest:

**DOD Budget–**

**Senate Maneuvers to Avoid Shutdown**


Defense News © September 22, 2015
By Joe Gould

US senators are poised to consider a stop-gap funding bill that keeps the federal government running through Dec. 11 and strips funding from Planned Parenthood — expected to set the stage for a more viable bill later this week. The $1.017 trillion measure conforms to spending caps ordered in the 2011 Budget Control Act, but adds $74.7 billion for defense through the Overseas Contingency Operations account, which is exempt from the caps. The OCO amount is roughly $13 billion more than the president's budget request.

McCain Vows One Continuing Resolution Only, Then It’s Budget Deal or Bust

http://www.defenseone.com/politics/2015/09/mccain-vows-one-continuing-resolution-only-then-its-budget-deal-or-bust/121688/?oref=d-river

Defense One © September 22, 2015

By Molly O'Toole

As yet another Senate vote failed to move the military spending bill along on Tuesday, several senators signaled that the Republican majority would soon announce a short-term continuing resolution to keep the government running. But Arizona Republican Sen. John McCain is vowing to keep a temporary CR from becoming another year-long budgetary straitjacket. Prodding his party’s Senate leadership to come up with a way to get rid of the four-year-old budget caps, the Armed Services chairman said he would support one CR — and no more. And he said he is talking to other senators about standing with him.

CR Likely to Advance First in Senate

http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/cr-likely-to-advance-first-in-senate/?utm_source=dc360&utm_campaign=625062d07f-RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_04f8f45e8-625062d07f-55784537&ct=t%28RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN%29#

Defense Communities 360 © September 22, 2015

Action on a continuing resolution (CR) needed to avert a government shutdown on Oct. 1 likely will begin in the Senate this week, according to congressional aides. With time quickly running out before the start of fiscal 2016, letting the Senate take the lead should ensure procedural delays don’t stop a CR from advancing, reports CQ. House leaders last week adopted rules allowing that chamber to move more quickly on a stopgap measure. The CR introduced in the Senate could include language to eliminate federal funding for Planned Parenthood and, if so, it
almost certainly would be blocked from going to the floor. The chamber then could take up a stopgap without the defunding language, with approval possibly coming over the weekend. The House then could approve the measure next week. The sequence of events could change at any point, however, CQ noted…………

**Shutdown looms but Congress has plenty of distractions**


Military Times © September 21, 2015

By Leo Shane III

Congress has only seven working days left to avoid a government shutdown, and a host of distractions in coming days will make that work even more difficult. Despite the looming deadline, work on budget problems will all but shut down for two days this week. Congress will break from work Tuesday night for the start of Yom Kippur, and return to work Thursday morning to hear an address from Pope Francis. Both events threaten to tighten an already hectic schedule for budget negotiators, who must reach agreement on at least a continuing resolution by midnight on Sept. 30 to keep federal programs funded, up and running into the new fiscal year........

**Pentagon moves into uncharted waters**


The Hill © September 23, 2015

By Kristina Wong

The Department of Defense is bracing for the possibility of operating under an emergency spending measure for the next fiscal year, something it has never before been asked to do. While lawmakers only intend for their stopgap funding measure — known as a continuing resolution (CR) — to last through mid-December, the Army is bracing for the possibility that funding is eventually put on auto-pilot for a whole year, according to official documents obtained by The Hill. A yearlong CR would be unprecedented for the Department of Defense, but is one of two likely scenarios for fiscal 2016, budget experts say. Pentagon budget officials are "starting to realize that a full year CR is a real possibility," said Todd Harrison, director of defense budget analysis and senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. "It's a real
possibility this year because we've got a budget stalemate in Congress and between Congress and the administration, and both camps are pretty firmly dug into their trenches," he said. 

Showdown over government shutdown set for next week


Military Times © September 24, 2015

By Leo Shane III

Congress wants a budget deal to fund government operations through late 2016, is working on a deal to keep programs running until December, but worries it may not have any deal that will last past Oct. 1. With a few dozen hours left before a possible government shutdown, Senate lawmakers on Thursday advanced plans for a straightforward continuing resolution that would extend federal spending at fiscal 2016 levels until Dec. 11, hopefully giving political leaders a few more weeks to reach a long-term budget deal. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., repeatedly has promised to avoid a shutdown, even in the face of what he considers stonewalling by Senate Democrats.

Path Appears to Open up for Congress to Approve ‘Clean’ CR

http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/path-appears-to-open-up-for-congress-to-approve-clean-cr/?utm_source=dc360&utm_campaign=58921f9450-RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_04f8f45e8-58921f9450-55784537&ct=t%28RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN%29#

Defense Communities 360 © September 25, 2015

Republican leaders in both the House and Senate appear to have settled on strategies to clear a continuing resolution (CR) that does not strike funding for Planned Parenthood, and can clear both chambers and gain President Obama’s signature before the new fiscal year starts Oct. 1. In the Senate, Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) scheduled a procedural vote for Monday on a stopgap measure lasting through Dec. 11 that does not target the women’s health group. McConnell’s action follows Thursday’s 47-52 vote by the Senate blocking a CR defunding Planned Parenthood from advancing to the floor. Sixty votes were needed to advance the measure. The timeline would leave House Republicans only a short amount of time to act prior to the start of fiscal 2016. The main hurdle for the Senate would be sidestepping a delaying maneuver by Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas), who has pledged to use all procedural tools available to stop a CR that includes funding for Planned Parenthood from advancing.
Senate Republicans Open to Budget Deal to Lift Spending Caps

With much of Capitol Hill focused on averting a government shutdown next Thursday, Senate Republicans say it is likely Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) will be willing to negotiate increases in the Budget Control Act caps on defense and non-defense spending as part of a year-end deal that also incorporates the temporary and permanent extension of tax breaks and, possibly, extends the nation’s debt ceiling. —You never know. Miracles sometimes happen at the end of the year,” Orrin Hatch (R-Utah), chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, said this week. Any talks on relaxing the spending caps or other year-end business will wait, however, until lawmakers complete work on a continuing resolution to fund the government starting Oct. 1, reported CQ........

Defense Bill Talks Drag On

The House and Senate Armed Services committees are still engaged in negotiations to hash out a compromise version of the fiscal 2016 defense authorization bill as an agreement on a handful of issues has proven unattainable to date. —No question we’re close,” House Armed Services Chairman Mac Thornberry (R-Texas) told CQ. Thornberry said he has remained in contact with his Senate counterpart, John McCain (R-Ariz.). —I mean, we could be done anytime, but we’re not,” he said. Military compensation, including increases in Tricare co-pays and retirement benefits, has been one of the thorniest issues so far........

Air Force Could Request Continuing Resolution Waivers for Top Programs

By Jon Harper
The Air Force might seek relief from funding restrictions that would affect the KC-46 tanker and F-35 Joint Strike Fighter programs if Congress passes an extended continuing resolution to keep the federal government open, a high-ranking service official said. Lawmakers are expected to pass a CR before the end of the fiscal year on Sept. 30 to keep the government running as the budget impasse in Washington, D.C. drags on. Defense officials and analysts are concerned that Congress will continue to kick the can down the road and use continuing resolutions to fund the Pentagon for the remainder of fiscal year 2016. Lt. Gen. Arnold Bunch, military deputy to the assistant secretary of the Air Force for acquisition, warned about the consequences of a year-long CR.

Boehner News Paves Way for Short-Term CR to Advance

A government shutdown starting Thursday appears to have been averted following last week’s surprising announcement by House Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio) that he would step down next month. Boehner told the GOP conference he plans to put the “clean” continuing resolution (CR) now moving in the Senate on the House floor early this week. Several members of the Freedom Caucus, the conservative group that led the revolt against Boehner’s leadership, said they now will support the stopgap without insisting it bar funding for Planned Parenthood.

MacDill AFB –

Socom conference delves into partnerships of extremists, criminals

By Howard Altman

What do Hizballah, an international crime syndicate called “D-Company,” and global drug cartels have in common? Finding the answer to that question, and ways to stop the interaction
between violent extremists and criminal enterprises, is the goal of a conference taking place this week at U.S. Special Operations Command’s headquarters at MacDill Air Force Base. Socom is on the tip of the Pentagon’s spear for tracking violent extremist financing, working with the FBI, the Department of Treasury and other organizations. The command’s annual Counter Threat Finance Working Group meeting is bringing together about 100 experts from the private sector, law enforcement, military and organizations like the FBI to help develop a “comprehensive approach for disrupting Transnational Organized Crime networks,” said Air Force Capt. Brian J. Wagner, a Socom spokesman………

**Budget impasse threatens MacDill AFB construction projects**


Tampa Tribune © September 24, 2015

By Howard Altman

Two military construction projects slated for MacDill Air Force Base, worth nearly $100 million, could become collateral damage in a defense budget battle between the White House and Congress, a defense budget expert says. With the Obama administration and Congress unable to agree on a defense budget, the Pentagon may have to operate through December under an emergency spending plan called a continuing resolution. But the budgetary intransigence may mean the emergency measure lasts through the entire 2016 fiscal year, which begins Oct. 1, said Todd Harrison, director of defense budget analysis at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. “That is unprecedented,” Harrison said. And it would mean projects anticipated for MacDill could be put on hold………

Hurlburt Field –

**Hurlburt cuts ribbon on first new house**


Pensacola News Journal © September 25, 2015

By Rod Duren
The Air Force will hold a ribbon cutting ceremony Tuesday for the first new house within a 404-unit neighborhood being built on Hurlburt Field under a national military privatization contract with Corvias Military Living. The new homes at the Mary Esther base were the first to be constructed by Corvias under the Air Force’s Continental Group, a collection of six bases across the country that also includes Eglin Air Force Base. During the next five years of development, Corvias will demolish all existing homes on base and replace them with modern units featuring added amenities and views of the Gulf of Mexico. The houses within Osprey Landing are the first new homes constructed at Hurlburt Field since 1996, according to a CML news release……..

NAS Jacksonville –

**NAS Jacksonville runway face-lift underway**


News4Jax © September 21, 2015

By Crystal Moyer

A $50 million project is underway to renovate and upgrade the runway at Naval Air Station Jacksonville. It's the first time the runway has had a major overhaul in nearly 50 years. The renovations include a new 1,000-foot overrun pavement added to the existing runway, along with upgrades to the taxiways and new airfield lighting. "It's critical. The concrete-capped ends on both sides of the runway were cracking and causing foreign-object damage for the aircraft," NAS Jax commanding officer Howard Wanamaker said. It is a very complex and complicated project and as you can see behind me, the scope of it is enormous." Workers are currently milling 20 tons of concrete, which will be recycled and put back into the new runway……..

NS Mayport –

**BAE Systems to lay off 200 in Jacksonville**


Florida Times-Union © September 21, 2015

By Roger Bull
BAE Systems will lay off about 200 people in Jacksonville, the company announced Monday. The company employs about 800 people at two locations here: A shipbuilding/repair facility on Heckscher Drive and a repair yard at Mayport Naval Station. The company is also laying off 650 of the 1,500 employees at its Newport News, Va., facility. The layoffs will begin next month and continue through the end of the year, said Karl Johnson, BAE spokesman. “It’s really a matter of eliminating jobs and then determining who best fits the jobs that remain,” he said. He described the jobs as high-skilled and high-paying. Johnson said the company is experiencing a decline in its commercial work at Heckscher Drive and its Navy work in Mayport, but that the Heckscher yard is driving the layoffs……

**Delay in Navy hospital ship stop at Mayport following six-month deployment in the Caribbean is weather related**


Florida Times-Union © September 23, 2015

By Dana Treen

The arrival of the USNS Comfort has been delayed until Friday, according to the Navy. The delay is weather-related, Mayport Naval Station spokesman Bill Austin said and may also be a factor in Friday’s schedule, he said. A six-month deployment on board the Navy hospital ship USNS Comfort will end Thursday for about 100 military and civilian personnel associated with Mayport Naval Station during a one-day stop at the base. About another 900 personnel will continue to Norfolk, Va., completing their mission Friday. They provided medical care for about 122,000 patients during an 11-nation Caribbean tour, the Navy said. The Comfort, one of two hospital ships operated by the Navy, spent time in Columbia, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Haiti, Jamaica and Nicaragua among the stops………

**USNS Comfort returns to Mayport**


News4Jax © September 25, 2015

By Ashley Mitchem

More than 100 U.S. military and civilian personnel returned home to their families Friday at Mayport after a six-month deployment. One of those returning was Lt. Roberto Nieto. “Being away for six months and then having this welcome is extremely amazing,” Nieto said. His son,
Facundo, was waiting for him. “I'm glad my dad is home. He'll get to spend time with me,” Facundo said. The USNS Comfort hospital ship is one of just two in the entire country……

Avon Park Air Force Range –

**Reactivated into service**


Highlands Today © September 23, 2015

By Paul Catala

It was a direct and dignified ceremony marking a significant achievement for the Avon Park Air Force Range and those responsible for maintaining its prominence into the future. Inside Building 77 at the Avon Park Air Force Range Tuesday, the 598th Range Squadron Activation Ceremony was held, marking the squadron’s detachment from Moody Air Force Base just northeast of Valdosta, Georgia, and into a full-fledged squadron of its own. The 598th Squadron was inactivated Jan. 6, 1946, at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey. The gathering was also significant as an “Assumption of Command” event was also held and the incoming commander, Lt. Col. Kevin Beeker, officially took over duties during an the ceremony led by base presiding official Col. Timothy Sumja, Moody AFB 23rd Fighter Group commander. ……

NAS Whiting Field –

**Millions sought from state for Santa Rosa projects**


Pensacola News-Journal © September 23, 2015

By Kaycee Lagarde

Whiting Aviation Park, a new county courthouse, Navarre Beach renourishment and a Riverwalk expansion in the city of Milton are again on the list of projects local governments are hopeful
will receive state funding next year — many of which didn’t make the cut during the 2015 legislative session. As state representatives for Santa Rosa County prepare to enter another legislative session, local officials and residents had the opportunity to bring their requests before Sen. Greg Evers and state Reps. Doug Broxson and Mike Hill Tuesday evening at the Santa Rosa County Legislative Delegation public hearing, to be considered during the upcoming session in January. Requests in Santa Rosa County will be brought before committees and prioritized along with those from throughout the state, Broxson said, with funding to be determined at the end of the session in February or March………..

Santa Rosa considering restructure


By Kaycee Lagarde

As Santa Rosa County braces for several leadership changes coming by the end of the year, the county is exploring an organizational restructure of its grants department in hopes of maintaining a competitive edge for future funding opportunities. With nearly $30 million in RESTORE funding expected to be available to Santa Rosa County in the coming years, on top of millions of dollars in state and federal grants, the restructure was proposed by Commissioner Lane Lynchard Thursday as a step to ensure the county takes full advantage of the available funds. Led by Grants and Special Projects Director Sheila Fitzgerald, the grants department is currently responsible for a broad range of tasks, including federal and state grant applications for parks and recreation projects, flood mitigation improvements and military-related land acquisition at Whiting Field. The department also oversees disaster recovery and the county's local mitigation strategy………..

Other Items of Interest –

Arkansas Governor Establishes Panel to Promote State’s Military Installations

http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/arkansas-governor-establishes-panel-to-promote-states-military-installations/?utm_source=dc360&utm_campaign=625062d07f-RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_04f8ff45e8-625062d07f-55784537&ct=1%28RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN%29#

Defense Communities 360 © September 22, 2015
Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson (R) on Monday created a committee to support and promote the state’s military installations and related economic development interests. The Governor’s Military Affairs Committee will have four primary goals:

- grow and protect the state’s military installations and their missions;
- advocate at state and federal levels on behalf of state and local economic development interests;
- position Arkansas as a priority state in the national defense plan; and
- appoint a public-private partnership steering committee to accomplish short-term and organizational goals.

Hutchinson committed $400,000 to establish the statewide organization and commission an economic impact analysis. “The nation’s military presence in Arkansas through our bases and our defense contractors plays a vital role, not only in the defense of our country, but also in the economic stability of our state,” the governor said at a press conference at Camp Robinson in North Little Rock. “We have several groups around the state who have an interest in seeing our military prosper, and this proactive initiative will allow us to combine our strengths and pursue common objectives and opportunities,” he said………

Editorial: 6 issues for new CNO

http://www.navytimes.com/story/opinion/2015/09/26/editorial-6-issues-new-cno/72803988/?source=nletter-%%__AdditionalEmailAttribute1%%

Navy Times © September 26, 2015

The new chief of naval operations takes over a force that is trying to reset after years of straining optempo. Here are six issues Adm. John Richardson needs to address to improve quality of life for sailors: Improve career opportunities. Pulling all the personnel strings necessary to ensure advancements and career opportunities remain robust in all ratings and specialties has to be one of the most difficult jobs on the planet. But few things are more important to maintaining morale, readiness and mission. Richardson must maximize resources dedicated to this task, offer re-up bonuses as widely as possible and recruit and retain the best talent, from wrench turners to cyber specialists………
October 5, 2015 – FDSTF Update

TF members --

1. **Next Task Force Meeting in Tallahassee** – The next meeting of the Florida Defense Support Task Force will be on Thursday, November 19, 2015 at the **Doubletree by Hilton – 101 S. Adams St., Tallahassee FL**. The meeting will begin at 9:00 AM.

2. **Attachments:**

   - TPG monthly report
   - 2015 FL Military Friendly Guide – Bookmarked/Searchable version (This version will be posted to the Task Force web site this week)

Regards, BG.

Bruce Grant
Executive Director, Florida Defense Support Task Force

**Articles of Interest:**

BRAC –
Compromise Authorization Bill Calls for Excess Capacity Study

http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/compromise-authorization-bill-calls-for-excess-capacity-study/?utm_source=dc360&utm_campaign=56eaa9d36a-RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_04f8f45e8-56eaa9d36a-55784537&ct=t%28RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN%29#

Defense Communities 360 © September 30, 2015

The Defense Department would be required to prepare force structure plans and an infrastructure assessment that could be used to determine the level of excess capacity in DOD, according to the conference report for the fiscal 2016 defense authorization bill released Tuesday. The bill language does not directly link the analysis to a justification for a new BRAC round, but a summary acknowledges that a new capacity study is needed in light of the department’s repeated requests to hold a new round of base closures. —The conferees are mindful of DOD concerns that excess basing capacity is a financial drag on the department,” according to a summary from the House Armed Services Committee……..

FDSTF –

Rick Scott Highlights Defense's Important Role in Florida's Economy

http://www.sunshinestatenews.com/blog/rick-scott-highlights-defenses-important-role-floridas-economy

Sunshine State News © October 2, 2015

Gov. Rick Scott showcased a report from Enterprise Florida and CareerSource Florida which showed the defense industry added $79.8 billion--9.5 percent of the state’s economy--to Florida last year. Scott highlighted the “Economic Impact of Defense Activities in Florida” study which showed the defense industry grew 8.7 percent since 2011 even as the federal government cut defense spending. —Despite declining help from the federal government, Florida’s defense industry employed nearly 775,000 Floridians and had a $79.8 billion impact on our state,” Scott said. —This success includes Enterprise Florida’s work to attract and retain companies like Boeing and Lockheed Martin, both of which have recently announced plans to create hundreds of new jobs for Florida families. Florida’s defense industry helps diversify our economy and ensure jobs are available for the Floridians who need them, which is yet another reason we will work with the Legislature to fully fund Enterprise Florida in the upcoming Legislative Session.”
DOD Budget–

CR Clears Procedural Hurdle in Senate

http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/cr-clears-procedural-hurdle-in-senate/?utm_source=dc360&utm_campaign=e537e7f3e1-RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_04f8ff45e8-e537e7f3e1-55784537&ct=t%28RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN%29#

Defense Communities 360 © September 29, 2015

The Senate is expected to pass a fiscal 2016 continuing resolution (CR) today funding the government for 10 weeks, after the chamber on Monday voted to limit debate on the measure. The procedural vote keeps the CR on track to go to the House on Wednesday, the last day before funding for the federal government runs out. The House is expected to adopt the bill, even though it fails to strip Planned Parenthood of federal funding. The CR would fund the federal government through Dec. 11 at current fiscal 2015 spending levels. For the Pentagon, that means the department could spend money at an annual rate of about $560 billion, including funding in its overseas contingency operations account……

Short-Term Relief from Boehner Resignation Unlikely to Translate into Long-Term Budget Deal


Defense Communities 360 © September 29, 2015

House Speaker John Boehner’s surprise announcement that he would retire next month appears to have averted the possibility of a government shutdown this week, but it may have ended the chances for a bipartisan deal to relax the statutory spending caps and advance a fiscal 2016 omnibus spending bill. The end result could be a full-year continuing resolution. With hard-line conservatives in the House emboldened by Boehner’s departure, the new speaker almost certainly will find it more difficult to negotiate a bipartisan budget agreement that loosens the caps, reports CQ. A new House leader could be forced to make concessions to conservatives, limiting his ability to negotiate higher spending levels with Democrats……

McCain: Stalled NDAA Reconciled
Defense News © September 29, 2015

By Joe Gould

The stalled 2016 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) has been reconciled by House and Senate conferees, and a conference report is due imminently, Senate Armed Services Chair John McCain confirmed Tuesday. Though McCain did not say negotiations were complete, he said an announcement is expected this afternoon — an expected end to wrangling over differences between the House and Senate versions of the bill, which in recent weeks included military pay and benefits, acquisition reform, and plans to close Guantanamo Bay. House Armed Services Chairman Mac Thornberry told reporters Monday he and McCain had made “good progress” and that he was “very much hopeful” it would be finalized this week, Politico reported……..

Despite House-Senate Compromise, Defense Bill’s Fate Uncertain

Defense Communities 360 © September 30, 2015

The leaders of the House and Senate Armed Services committees on Tuesday unveiled a compromise version of the fiscal 2016 defense authorization bill that faces the threat of a presidential veto over its reliance on DOD’s overseas contingency operations (OCO) account to evade the statutory spending caps. The chairmen and ranking members of the two committees said the conference report represented bipartisan agreement on the vast majority of its provisions, yet the panels’ senior Democrats said they would oppose the legislation because it adds $38 billion to the department’s OCO account to cover base operations……..

President Obama Will Veto Defense Policy Bill

Defense News © September 30, 2015
In a dispute with Republicans over how defense would be funded, President Obama plans to veto the 2016 defense policy bill due for a vote in the House on Thursday, a White House spokesman told reporters Wednesday. All but one conference committee Democrat refused to sign the conference report, which reflects a compromise months in the making between House and Senate armed services committees conferees over differences between their two versions of the bill. Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman John McCain, R-Ariz., and House Armed Services Chairman Mac Thornberry, R-Texas, with the ranking Democrats of each committee — Sen. Jack Reed, D-R.I., and Rep. Adam Smith, D-Wash. — announced the report was finalized at a cordial Capitol Hill press conference late Tuesday afternoon. Reed and Smith collaborated with Republicans on the measure, but said they could not support it.

### Congress dodges government shutdown, for now


Military Times © September 30, 2015

By Leo Shane III

Congress narrowly avoided a partial government shutdown Thursday by passing a short-term budget extension with just hours to spare, and over the objections of conservative lawmakers. But lawmakers could be back facing the same issues — and another shutdown threat — in mid-December. A shutdown would have meant a halt to military paychecks, furloughs for defense civilian employees and program cancellations within the Pentagon, along with a host of headaches for other government agencies. Conservatives in the House and Senate had pushed for that option over continued federal funding for Planned Parenthood operations, in light of recent accusations that the organization profits from the sale of aborted fetuses.

### House passes defense bill compromise, despite veto threat

http://www.militarytimes.com/story/military/2015/10/01/ndaa-house-final-vote/73151754/

Military Times © October 1, 2015

By Leo Shane III

House Republicans passed a compromise $612 billion defense authorization bill on Thursday, the first day of the new fiscal year, which includes a pay raise for troops and an overhaul of the military retirement system, over objections from the White House that the measure uses budget gimmicks to avoid fully funding military needs. President Obama has promised to veto the measure if it is approved by the Senate, which could happen as early as next week. Pentagon
leaders have backed that move, arguing that Republican lawmakers' plans to use temporary war funds to get around government-wide spending caps that Congress itself imposed would undermine national security.

Conferees Find Middle Ground on Pentagon Streamlining Initiative

http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/conferees-find-middle-ground-on-pentagon-streamlining-initiative/?utm_source=dc360&utm_campaign=8068713c51-RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_04f8ff45e8-8068713c51-55784537&ct=t%28RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN%29#

Defense Communities 360 © October 4, 2015

The Defense Department would need to achieve $10 billion in savings in its headquarters, administrative and support activities within four years, under the final version of the fiscal 2016 defense authorization bill. Spending on major headquarters activities — which would count toward the $10 billion target — would need to be trimmed by 25 percent by FY 2020, according to the legislation. The language also allows DOD to count savings already realized through an initiative announced in 2013 to lower headquarters spending by 20 percent. The provision represents a compromise between the two chambers’ versions of the annual policy bill. The Senate version called for cutting funding for headquarters and administrative functions for military services, defense agencies, combatant commands, the office of the secretary of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff by 30 percent within four years. The House required DOD to trim its headquarters budgets and personnel by 20 percent over five years.

MacDill AFB –

Tampa eyes Marine training site as possible park


Tampa Tribune © September 27, 2015

BY CHRISTOPHER O’DONNELL

For decades, U.S. Marine Corps Forces Reserve has run drills and practiced landing amphibious vehicles at its training center on Gandy Boulevard. The center, used by the 4th Assault Amphibian Battalion, sits on a 44-acre parcel, almost the last spit of land before the Gandy Bridge and next to a small city-owned preserve. That led Councilman Mike Suarez to wonder if Tampa could combine the parcels to make a new waterfront park. He asked city parks and
recreation staff to investigate whether the Marines would be willing to relocate. The answer may be yes ………

**Kathy Castor says GOP defense bill that violates the sequester could end up hurting MacDill AFB**


Saint Peters Blog © October 1, 2015

By Mitch Perry

The Republican-led House’s approval of a multibillion-dollar defense policy bill could end up being vetoed by President Obama and ultimately hurt MacDill Air Force Base, contends Tampa Bay area Democrat Kathy Castor. But she’s not blaming the president, but the John Boehner-led House. That’s because the $612 billion bill, which will cover new ships, aircraft and pay raises for the military, is being accounted for by violating the so-called “sequester” imposed back in 2011 that puts a cap on domestic and military spending ………

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**Hurlburt Field –**

**New housing opens at Hurlburt**


Walton Sun © September 29, 2015

By DEVON RAVINE

U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. John Campbell, his wife, Nicole, and their sons Lucas and Evan got the first look inside their new home following a short ceremony Tuesday afternoon at Hurlburt Field's Osprey Landing base housing community. The Campbell's home is the first of 145 houses near completion through a housing privatization initiative between the U.S. Air Force and the Corvias Group. Sixty-three of those homes are located in Osprey Landing in Hurlburt's Soundside area while the other 82 are located in the Pine Shadows housing community just west of Hurlburt Field. Military families will move into the new homes as they are finished between now and the end of the year ………
Welsh, Cody visit Hurlburt Field


USAF © October 1, 2015

By Staff Sgt. Melanie Holochwost

Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Welsh III and Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force James A. Cody visited thousands of Air Commandos Sept. 28-30. Their visit included several roundtable discussions, lunch with Airmen and an all call with Hurlburt Field personnel. During the all call, Welsh and Cody thanked everyone for the hard work they do to make the Air Force great. ―You should be so proud of what you do,‖ Cody said. ―Nobody else does what you do.‖ To demonstrate this, Welsh asked all the young Airmen in the hangar to raise their hands and randomly selected Airman 1st Class Charles Swem, a 1st Special Operations Civil Engineer Squadron firefighter, to come forward. Welsh asked, ―Charles, if the building caught on fire, who would be the most important person to save?‖ Slightly uncomfortable, Swem replied, ―You, sir?‖

NAS Jacksonville –

U.S. Navy's new top admiral takes tough questions from 1,200 sailors during first visit to Jacksonville NAS


Florida Times-Union © September 29, 2015

By Dan Scanlan

The questions tossed at the new chief of naval operations Tuesday at Jacksonville Naval Air Station ranged from simple concerns like retirement to serious issues like a government shutdown and ethics. But in only his second All Hands sailor session, since assuming command Aug. 18, Adm. John Richardson spent about 45 minutes answering every question in humid Hangar 117 at Jacksonville’s historic base. Then he asked 1,200 sailors from the station and Kings Bay Naval Submarine Base to join him in a video wishing the U.S. Navy a happy 240th birthday before a Secret Service motorcade took him to a similar meeting at Mayport Naval Station. —They are an educated, smart group and they had a lot of questions and concerns ……
NS Mayport –

Last of Mayport's frigates to be retired


News4Jax © September 28, 2015

By Crystal Moyer

After 30 years of service in the U.S. Navy, the USS Simpson will be decommissioned Tuesday. It's the last of the Oliver Hazard Perry-class frigates, and the 12th and final frigate to be retired at Mayport Naval Station over the past four years. It's going to be missed by those who served aboard it. "It's definitely going to be weird ... bittersweet," Petty Officer 2nd Class Travis Thompkins said. That's how many sailors feel after saying goodbye to what has been their home away from home. "It's exciting in the fact that you're moving on and doing something new, but it's sad at the same time because all these sailors and the crew that you've been around over the last year and a half. (You've) spent more time with them than your own family," said Capt. Casey Roskelly, commanding officer of the Simpson. "It's hard to see people go because they're like family." The USS Simpson, which has provided anti-submarine warfare support and protection of shipping convoys since 1985, has a crew of about 230 sailors……..

CNO/MCPON Visit Mayport, Jacksonville Sailors


Military Spot © September 30, 2015

Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Adm. John Richardson and Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (MCPON) Mike Stevens held an all hands call at both Naval Air Station Jacksonville, Fla. and Naval Station Mayport, Fla. Sept. 29. Richardson opened each visit by first highlighting his four priorities that will guide him and the Navy: integrity and safety, accountability and assessment, creativity and initiative and toughness and resilience. "I think we are probably in one of the most creative times in our Navy," said Richardson. "During my 33 years of service, the times I get to interact with the fleet, to talk to you, you are just bursting with ideas."……..

Navy retires its last modern ship to sink an enemy vessel
The United States Navy decommissioned its last Perry-class frigate, reducing the Navy's number of ships that have sunk an enemy vessel to just one. The end of the Navy's frigates marks a new era of naval warfare where ships are less likely to go to battle in the open sea. The USS Simpson removed its weapons, covered its windows, and on Sept. 29, it lowered its flags. Now, the ship will travel to Philadelphia until a foreign nation buys it. After 30 years of service — including an April 1988 battle when it fired missiles at and sunk an Iranian oil platform and an Iranian Navy vessel — the ship's service came to an end on Sept. 29 with a ceremony at Mayport Naval Station. Now the only Navy ship that has sunk an enemy is the USS Constitution, which did so during the War of 1812……

A natural resources manager that has helped protect a Florida National Guard facility from encroachment and a partnership of federal agencies and conservation groups that has enhanced mission readiness at Fort A.P. Hill in Virginia have received the 2015 Nancy Natoli Élan Award for Innovation in Land Conservation from the U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities. Paul Catlett has helped protect more than 21,000 acres from development that threatened both the training mission at the Army National Guard’s Camp Blanding Joint Training Center and the rich diversity of habitats and wildlife in northeastern Florida, according to a press release. One project protected 1,600 acres of sandhills habitat preferred by the at-risk gopher tortoise, to which gopher tortoises may be relocated from Camp Blanding……

Flagler County rescue team trains with National Guard at Camp Blanding


Daytona Beach News-Journal © September 30, 2015

Members of Flagler County's Fire Rescue Light Technical Rescue Team and an Emergency Management all hazards incident management team recently trained with the Florida National Guard at the Camp Blanding Joint Training Center in Starke. The training, dubbed "Operation Integration," involved statewide deployment of urban search-and-rescue teams from across the state for a unified operation with the Florida National Guard, according to a news release from the county. "This is wonderful training for the members of our Light Technical Rescue Team (a resource within the state of Florida),” Fire Rescue Chief Don Petito said in the release.

Lawmakers Urge Army Commission to Broaden Study Scope

http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/lawmakers-urge-army-commission-to-broaden-study-scope/#

Defense Communities 360 © October 4, 2015

Two Republicans on the House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee have written the National Commission on the Future of the Army out of concern that it has defined the scope of its mission too narrowly. In a letter dated Sept. 30, Reps. Kay Granger (Texas) and Steve Womack (Ark.) said they "have some concerns with the conduct of the commission itself. It seems that the scope and breadth of the commission’s work is narrower than Congress directed. The commission appears to be focused on small, incremental changes rather than comprehensive changes.”

NAS Whiting Field –

NAS Whiting Field Outlying Field to Host F-18 Training


Navarre Press © October 2, 2015
Aircraft evacuating from the Norfolk area will be arriving to Naval Air Station Pensacola today to avoid potentially dangerous weather from Hurricane Joaquin. These East Coast F-18 jets will be performing training flights at Navy Outlying Landing Field (NOLF) Choctaw tonight through Monday evening as they work to complete required training. In order to complete all their training before arriving on the aircraft carrier, they need to use NOLF Choctaw for Fleet Carrier Landing Practice (FCLP). Flights are expected to include both day and evening exercises Friday through Monday.

Naval plane noise upsets residents

http://www.gulfcoastnewstoday.com/area_news/article_6bd9f76e-6913-11e5-9147-6fa996b31f1f.html

Gulf Coast News Today © October 2, 2015

by Cliff McCollum

“Near constant noise” from military air training at Barin Field in Foley brought people from Glenlakes subdivision and military officials together last week in Foley for an information session. Capt. Todd Bahlau, commander of Naval Air Station Whiting Field, said Barin was one of five fields currently being used for training naval pilots. Flight operations from Whiting average over one million per year, more than the 911,000 at Atlanta’s Hartsfield Airport — widely known as the busiest airport in the world……

Patrick AFB –

Soldiers, Families at Risk in Military Housing, At Home and Abroad


ABC News © September 30, 2015

By Lee Ferran

Far from the front lines, American service members and their families could be in danger in their own homes due to hundreds of “deficiencies” discovered in some military housing facilities, according to a recent Defense Department Inspector General report – the fourth report to find a myriad of problems with military living facilities at home and overseas. “We identified 389 deficiencies that could affect the health, safety, and well-being of warfighters and their families,”
says the Sept. 24 IG report, which examined both privately-managed family homes and military-run barracks-style housing at Patrick Air Force Base in Florida, Naval Station Mayport in Florida and the Army’s Fort Gordon in Georgia. A majority of the deficiencies, the report says, resulted from improper installation, insufficient inspection, and inadequate maintenance of housing facilities.” The IG identified 15 deficiencies as “critical” and “requiring immediate action,” which it says the military “promptly addressed”. ……….

Defense Industry –

$612B Defense Bill Says Chiefs Must OK Programs With Overruns


Defense News © September 29, 2015

By Joe Gould

US House and Senate conferees finalized a $612 billion defense policy bill that shifts the balance of power of acquisitions from the Office of the Secretary of Defense toward the service chiefs. The measure, which authorizes and encourages lethal aid to Ukraine, weans the US off of Russian rocket engines, bans torture, and keeps open the Guantanamo Bay detention facility, came after lawmakers in the House and Senate wrapped up negotiations. Among the acquisition reform measures, service chiefs would be required to sign off on programs suffering from cost overruns. The bill also includes a number of troop pay and benefit reform provisions……..

McCain Wins Big With Acquisition Reform

http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/policy-budget/2015/10/04/mccain-wins-big-acquisition-reform/73217188/

Defense News © October 4, 2015

By Aaron Mehta and Joe Gould

With conference finished on the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), it appears that sweeping acquisition reforms spearheaded by Sen. John McCain will become the law of the land.
The bill, reported out of a joint committee Sept. 29, gives service chiefs and secretaries overall responsibility for acquisition programs within the services — a shift away from the Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics (AT&L), which has held milestone decision authority over programs for roughly the past 30 years.

Current DOD Issues –

**Decision looms on women in combat**


Military Times © September 29, 2015

By Andrew Tilghman

Defense Secretary Ash Carter soon may have to mediate a military culture clash between an Army that is prepared to open combat infantry jobs to women and a Marine Corps that may seek an official policy exemption to keep those same jobs limited to men. The service leaders' official recommendations for integrating women into combat jobs — or not — are due on Carter's desk by Wednesday, punctuating a two-year review of the emotionally charged issue. That will give Carter a few months to study the matter before a Jan. 1 deadline for ending all gender-based restrictions or formally granting specific waivers to keep some in place. While the final recommendations have not been publicly released, Army leaders have stated an intent to open all jobs to women, while Marine Corps leaders have signaled plans to ask for an exemption to keep some jobs male-only, potentially tens of thousands of billets in infantry and armor units.

**Pentagon's top Russia official resigns**


Politico © September 29, 2015

By Austin Wright and Philip Ewing

The Pentagon’s top official overseeing military relations with Russia and Ukraine is resigning amid the ongoing debate within the Obama administration over how to respond to Russian moves in Ukraine and Syria. Evelyn Farkas, deputy assistant secretary of defense for Russia, Ukraine and Eurasia, is leaving her post at the end of next month after five years with the Defense Department, a senior defense official confirmed to POLITICO. –She has advised three
secretaries of defense on Russia policy, providing steady counsel on how the U.S. should respond to Russia's aggressive actions and has been deeply involved in securing $244 million in support for Ukraine,” the official said. In addition, Evelyn has brought fresh thinking to Southeast Europe policies — supporting Montenegro’s interest in joining NATO, expanding defense cooperation with Georgia, and increasing multilateral cooperation with the three Caucasus nations.”

US military favors keeping troops in Afghanistan past 2016


Colorado Springs Gazette © September 30, 2015

In a potential major shift in policy, U.S. military commanders want to keep at least a few thousand American troops in Afghanistan beyond 2016, citing a fragile security situation highlighted by the Taliban's capture of the northern city of Kunduz this week as well as recent militant inroads in the south. Keeping any substantial number of troops in Afghanistan beyond next year would mark a sharp departure from President Barack Obama's existing plan, which would leave only an embassy-based security cooperation presence of about 1,000 military personnel by the end of next year. Obama has made it a centerpiece of his second-term foreign policy message that he would end the U.S. war in Afghanistan and get American troops out by the time he left office in January 2017.

Congress to Air Force: Push to Retire A-10 ‘Misguided’

http://www.dodbuzz.com/2015/09/30/congress-to-air-force-push-to-retire-a-10-misguided/

DOD Buzz © September 30, 2015

By Brendan McGarry

U.S. lawmakers again rejected the Air Force’s proposal to retire the A-10 Thunderbolt II attack aircraft, calling the decision “misguided.” Congress on Tuesday agreed to a sweeping $612 billion defense bill, called the Fiscal 2016 National Defense Authorization Act, which sets policy goals and spending targets for the fiscal year beginning Oct. 1. A fact-sheet distributed by the House Armed Services Committee, headed by Rep. William “Mac” Thornberry, a Republican from Texas, references the Air Force’s controversial proposal to divest its fleet of Warthogs, some of which are flying missions in the Middle East as part of Operation Inherent Resolve to target militants affiliated with the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, or ISIS.
Other Items of Interest –

**Pentagon spent $1.6B in Pinellas, $1.5B in Hillsborough**


Tampa Tribune © September 29, 2015

By Howard Altman

When it comes to defense spending, Pinellas and Hillsborough counties ranked in the middle of the top 10 counties in Florida in the fiscal year ending last Sept. 30, a new Pentagon report says. Pinellas County, with $1.6 billion in defense spending, ranked fifth in Florida, according to Defense Spending By State, a report which breaks down where the Department of Defense spends money on personnel and contracting. Hillsborough County, at $1.5 billion, ranked sixth, tied with the Panhandle’s Escambia County. The Pentagon spent more in Orange County than in any of Florida’s 67 counties during the last fiscal year, at $3.7 billion. Hillsborough County, home to MacDill Air Force Base, had the state’s fourth highest number of military personnel with 12,407. That figure includes uniformed and civilian employees. Pinellas County was not on this list……..

**DoD Releases Fiscal Year 2014 Defense Spending by State Report**


Defense.gov © September 30, 2015

The Defense Spending by State Fiscal Year 2014 report examines U.S. defense spending in FY 2014, at the state and local levels, for all 50 states and Washington, D.C. According to the budget of the United States Government, Fiscal Year 2015, national defense spending is expected to decline 28 percent from FY 2011 to 2019 in real terms, after increasing by more than 65 percent from FY 2000 to 2010. Sequestration went into effect in March 2013 and required across-the-board cuts to defense and non-defense programs from FY 2013 to 2021. Over this period, defense spending will be reduced by a total of $454 billion. The impact of these cuts depends in part on the number of defense personnel and amount of defense contract revenue in each state and region. This report highlights factors, such as the regional expenditures from military bases or private contractors, which can be used to evaluate each state's potential exposure to projected declines in defense spending……..
TF members --

1. **Conference Call on Wednesday, October 14, 2015 at Noon** – The Florida Defense Support Task Force will hold a conference call from **12:00 – 1 PM EDT on Wednesday, October 14, 2015**. This conference call is open to the public. The purpose of this call is to address a request from Team Orlando for support as they move forward with plans to acquire additional much-needed office space. As you are aware, the high cost rental office space problem was identified as a risk element in any future BRAC or realignment, and the Task Force has funded a strategic planning effort by the National Center for Simulation (NCS) and the Metro Orlando Defense Task Force (MODTF) to address this issue. The resultant plan was successfully used over the past three years to influence obtaining state resources directed at this issue. Over the last 2 legislative sessions, Team Orlando, led by NCS and University of Central Florida, has received state funding of $28 million for the acquisition of an existing building (Partnership IV) to begin to alleviate the shortage of office space with a goal of removing Team Orlando federal employees from leased office space. By doing so, the cost of occupancy will be reduced by approximately 80%, effectively mitigating this issue. Team Orlando generates almost a $5 billion economic impact in the modeling and simulation industry in Central Florida. This acquisition is currently slated to be presented before the Governor and Cabinet for approval on October 27th. Materials development for this issue will be vetted by Cabinet Aides on October 21st. NCS letter to Task Force Chairman Senator Richter is attached. Also attached is a DRAFT Task Force letter to Governor Scott supporting the acquisition of Partnership IV – should the Task Force decide to support this action.

2. **Call In Numbers for Conference Call** –

   **Call in Number** – 800-501-8979

   **Access Code** – 8784566

3. **November Task Force Meeting in Tallahassee** – The November meeting of the Florida Defense Support Task Force will be on Thursday, November 19, 2015 at the **Doubletree by Hilton – 101 S. Adams St., Tallahassee FL**. The meeting will begin at 9:00 AM.

4. **Attachments:**
Articles of Interest:

BRAC –

**Fayetteville forum: Military communities being asked to do more**

http://www.fayobserver.com/news/local/defense-communities-gather-in-fayetteville/article_fb1057d6-6f36-5e7a-b0e0-c09bc4d0fdc6.html

Fayetteville Observer © October 5, 2015

By Drew Brooks Military editor

With defense spending being squeezed, military communities are being asked to do more to help their neighbors. That was one of several messages from leaders of defense communities across the Southeast who met in Fayetteville on Monday for a forum. The event was aimed at preparing
defense communities for future issues amid today's uncertainty. Talk at the Association of Defense Community's Southeast Regional Forum focused on military spending cuts and the possibility of another round of base realignment and closure, also known as BRAC………

Bring Back BRAC – Permanently

http://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2015/10/06/bring_back_bracpermanently_108547.html

Real Clear Defense © October 6, 2015

By Devon Hill

In recognition of the fact that America’s security environment and military organization would continue to change, the 2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment (BRAC) Commission recommended future closure rounds take place every 8 to 12 years. In 2012, then-Defense Secretary Panetta renewed the BRAC debate, requesting new rounds take place in 2013 and 2015. Since then, Congress has explicitly denied authorization for a new round of base closures. The argument, however, does not simply end with the disapproval of Congress. Pentagon leaders insist on the need for a new BRAC round to save money, realign forces to meet today’s security needs, and divest the Defense Department of excess infrastructure. While the House and Senate versions of the National Defense Authorization Act again deny the Pentagon’s request, and will likely do the same next year, when Congress does finally accept the need for a new BRAC round it should implement the 2005 Commission’s recommendation to make closures a regular process………

DOD Budget–

Senate Moves Defense Policy Bill One Step Closer to Obama’s Veto Pen


Defense One © October 6, 2015

By Molly O'Toole

The Senate has moved the annual defense policy bill one step closer to passage and President Barack Obama’s desk, where he has promised to veto it. But the upper chamber did so with a somewhat surprising amount of Democratic support, indicating the Republican majority has enough votes to override the threatened veto. As the vote trickled by on Tuesday, Sen. Bob Corker, R-Tenn., had told Defense One: “The question is, is there going to be 60 votes.” But the
Senate advanced the fiscal year 2016 bill, known as the NDAA, by a vote of 73 to 26. Twenty-one Democrats voted for the $612 billion bill, despite the Obama administration’s opposition to what they call a “gimmick” ……

**Cutting OCO May Be Solution For NDAA: Kendall**


By Colin Clark

If the National Defense Authorization Act really is vetoed by President Obama, the Pentagon’s top acquisition official thinks slicing out the Overseas Contingency Funding and leaving the rest of the bills as is might work. Frank Kendall, undersecretary for acquisition, technology and logistics, also said that another Continuing Resolution in December covering the all of fiscal 2016 would probably mean serious cuts to procurement, because the Pentagon would first protect operations and readiness money. Kendall, speaking at an event put on by DefenseOne, said this may mean interrupting multi-year contracts, which could cost both contractors and the military substantial amounts. He wouldn’t name them, but Kendall said that he’s drawn up a list of programs they might need to delay or push out until we have more budget certainty……

**Pentagon leaders bracing for budget uncertainty**


By Amber Corrin

The military is having a case of fiscal déjà vu: Amid ongoing discord on Capitol Hill, the threats of a continuing resolution and a repeat round of sequestration is striking fear throughout the Pentagon. Just as passage of the 2016 National Defense Authorization Act teetered on the Senate floor, top Pentagon acquisition officials took the stage a few miles away in Arlington, Virginia, to warn, yet again, of the dangers posed by looming fiscal uncertainty. Speaking Oct. 6 at the State of Defense Acquisition event, the military secretaries overseeing weapons-buying emphasized the damage inflicted by sequestration in 2013, when sweeping budget cuts trimmed 10 percent of spending across the board. This time around could be even worse……
NDAA Passes Senate, Threatened Veto Up Next


Defense News © October 7, 2015

By Joe Gould

The US Senate voted Wednesday to approve the 2016 defense policy bill, but President Obama is expected to veto it because of language supporting a workaround that funds defense using the overseas contingency operations account. The bill creates authorization to spend money on a wide range of acquisition programs across the services, and contains measures meant to provide defensive weapons to Ukraine, overhaul of the military retirement system and reauthorize a host of military pays and benefits. Wednesday’s Senate vote on the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) tallied 70-27. Last week, the House vote fell short of the two-thirds required to override a presidential veto………

Disarray in House GOP Leaves Budget Talks up in the Air


Defense Communities 360 © October 9, 2015

House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy’s (R-Calif.) stunning exit from the race for speaker on Thursday has added a new layer of confusion to bipartisan negotiations to raise the statutory spending caps, raising doubts as to who will represent the House GOP in talks. And with only two months before the continuing resolution (CR) now in place runs out — and even less time before the nation’s debt ceiling needs to be extended — McCarthy’s surprise decision to drop out of the race to replace House Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio) reduces the prospect that Congress will strike a comprehensive deal on either issue. —This is all we needed,” House Appropriations Chair Harold Rogers (R-Ky.) told reporters after hearing the news………

Eglin AFB –

UWF to expand Military and Veterans Resource Center to Fort Walton Beach location
University of West Florida office and classroom space at Eglin Air Force Base will soon relocate to the University’s Fort Walton Beach campus on the Emerald Coast to promote stronger community relations. With UWF Emerald Coast situated almost directly between Eglin AFB and Hurlburt Field, the University plans to expand the services of its Pensacola-based Military and Veterans Resource Center to surrounding communities. The MVRC is committed to serving the educational and training needs of prospective and currently enrolled service members, veterans, their dependents, their survivors and others eligible to receive educational benefits under the various Department of Veteran Affairs programs.

US Southern Command –

SOUTHCOM evaluating how low-cost nanosatellites could provide communications in the challenging terrain of Latin America

By U.S. Southern Command Public Affairs

An Atlas V rocket launched into orbit today with three nanosatellites that U.S. and partner nation forces will evaluate as part of a program to improve communications in the challenging terrain of Latin America. The U.S. Southern Command-sponsored nanosatellites were part of the payload of a United Launch Alliance Atlas 5 rocket launched from Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif. U.S. Southern Command's Technology, Innovation, and Solutions Division is evaluating nanosatellite technologies as part of an effort to evaluate how low-cost space communication capabilities could provide an advantage for troops in the battlefield with information sharing and tactical communications across wide geographic expanses, including remote and densely forested areas. Navy Rear Adm. Scott Jerabek, SOUTHCOM’s Director of Theater Engagement, said the nanosatellites have the potential to solve some of the unique challenges associated with communications in remote areas.
NS Mayport –

**Changing Training One Helo At A Time**


Florida Times-Union © October 7, 2015

By Lt.j.g. Cassandra Caswell

Warships undergo rigorous training in preparation for deployments. Responsible for warships during the Basic Phase training, Afloat Training Group Mayport (ATGM) trains and assesses more than 20 warfare mission areas including Aviation. Large deck aviation capable warships such as amphibious assault ships and aircraft carriers routinely practice damage control evolutions with aircraft shapes for maximum training value. However, cruisers and destroyers (CRUDES) did not have aircraft to train their flight deck crews in case of a crash on deck. As a result, this valuable piece of training was lost to the CRUDES Navy until now. Thanks to the visionary efforts of ATGM’s Mobility Aviation (MOB-A) Team, CRUDES warships and soon littoral combat ships will be able to practice with an actual helicopter on deck……..

**USNS Spearhead Arrives in Mayport to Close Out Southern Partnership Station 2015**


US Navy © October 9, 2015

By ENS Carol McKenzie, U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command/U.S. 4th Fleet Public Affairs

USNS Spearhead (EPF 1) returned to Mayport Oct. 9, after deploying from early June to early October in support of Southern Partnership Station-Joint High Speed Vessel 2015 (SPS-JHSV 15). USNS Spearhead (EPF 1), formerly known as USNS Spearhead (JHSV 1) returned to Mayport to drop off members of the crew before it returns to Norfolk, Virginia, Oct. 12 to complete her four month deployment to the Caribbean, Central and South America. On Sept. 3, 2015, the Secretary of the Navy announced the re-designation of Joint High Speed Vessels to Expeditionary Fast Transports, making USNS Spearhead (JHSV 1) newly designated as USNS Spearhead (EPF 1). Southern Partnership Station is an annual series of U.S. Navy deployments focused on subject matter expert exchanges (SMEEs) with partner nation militaries and security forces in the Caribbean and Central and South America. This year, USNS Spearhead deployed to Colombia, Belize, Guatemala and Honduras……….
Patrick AFB –

Patrick AFB airmen return from Africa deployment


FLORIDA TODAY © October 5, 2015

By R. Norman Moody

A group of reservists from the 920th Rescue Wing returned Sunday night to Patrick Air Force Base from deployment to the Horn of Africa. The 30 pararescue and support personnel spent the last four months as part of Combined Joint Task Force Horn of Africa providing personnel-recovery and humanitarian relief. The Task Force works to help counter extremist organizations and protect American interests in the region. The pararescue airmen from the 920th Rescue Wing left for Africa on May 24 and returned late Sunday. The returning airmen are part of a rotation in and out of Djibouti, serving in the tiny East African nation — squeezed among Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia — in support of U.S. and allied forces operations in the areas around the Horn of Africa. Airmen from the wing have long been a part of rotations to the Horn of Africa.

Asset visibility team assesses Patrick AFB and Cape Canaveral AFS


Patrick AFB © October 6, 2015

by Susan Lawson, Air Force CEC Public Affairs

Assessing over two-million square feet of building space for the Air Force is not an easy task but one that the asset visibility team, or AVT, from the Air Force Civil Engineer Center has readily taken on. A recent assessment at Patrick Air Force Base and Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, both in Florida, is the latest in a list of 21 bases that have received support over the past two years. The AVT plays a critical role in implementation of asset management principles across the Air Force civil engineer enterprise by meeting federal and Department of Defense mandates. The team traveled to the installations, in September, to comply with the 2007 Energy Independence and Security Act, which requires evaluation of 25 percent of high energy consuming facilities annually, and the Energy Conservation Mandate, and Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Installations and Environment 2013 memo, Standardizing
Facility Condition Assessments. The mandate requires all real property assets within the Air Force Real Property Database to utilize BUILDER, PAVER, and the soon-to-be-fielded UTILITIES assessment tools. The mandates apply to active duty, Air Force Reserves, and Air National Guard bases worldwide………..

DOD Issues –

**Obama considering plan to leave significant force in Afghanistan**


Washington Post © October 5, 2015

By Greg Jaffe and Missy Ryan

President Obama is seriously weighing a proposal to keep as many as 5,000 U.S. troops in Afghanistan beyond 2016, according to senior U.S. officials, a move that would end his plans to bring U.S. troops home before he leaves office. The proposal presented in August by Army Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, then-chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, would focus the remaining American force primarily on counterterrorism operations against the Islamic State, al-Qaeda and other direct threats to the United States. Obama has made no final decision on the plan, which was developed before the Taliban captured Kunduz in September; it was the first major city to fall to the Taliban since the war began in 2001………

**Marines unveil new gender-neutral standards for 29 jobs**


Marine Corps Times © October 5, 2015

By Gina Harkins

It could get a whole lot tougher for Marines to make it into more than two dozen ground combat jobs as Corps officials unveil new physical standards that troops must meet before shipping off
to the fleet. Marines who leave boot camp or Officer Candidates School hoping to join infantry, weapons, artillery and mechanized units will now face a host of new requirements before they can graduate from their military occupational specialty schoolhouses, Marine Corps Times has learned. The new rules, which require Marines to prove they can accomplish some of the toughest tasks related to their jobs, are gender-neutral. That means all Marines — male or female — will have to meet the requirements before they're cleared for graduation……..

Other Items of Interest –

DOD Report Chronicles States’ Reliance on Defense Spending
http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/dod-report-chronicles-states-reliance-on-defense-spending/?utm_source=dc360&utm_campaign=78a02363eb-RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_04f8ff45e8-78a02363eb-55784537&ct=t%28RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN%29#
Defense Communities 360 © October 7, 2015

After increasing by more than 65 percent from fiscal 2000 to 2010, defense spending is expected to decline by 28 percent from FY 2011 to 2019 in real terms, according to a new report examining defense spending at the state and local levels in FY 2014. The report highlights factors, such as the regional expenditures from military bases or private contractors, which can be used by state and local officials to assess their region’s vulnerability to projected declines in defense spending. The impact of DOD spending cuts has been uneven across states, as it depends in part on the number of personnel and the amount of contract revenue in each state, according to the report……..

Greater Direction from Congress Needed to Sustain Installations, ADC President Says
http://www.defensecommunities.org/headlines/greater-direction-from-congress-needed-to-sustain-installations-adc-president-says/?utm_source=dc360&utm_campaign=2458e40863-RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_04f8ff45e8-2458e40863-55784537&ct=t%28RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN%29#
Defense Communities 360 © October 8, 2015

Five years of budget turmoil in Washington has harmed military readiness and forced the Pentagon to shrink its force structure, while also threatening the long-term health of its installations. Without greater certainty about future funding levels and explicit direction from
Congress as to how DOD should cope with tight fiscal constraints, defense communities will continue to face heightened challenges as they strive to support the nation’s military installations, ADC President Mike Cooper states in an op-ed published in the Hill. "Our nation’s defense infrastructure — its bases, facilities and training grounds — is feeling the brunt of this indecision and uncertainty. So too are the communities, regions and states that steadfastly support our nation’s military bases and families. They are experiencing the economic hits of falling tax revenues, struggling small businesses and declining home values as departing service members and their families move away,“ Cooper writes……

**Obama Veto Would Prompt Committee to Block DOD Nominees, McCain Warns**


Defense Communities 360 © October 9, 2015

Senate Armed Services Chairman John McCain (R-Ariz.) on Thursday said he would block civilian nominations to the Defense Department from going to the chamber floor for a confirmation vote if President Obama carries out his threat to veto the fiscal 2016 defense authorization bill sent to his desk earlier this week. "They’re not agreeing to what’s necessary to protect and serve the men and women who are serving in the military, so why the hell should we support their civilians to support or work for a failed institution, a failed policy, a failed branch of government?“ McCain said, reported CQ……

**Navy’s Distributed Lethality Will Reshape Fleet**


Breaking Defense © October 9, 2015

By Scott C. Truver

The Navy’s Surface Warfare leaders announced a new warfighting concept, Distributed Lethality (DL) nine months ago at the January 2015 Surface Navy Association symposium in Arlington, Va., and outlined it in the U.S. Naval Institute magazine Proceedings. DL is an innovative concept for how surface, amphibious and combat logistics ships can enhance the Surface Navy’s offensive “punch” in support of the nation’s maritime, military and national security strategies. "Our vision,” Vice Adm. Thomas Rowden, Pacific Fleet commander of naval surface forces, said, "is of naval forces employed in a widely dispersed, often autonomous manner with the ability to hold potential adversaries at risk, at range.”……
The thin line between military and civilian cyber defense


FCW © October 9, 2015

How will military and civilian cyber response teams collaborate in the event of a cyberattack on U.S. critical infrastructure? It's not clear yet, but the maturing U.S. Cyber Command does not currently entertain ideas of going it alone in defense of critical infrastructure. "In every case that we currently imagine, we would do that in support of another government agency," said Lt. Gen. James "Kevin" McLaughlin, the command's deputy, at an Oct. 9 cybersecurity forum at the Center for Strategic and International Studies……..
TF members --

1. **November Task Force Meeting in Tallahassee** – The November meeting of the Florida Defense Support Task Force will be on Thursday, November 19, 2015 at the [Doubletree by Hilton – 101 S. Adams St., Tallahassee FL](https://www.doubletreehotels.com). The meeting will begin at 10:00 AM. The Task Force will meet in closed session from 8:15 – 9:45 AM. DRAFT Agenda attached.

2. **Attachment:**

   - DRAFT Task Force meeting agenda
   - Task Force Letter to Governor Scott supporting Team Orlando

Regards, BG.

**Bruce Grant**  
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Articles of Interest:

BRAC –

**BRAC is Not the Answer, Hampton Roads Congressional Delegation Insists**
When it comes to BRAC, the four Virginia congressmen from the southeastern part of the state are in complete agreement — the military does not need another round of base closures. "We are doing everything we can to make sure that BRAC doesn't occur," Rep. Rob Wittman (R), chairman of the House Armed Services' Readiness Subcommittee, said at a forum last week sponsored by the Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce. "And not just because we don't want a BRAC, because it's not the right time to even introduce the question," he said, reported Inside Business. When bases are closed, "you will not get them back," Wittman said. "And if you do get them back, you will not get them back in the strategic areas that they're located today." ………

DOD Budget–

**Year-Long CR Could Mean Big Cuts To Major Programs, US Army Leaders Say**

By Jennifer Judson

A year-long continuing resolution would spell major cuts to big programs like helicopters and vehicles, two US Army leaders said Tuesday. Congress passed a short-term funding measure in lieu of approving a fiscal year 2016 budget that will end on Dec. 11. The resolution sets the budget at the previous year's levels and if Congress can't agree on a budget, a longer continuing resolution could be coming. "I think my biggest fear is a lot of critical major programs, we really are going to buy a lot less quantity," Heidi Shyu, the Army's acquisition chief said at the Association of the US Army, and this would mean buying half of the AH-64E attack helicopters the Army is planning to buy in 2016 and half of its new-build CH-47F Chinook cargo helicopters………
MacDill AFB –

**MacDill's economic impact on Tampa Bay leaps to $4.74 billion**


Tampa Bay Times © October 14, 2015

By William R. Levesque

The war in Iraq is over and the United States is drawing down operations in Afghanistan. But the economic impact of MacDill Air Force Base has increased by $1.3 billion the past two years, say figures released by base officials Wednesday. MacDill's economic impact on Tampa Bay was a robust $4.74 billion in 2014, with activity on the base creating nearly 25,000 jobs, according to MacDill's host unit, the 6th Air Mobility Wing. That compares to $3.4 billion and 18,000 jobs in 2012. The biggest factor in the $1.3 million hike is an additional $660 million being paid to retirees and their spouses living within 50 miles of Tampa. The rest of the climb is tied to a hike in base payroll and in the total economic value of jobs created by the base……..

Companies irked by how Socom awards contracts


Tampa Tribune © October 18, 2015

By Howard Altman

A series of protests and lawsuits has bogged down a $1.5 billion U.S. Special Operations Command program designed to maximize competition and improve performance of contracts for a broad array of services, training and support. Even before decisions were made about which companies could try to win contracts under the program, administered at Socom headquarters on MacDill Air Force Base, protests had been filed with the Government Accounting Office from bidders unhappy with the process. Additional protests were lodged in August after Socom announced who won the right to bid on work through the new Socom-Wide Mission Support……..

NAS Jacksonville –
NAS Jacksonville celebrates 75 years of service


News4Jax © October 15, 2015

By Crystal Chen

Sailors and airmen spent Thursday morning honoring the past and looking to the future as Naval Air Station Jacksonville celebrated its 75th anniversary as the first naval air base in northeast Florida. Part of the celebration included compiling an unusual time capsule made of an ammunition box. In it, sailors and airmen placed command coins, a history book, badges and other historical items. “We added a commemorative plaque from our inaugural deployment with the P-8 Poseidon through the western Pacific that we just came back from in the spring,” said Cmdr. Joe Levey, executive officer of VP-5 Poseidon. The ceremony was a walk down memory lane for many sailors and airmen at the base……..

Tyndall AFB –

Tyndall AFB pays majority of water bill to the County


My Panhandle © October 15, 2015

By Megan

Tyndall Air Force Base has finally paid off a vast majority of what they owe the county for their water bill after already paying over $300,000. Bay County provides water to all municipalities and Tyndall AFB. Years ago, the county hired an independent business to do a water rate study which showed the need for a major increase. According to the county, Tyndall disputed the amount they were charged and the issue was taken to federal court. Yesterday the county received a second check of $535,000 from Tyndall that will complete a vast majority of what they owe. Commissioner George Gainer says this will allow the county to focus on other areas of the water system. "Whereas this frees up about 800 thousand dollars now we look forward to a
lot more that we can commit to other areas in the water system that we'd like to," Commissioner Gainer said. The County says Tyndall still has some money left to pay but it is a very small amount and the County has no doubt it will get worked out.

**America's F-22 Raptor Stealth Fighter Is a Killer (But it Can Be Defeated)**


The National Interest © October 15, 2015

By Dave Majumdar

The U.S. Air Force has as a tiny fleet of 186 Lockheed Martin F-22 Raptor stealth fighters. That’s all that survived out of 187 production aircraft (195 jets if developmental airframes are included) that were built out of the 750 that were originally planned. Of those 186 remaining Raptors, only 123 are “combat-coded” aircraft with another twenty that are classified as backup aircraft inventory machines. The rest are test and training assets. But even if 186 aircraft remain in the Air Force’s inventory—not all of those fighters are operational. At least two—possibly more—jets are not currently flyable. One test aircraft—tail 91-4006—at Edwards Air Force Base (AFB) in California has avionics that are so old; it’s not worth bothering to fly it anymore. Another aircraft—02-4037—was badly damaged in a belly landing at Tyndall AFB, Fla. It’s going to take at least four years and $98 million to repair the damage. 

**NAS Pensacola –**

**Navy Celebrates 240th Birthday**


WUWF © October 13, 2015

By Dave Dunwoody

To honor the United States Navy’s 240th birthday, an “Eight Bell” ceremony was held Tuesday at all land stations and aboard all ships. Article I of the United States Constitution directs Congress to raise an army as needed – but to maintain and provide for a navy. On October 13, 1775 the Continental Congress voted to outfit two sailing vessels – the Andrew Doria and the Cabot. Their mission: intercept transports of munitions and stores meant for the British army in
Defense Industry –

**Budget Uncertainty Dampens Promising Procurement**


Defense News © October 18, 2015

By Jen Judson

At the Association of the US Army's annual convention last week, the Army affirmed its commitment to several nearer-term vehicle procurement efforts and buying a future helicopter in the 2030s. But while much of industry stressed the service could be moving faster on many of these programs, Army leaders lamented that budget uncertainty is slowing the process. The Army unveiled its combat vehicle modernization strategy at AUSA, which aligns with its operating concept released at the same show last year. The plan, in the near term, is to acquire a new lightweight vehicle for infantry brigade combat teams and increase the lethality of its Stryker fighting vehicles……..

DOD Issues –

**Women Will Likely Have to Register for the Draft, Army Secretary Says**

[http://www.military.com/daily-news/2015/10/12/women-likely-have-register-draft-army-secretary-says.html](http://www.military.com/daily-news/2015/10/12/women-likely-have-register-draft-army-secretary-says.html)

Military.com © October 12, 2015

By Richard Sisk

Women will eventually have to register for the draft if "true and pure equality" is to be realized in the U.S. military, Army Secretary John McHugh said Monday. "If your objective is true and pure equality then you have to look at all aspects" of the roles of women in the military, McHugh
McHugh said draft registration was not a subject to be decided by the services or the Department of Defense, and will ultimately have to be dealt with by Congress. He expected a "pretty emotional debate and discussion." However, as more military occupational specialties are opened to women, the debate on Selective Service System registration was inevitable, McHugh said. "If we find ourselves as a military writ large where men and women have equal opportunity, as I believe we should," he said.

**Obama extends Afghanistan mission into 2017**


Military Times © October 15, 2015

By Andrew Tilghman

President Obama's long dream of concluding the war in Afghanistan before he departs the White House officially ended Thursday with the announcement that the U.S. will leave up to 5,500 troops there into 2017. The announcement came after months of bad news from Afghanistan: The Taliban has scored a series of battlefield victories, the Afghan army's casualties are soaring and there are mounting worries that the Islamic State is gaining a foothold in rural areas. "Afghan forces are still not as strong as they need to be," Obama said in a White House news briefing Thursday morning. "While America's combat mission in Afghanistan may be over, our commitment to Afghanistan and its people endures. As commander in chief, I will not allow Afghanistan to be used as [a] safe haven for terrorists to attack our nation again," Obama said.

**Defense chief asks officers not to discuss women in combat review**


The Hill © October 15, 2015

By Kristina Wong

Defense Secretary Ash Carter is asking military and civilian leaders involved with his pending decision to open all combat jobs to women by January to not discuss the issue without approval. "Until I make the final decision, further public discussion of the [WISR or Women in Service Review] process is neither helpful or prudent," said an Oct. 2 memo signed by Carter and
obtained by The Hill. "External communication by any official within the Department of Defense regarding specific WISR deliberations and deliberative documents must be confidential and approved in advance with the Deputy Secretary of Defense," the memo said.

The WISR, begun in 2013, was intended to give the military services time to study and implement an order by then-Defense Secretary Leon Panetta to open all combat jobs to women by January 2016, or else submit requests to the Defense secretary by Sept. 30 for an exemption………

Women in combat sparking fierce debate within military and beyond


McClatchy © October 15, 2015

By James Rosen

The push for American women to join men on the front lines of combat will take another step forward Friday when the third female candidate graduates from Army Ranger School in ceremonies at Fort Benning, Ga. But the landmark success of the first three women to earn their Ranger tab, along with Defense Secretary Ash Carter’s initiative to increase combat roles for female troops, has set off a new round of gender wars across the country. When Carter visited U.S. sailors last week at Naval Air Station Sigonella in Italy, one of the first questions he fielded came from a Marine who asked why the Pentagon wants to place more women in battlefield infantry ranks. After assuring the Marine that –we’re going to make a data-based decision in all of the services,” Carter said simple math dictates that Pentagon leaders open more combat jobs and other previously closed roles to female troops………..

Other Items of Interest –

McHugh: Army on 'Ragged Edge' of Readiness

http://www.armytimes.com/story/defense/show-daily/ausa/2015/10/12/mchugh-army-ragged-edge-readiness/73816748/

Army Times © October 12, 2015
As the Army tilts on the "ragged edge" of being unable to successfully confront challenges ahead, seen or unseen, the service faces two potential scenarios, said Army Secretary John McHugh at the opening ceremony of the Association of the US Army on Monday. One of those is an Army of power and readiness where enemies respect its capabilities and are deterred by its strength or destroyed by its lethality, McHugh said. "I hope and pray that is the future of our Army. That is the future they deserve." The other is "much darker and much more dangerous, one based on ill-conceived notions of the nature of war, one based on growing discussions in this town that questions the very need for our Army," he said………

Defense Bill Requests Report on New Installations Organization at DOD

With DOD’s newly formed installations and operational energy organization nearing its one-year old birthday, the Armed Services committees want a progress report on the merger. Last year’s defense authorization bill directed the department to create the office of the assistant secretary of defense (ASD) for energy, installations and environment by merging the office of the ASD for operational energy plans and programs with the office of the deputy undersecretary of defense (DUSD) for installations and environment………

Officials can help parents having issues with kids' schools

By Karen Jowers

The military does not have authority to enforce the interstate compact that helps ease the transitions of military children moving from school to school, but officials still want to hear families' concerns. And the commission that does have authority to enforce the compact wants to hear from those families, too. All 50 states have adopted the Interstate Compact for Educational Opportunity for Military Children, but that doesn’t mean all issues are resolved and every school is following the compact's provisions. Military officials are doing what they can to
encourage school districts to follow the compact when issues do come up, Army Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Milley told a family forum Oct. 12 at the Association of the U.S. Army's annual convention.

**US Army Plans for More Equipment Caches in Europe**

http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/2015/10/18/army-planning-for-more-equipment-caches-in-europe/74045756/

Defense News © October 18, 2015

By Jen Judson 1:12 p.m. EDT October 18, 2015

The US Army is planning to set up more equipment caches — known as activity sets — in Europe as nerves continue to fray over Russia's incursion into Ukraine, putting eastern countries, particularly with ethnic ties to Russia, on alert. Gen. Dennis Via, the commander of Army Materiel Command, told Defense News in an exclusive interview at the Association of the US Army's annual conference last week, that more caches are needed in Europe. "There will be more activity sets," Via said. "We are looking at other options, what else we need." The four-star visited Europe last month and met with both NATO's Supreme Allied Commander Air Force Gen. Philip Breedlove and the commander of US Army Europe Lt. Gen. Ben Hodges "to understand what they determine their future requirements will be for these other activity sets that they want to build."

**Family Support Programs Vulnerable in Face of Budget Cuts, Army Officials Say**


Defense Communities 360 © October 16, 2015

Funding for the Army’s family programs has remained consistent in recent years, but those support programs would be threatened if the Budget Control Act spending caps are fully imposed in fiscal 2016, senior Army leaders said this week at the Association of the U.S. Army annual meeting. The next wave of budget cuts would be "devastating,” said Army Secretary John McHugh. Congress has allocated $1.2 billion annually for family programs over the last four years, which represents an increase from earlier. Lawmakers allocated about $700 million for family support six years ago. Army Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Milley warned that budget cuts mandated by the statutory spending caps would jeopardize all elements of readiness, reported Soldiers magazine.
TF members --

1. **November Task Force Meeting in Tallahassee** – The November meeting of the Florida Defense Support Task Force will be on Thursday, November 19, 2015 at the **Doubletree by Hilton – 101 S. Adams St., Tallahassee FL**. The meeting will begin with closed session from 9:00 – 10:45 AM. The Task Force meeting beginning at 11:00 AM will be open to the public. DRAFT Agenda attached. Please note the adjusted starting times for both open and closed sessions.

2. **Attachment:**
   - DRAFT Task Force meeting agenda
   - Notes from bi-weekly TPG conference call

Regards, BG.

**Bruce Grant**

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**Articles of Interest:**

**BRAC –**

**Excess Capacity Expected to Reach 21 Percent, Army Says**
Defense Communities 360 © October 21, 2015

Force reductions shrinking the Army's active-duty end strength from 490,000 to 450,000 soldiers by the end of fiscal 2018 will increase the portion of the service's infrastructure considered excess to 21 percent, according to a rough estimate. "And it's only going to get worse as the Army declines in force structure," Paul Cramer, deputy assistant secretary for installations, housing, and partnerships, told Federal News Radio. Officials previously had said the Army's excess capacity ranged between 12 and 28 percent in the United States, depending on facility category, with an overall average of 18 percent. That analysis was based on an active force of 490,000, a target the Army planned to reach at the beginning of the month………….

Army Bases Bleed, Then BRAC Comes

Breaking Defense © October 21, 2015

By Sydney J. Freedberg Jr.

Congress hates base closures, known as BRAC. But it turns out you don't need a Base Realignment And Closure round to hurt homestate economies. If you cut the Army by 120,000 (from a wartime peak of 570,000 to 450,000), and prohibit the Pentagon from closing bases, what you get — instead of wholesale shutdowns — is the death of a thousand cuts. Eventually, as the pressure builds, you probably end up with a BRAC anyway. That's the lesson our sources extract from the Army Secretary's official report to Congress on the most recent round of cuts, the 40,000-soldier reduction detailed in July. (The Federation of American Scientists just posted a FOIA'd copy online, but we got the report a few days ago and had time to pass it around to experts). Amidst the process details and boilerplate, the 22-page document enumerates some of the economic impacts of the cuts: an estimated $828 million in losses and 3,401 lost local jobs………….

McCain Expresses Regrets over Past BRAC Recommendations
In resisting the Obama administration's request to approve one or more BRAC rounds each of the past four years, lawmakers typically have pointed to problems with the last round, primarily the higher-than-expected implementation costs and the protracted payback period. When the question came up Tuesday during an event at the Brookings Institution, Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.), chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, pointed to a couple of recommendations from past BRAC rounds that he wishes had never come about. One was the decision to close Naval Air Station Cecil Field in Jacksonville, a recommendation McCain said should never have taken place in light of the encroachment problems at Naval Air Station Oceana in Virginia Beach. Cecil Field’s closure left Oceana as the Navy’s only master jet base on the East Coast.

DOD Budget–

**Boehner to Sign Authorization Bill, Starting Clock on Obama Veto Threat**

House Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio) plans to sign the fiscal 2016 defense authorization bill on Tuesday before delivering it to the White House, setting up an anticipated veto by President Obama. Obama will have 10 days, not including Sundays, to veto the measure while Congress is in session, or it will become law. The White House has repeatedly threatened to return the legislation to Congress over its reliance on DOD’s overseas contingency operations (OCO) account to skirt the Budget Control Act spending caps. As recently as last week White House press secretary Josh Earnest said, “The president’s intention to veto that legislation still stands, primarily because the bill includes this slush fund tactic that’s an irresponsible way to fund our most basic national security priorities.”

**Defense Hawks Stand Firm on Need to Boost Defense Spending**
More than 100 Republicans in the House have vowed not to support any fiscal 2016 spending bill that allocates less than $561 billion for DOD’s base budget, the amount requested by the Obama administration. In a letter to House GOP leaders, 102 Republicans underscore the growing number of conflicts across the globe and the fiscal constraints already imposed on the military in demanding that the Pentagon be granted significant relief from the Budget Control Act spending caps this year. “In light of the bleak assessments provided by our military leaders, we are writing to inform you that we cannot vote for any spending measure for FY 2016 that does not fund base requirements for national defense at or above the $561 billion level,” the group stated in the letter………..

Obama Takes the Military Hostage

President Obama is determined to end his second term in another blaze of spending glory, and toward that end he’s taking the U.S. military hostage. That’s the way to understand his threat to veto the National Defense Authorization Act. The House and Senate recently passed this annual bill with significant bipartisan majorities and they’ll send it to Mr. Obama as early as Tuesday. The NDAA is a policy bill that contains major military reforms and authorizes $612 billion in national defense spending, though that money would have to be appropriated separately……..

The U.S. Military Needs Budget Certainty in Uncertain Times

By Ashton Carter

As they stood watch for our security around the world last month, the men and women of the Defense Department were also watching another development closer to home: whether the U.S. Congress would vote to keep the federal government open. A short-term stopgap measure called
a continuing resolution eventually passed, but it funded the military for just 10 more weeks. What does it say to our adversaries when we take a paycheck-to-paycheck approach to our nation’s defense? What does it say to our friends? For the seventh year in a row, Congress has failed to pass a defense appropriations bill in time to start the fiscal year. And for the past four years, the Defense Department and other federal agencies have been struggling with the impact of sequestration, which imposed cuts that were never meant to be implemented, but were supposed to prod both parties to come together and reach a budget agreement. The Defense Department has done its best to manage through this prolonged period of budget uncertainty, making painful choices and trade-offs among the size, capabilities and readiness of the joint force. 

Obama to veto defense bill in high-stakes showdown over spending


USA Today © October 22, 2015

By Gregory Korte

President Obama will issue a rare veto of a defense policy bill Thursday in a showdown with Congress over broader spending levels, the White House said. The veto of the National Defense Authorization Act is an extraordinary use of one of the president's most powerful executive tools. While the White House had problems with some of the bill's provisions, Obama's main objection is that the bill uses a budget gimmick to increase defense spending without increasing domestic spending first. The president wants Congress to lift the automatic budget caps known as sequestration included in a 2011 budget agreement.

Obama vetoes annual defense authorization bill

http://www.militarytimes.com/story/military/pentagon/2015/10/22/ndaa-veto-obama/74383142/

Military Times © October 22, 2015

By Leo Shane III

President Obama vetoed the annual defense authorization bill Thursday as part of an ongoing fight with congressional Republicans over the federal budget that has left a host of military policy changes caught in the crossfire. The move puts in doubt whether lawmakers can complete a planned overhaul of the military retirement system and whether a host of military specialty pays and bonuses will be renewed in January. The authorization bill has been signed into law for
53 consecutive years, a rare piece of bipartisan compromise through eras of partisan fighting. "As president and commander in chief, my first and most important responsibility is keeping the American people safe," Obama told reporters at an unusual veto ceremony at the White House. –And that means that we make sure that our military is properly funded. … Unfortunately, (this bill) falls woefully short in key areas.”............

**Budget Deal May Be Required to Enact Defense Policy Bill**


Defense Communities 360 © October 26, 2015

The next step following President Obama’s veto of the fiscal 2016 defense authorization last week will be an attempt by House Republicans to come up with the votes to override it. The task won’t come easy as the House’s 270-156 vote approving the conference report at the beginning of the month fell 20 votes shy of the 290 needed to reach a two-thirds majority. House Armed Services Chairman Mac Thornberry (R-Texas) and GOP leaders will start by leaning on the 10 Republicans who voted against the conference report to switch their votes. And then defense hawks will work on Democrats from defense-dependent districts who voted against the bill. –Nobody’s denying it’s going to be an uphill climb,” a Republican congressional aide told Politico............

MacDill AFB –

**New system at MacDill AFB helps military parents find child care**


Tampa Tribune © October 22, 2015

By Howard Altman

Two years ago, Airman Jenay Randolph was stationed at Aviano Air Base in Italy when she was given orders to transfer to MacDill Air Force Base. She had one small child and was eight months pregnant with her second. Finding childcare 5,000 miles to the west at MacDill, Randolph says, was the most stressful part of her move. –It was very difficult because I couldn’t get my child on a wait list until I actually got here, so as a single parent, it was stressful.” On
Wednesday, a new web-based system went online at MacDill that will help alleviate some of the hassles of trying to find childcare for families frequently on the move. MilitaryChildCare.com, a website run by the Defense Department, allows parents to register for existing on-base childcare services quickly and easily.

Eglin AFB –

McCain: 'Have To' Reduce F-35 Total Buy

http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/air-space/strike/2015/10/21/mccain-f35-reduce-total-buy/74350928/

Defense News © October 21, 2015

By Aaron Mehta and Joe Gould

The powerful chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, John McCain, R-Ariz., said Tuesday the US will have to cut the numbers of F-35 fighter jets it will purchase. In a brief comment to reporters, McCain seemed to signal that the total projected buy for the Pentagon's most costly and ambitious program — 2,443 in total, spread across three models for the Air Force, Marines and Navy — is out of whack with budget realities. He said that cost growth in the program will mean fewer jets overall. "We're going to have to reduce the buy," he said. "The number they are now quoting — there's just not going to be that many."
The image of a Marine Special Operations Team (MSOT) trudging through dense, jungle-like vegetation is probably not exactly what one would envision when considering a team’s natural surroundings in an operational setting. More likely, one would paint a mental picture placing a Critical Skills Operator in a pale-beige desert landscape, at high noon, possibly with a sandstorm brewing in the distance, or something of the sort. That, predominantly, is due to the region which U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command (MARSOC) personnel have been operating in for the last several years, but also because of the training locations the unit has frequented. In preparation for future deployments to their regionally aligned Geographic Combatant Command, a team leader with 1st Marine Raider Battalion (MRB) assisted in coordinating training for his MSOT in Florida’s panhandle, where the terrain is comparable to that of the team’s intended tropical deployment destinations……..

US Southern Command –

President Obama chooses diplomatic admiral to lead Southern Command


Miami Herald © October 23, 2015

By Carol Rosenberg

President Barack Obama has chosen a 37-year U.S. Navy officer whose career has focused on diplomacy and counterterrorism as the next commander of the U.S. Southern Command, the Miami Herald has learned. If confirmed by Congress, he replaces Gen. John F. Kelly, who joined the Marines during the Vietnam War and has run the Pentagon subsidiary responsible for U.S. military operations in Latin America and the Caribbean for nearly three years. Kelly, with no onward assignment, is retiring from service. He made a farewell trip to Washington, D.C., this week for a reception hosted by the ambassador from Colombia and a talk at a think tank, the Center for Strategic and International Studies. Two Defense officials confirmed the choice, but could not say when the White House would formally announce the nomination. It will be up to the Senate Armed Services Committee to set a timetable for a confirmation hearing……

Kelly Cites Effects of Drug Trade as Main Threat in Southern Command AOR

http://www.seapowermagazine.org/stories/20151023-kelly.html

SeaPower Magazine © October 23, 2015
By OTTO KREISHER, Special Correspondent

Marine Gen John F. Kelly, commander of the U.S. Southern Command, said very little of his normal activities are “purely military,” with most attempting to counter the massive trafficking of drugs heading to the United States and help deal with its devastating impact in Central America. “There is no real military threat to the U.S.” from his area of responsibility (AOR) and, with the possible exception of a few places, of state-on-state violence,” Kelly told a Center for Strategic and International Studies forum Oct. 23. As a result, Kelly said he spends a lot of time on countering the drug cartels and trying to promote economic development, which he considered his most effective way to help those countries and foster good relations. Kelly said virtually all of the cocaine and heroin that gets into the United States flows through his AOR and produces profits to the drug cartels estimated at $20 billion a year. That money leads to massive corruption in many of the region’s governments and the ruthlessness of the cartels contributes to a violent death rate that exceeds Afghanistan, he said………

NS Mayport –

In historical move, Chinese Navy will come to Jacksonville


Florida Politics © October 21, 2015

By A.G. Gancarski

In this brave new multipolar world, what once seemed unthinkable is the new normal. An example of such: China’s People’s Liberation Army’s Naval forces coming to Mayport, and before that, meeting with Jacksonville Mayor Lenny Curry in City Hall. On Monday, an email went to the mayor’s office from Michael Chan, the protocol officer of Navy Region Southeast, announcing that the PLA received diplomatic clearance” for a Port Visit to Mayport… the first ever by the Chinese military to the East Coast. A destroyer, a frigate, and a replenishment ship will be in Jacksonville from November 3 to November 7. The PLA wants Curry and staffers to attend the “official welcome ceremony” on November 3, and they want an “office call” with the mayor the next day. Even if Curry is traveling, they still want to visit City Hall November 4. The Chinese ambassador, consul general, and senior military officials will be on hand.

Chinese naval vessels to make goodwill visit to Mayport Naval Station in November
Three Chinese warships are scheduled to visit Mayport Naval Station from Tuesday, Nov. 3 through Saturday, Nov. 7, according to Navy Region Southeast. The visit will be part of a goodwill port visit. The amphibious assault ship USS Iwo Jima (LHD 7) will serve as the host ship in Mayport. The Chinese ships are on an around-the-world deployment. Sailors from both navies will participate in sporting events and interact during ship tours, the Navy said. The Navy did not specify which ships are coming, but the U.S. Naval Institute website said they may be the guided-missile destroyer Jinan, the guided-missile frigate Yiyang and fleet oiler Qiandao Hu. Goodwill visits by ships from foreign navies help build trust and foster shared understanding, according to Navy officials. Foreign navy vessels routinely visit the United States, with the Chinese Navy ship Zheng He visiting Hawaii this month, the Navy said……….

Tyndall AFB –

**UPDATE: Tyndall pays Bay County more than $500,000 in utilities dispute**

Bay County on Wednesday received a $535,797 check from Tyndall Air force Base i for a judgment related to a long-standing legal battle over how much the base was paying the county for wholesale utility rates. The payment is in addition to about $303,000 Tyndall paid the county last year. The county also is expecting several hundred thousand more to cover wholesale water and sewer charges Tyndall has underpaid since the court’s final judgment was issued in the county’s favor on June 12, 2014………. 
US Army Commission Takes Deep Dive Into Force Structure


Defense News © October 25, 2015

By Jen Judson

With just three months left before the National Commission on the Future of the Army must turn in its report to Congress, it is taking deep, analytical dives into force structure and meeting operational demand. The commission has also decided to peel back the onion on modernization objectives, even though Congress did not explicitly ask the commission to look into it. "It's so foundational to everything else that the Army does, we thought we'd spend a little bit of time and attention understanding that," retired Army Gen. Carter Ham, commission chairman, said last week at an open commission meeting in Arlington, Virginia. "Obviously, the resourcing implications are pretty significant." Congress established the commission in its fiscal 2015 National Defense Authorization Act because the Army and National Guard were deadlocked in a fight over how many soldiers should serve in each component, as well as what kinds of capabilities each should have. The law requires the commission to assess the size of the active Army and the reserve forces — including the Guard and Army Reserve — and recommend any modifications "related to current and anticipated mission requirements … at acceptable levels of national risk and in a manner consistent with available resources and anticipated future resources." ………..

Patrick AFB –

Nuclear treaty monitoring center activates five new squadrons


US Air Force @ October 19, 2015

By Susan A. Romano

The Air Force Technical Applications Center here recently activated five newly-designated squadrons, as the center takes steps to reorganize after becoming a wing equivalent in August 2014. The ceremonies were historic events for the center, as well as for the Air Force, officials said. AFTAC was first organized in 1959 as the 1035th U.S. Air Force Field Activities Group. For the next several years, five technical operations squadrons carried out specific portions of the nuclear treaty monitoring mission. In 1980, the 1035th was renamed the Air Force Technical Applications Center and became a direct reporting unit to Headquarters Air Force. The squadrons were deactivated at that time……….
DOD Issues –

**Carter: 'Combat' death does not mean 'combat role'**


Military Times © October 23, 2015

By Andrew Tilghman and Michelle Tan

Defense Secretary Ash Carter said it was hard to describe in detail what happened in the moments leading up to the Thursday death of Army Master Sgt. Joshua Wheeler, the first American killed in action in Iraq since 2011. "This is combat, things are complicated," Carter told reporters Friday, while declining to offer a full account of the fatal commando raid involving dozens of U.S. special operations soldiers targeting an Islamic State detention center in Iraq. "Combat" is a term that Carter and many military officials have studiously avoided using over the past few months in an effort to comport with President Obama's vow to keep U.S. troops out of combat in Iraq………

**New chief: 'We cannot allow a hollow Army'**


Army Times © October 24, 2015

By Michelle Tan

In just several weeks, new Army Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Milley has made clear his top priority as the service’s top general. —I have said that readiness is my No. 1 priority, and I absolutely, firmly believe that, and that No. 1 priority is not going to change the four years that I am the chief of staff,” Milley said in an interview with Army Times. —me, that is a moral commitment. That is an ethical commitment. To me, the greatest sin that I can commit is for me to send soldiers into harm's way that are not ready, that they are undermanned, underequipped, not properly trained, poorly led, and that will result in soldiers being killed or wounded. I cannot look myself in the mirror with that.”………
Other Items of Interest –

Communities Need to Consider Ways to Improve School Quality, ADC President Says


Defense Communities 360 © October 22, 2015

With DOD becoming increasingly focused on the quality of public schools serving military children, defense communities should strive to improve their schools as a hedge against future cuts to local installations, according to an op-ed written by Tim Ford, CEO of ADC, and Jim Cowen, director of military outreach for the Collaborative for Student Success. The Army has paid close attention to the issue and recently commissioned a study to assess the quality of schools that serve the children of soldiers. Researchers concluded it is not possible to compare how schools perform relative to their counterparts in other states because the country lacks nationwide education standards, they write in the op-ed published in the San Antonio Express-News. . . . . .
TF members --

1. **November Task Force Meeting in Tallahassee** – The November meeting of the Florida Defense Support Task Force will be on Thursday, November 19, 2015 at the Doubletree by Hilton – 101 S. Adams St., Tallahassee FL **in the 2nd floor conference room**. The meeting will begin with **closed session** from 9:00 – 10:45 AM. The Task Force meeting beginning at 11:00 AM will be open to the public. **DRAFT Agenda attached. Please note the adjusted starting times for both open and closed sessions.**

2. **Attachment:** Draft Task Force meeting agenda

Regards, BG.

**Bruce Grant**
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, FLORIDA DEFENSE SUPPORT TASK FORCE

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Articles of Interest:

DOD Budget–

**Congressional Leaders near Agreement on Two-Year Deal Lifting Budget Caps**

Negotiations between congressional leaders and the White House have produced a two-year budget deal that would raise the defense spending cap by a total of $40 billion over the next two years, as well as increase spending through DOD’s overseas contingency operations (OCO) account by $32 billion over that same time period. The package, which would offset higher discretionary spending through long-term spending cuts to programs like Social Security and Medicare, also would extend the nation’s debt ceiling through March 2017. That limit needs to be raised by Nov. 3 to avoid defaulting on the nation’s bills, according to the Treasury Department. An outline of the budget agreement was presented to members late Monday, with aides cautioning nothing was final as leaders gauge the level of support from rank-and-file members, reported the Washington Post…….

Budget deal gives DOD stability, almost all its money


Defense News © October 27, 2015

By Leo Shane III and Joe Gould

A sweeping new two-year budget deal unveiled by the White House and congressional leaders late Monday would give Pentagon planners the fiscal stability they have been begging for, but falls about $5 billion short of what they hoped to receive in fiscal 2016. If finalized, the agreement would stave off the threat of a government shutdown for the rest of President Obama's term and raise the national debt ceiling until spring 2017. It also would be the second partial fix to the mandatory federal budget caps that were passed by Congress in 2011 and have been lamented ever since…….

Lawmaker: Defense Hawks Likely To Support Budget Deal


Defense News © October 27, 2015

By Joe Gould
Defense hawks will likely back the two-year budget accord crafted by the White House and Republican leaders in Congress, according to a key lawmaker on defense in the House — even though the deal reportedly falls a few billion shy of the president's $612 billion defense budget request. Although there has been no official announcement of the details, news outlets are reporting that the two-year agreement would raise domestic and defense spending by $80 billion and lift the national borrowing limit until March 2017. Republicans are said to be divided on the deal, which could be voted on by the House as soon as Wednesday — the same day the GOP is expected to nominate Rep. Paul Ryan, R-Wis., to replace retiring Rep. John Boehner, R-Ohio, as House speaker………..

New budget deal puts defense policy bill back on track


Military Times © October 27, 2015

By Leo Shane III and Joe Gould

With a two-year budget deal in place, the heads of the House and Senate Armed Services committees see a relatively smooth path ahead for the recently-vetoed 2016 defense authorization bill. That means new life for a plan to radically overhaul military retirement, for proposed defense acquisition reforms, and for a host of other critical program renewals. Both Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., and Rep. Mac Thornberry, R-Texas, said they expect the bill to be reintroduced or resurrected in the next few days, after the broader budget agreement is finalized. "I think everybody is going to agree," McCain said. "We'll have to redo it, take $5 billion out, but hopefully we'll get it done. I don't think it will take much time."………..

US House Passes Budget Deal


Defense News © October 28, 2015

By Joe Gould

The US House passed a multiyear budget deal, deemed favorable to defense, ahead of what is expected to be smooth sailing in the Senate. The lower chamber on Wednesday voted 266 to 167 to send the sweeping two-year budget deal unveiled by the White House and congressional leaders late Monday to the upper chamber. Conservative Republicans voiced fierce opposition to the measure, and only 79 Republicans voted for it; 187 Democrats supported it. Senate Majority
Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., has vowed to take it up quickly. If approved, it would set 2016 and 2017 spending levels, lessen defense and domestic sequester cuts in both years, and allow congressional appropriators to begin writing annual spending bills………

**Lawmakers Look for $5 Billion Defense Cut**


Defense News © October 28, 2015

By Joe Gould

The US House and Senate armed services committees are working to identify $5 billion to cut from the defense budget as part of a larger budget pact between Congress and the White House, leaving procurement programs vulnerable to reductions. The Pentagon will get nearly everything it wanted in the budget deal — minus $5 billion — leaving defense watchers to speculate how the rewritten policy bill will play out. Reacting to the runaway aerostat in the news Wednesday, Kingston Reif, of the Washington-based Arms Control Association, tweeted out: "To appropriators looking to find part of that $5 billion in savings to meet revised [budget caps]: FY16 request for JLENS exercise is $40.6 million."…………

**US Budget Deal Provides Industry, Military Stability**


Defense News © October 31, 2015

By Joe Gould

On the eve of Halloween, the US Congress delivered a treat for the Pentagon and defense industry when it approved a crucial bipartisan budget deal with the White House that lands just $5 billion shy of the president's 2016 defense budget request. The sweeping two-year budget deal unveiled Oct. 26 would give Pentagon planners the fiscal stability they have been begging for, and a two-year reprieve from scare scenarios involving government shutdowns and lengthy stop-gap spending measures. --This compromise removes the uncertainty of ongoing continuing resolutions and possible government shutdowns, allowing the United States to honor our debts, reform entitlements, set realistic overseas contingency funding levels, and provide predictability for the Defense Department and defense industry to invest in programs and technologies to meet the national security needs of our country," said National Defense Industrial Association Chairman Arnold Punaro........
Budget Deal Is A Big Win for Pentagon


Defense One © October 30, 2015

By Marcus Weisgarber

The Pentagon has weathered the worst of the defense spending caps that military leaders have called a thorn in their side since 2013. The bipartisan budget deal struck by Congress — the Senate passed the measure early Friday morning, matching the House’s action earlier this week — gives the Defense Department big-time relief immediately, raising the 2016 spending cap by $33 billion and the 2017 cap by $23 billion. That allows the Pentagon to get a total of $607 billion in 2016 and $610 billion in 2017, according to budget experts and investment analysts. “This is significant. This is a turnaround for defense,” said Todd Harrison, a budget analyst with the Center for Strategic and International studies. “This would mark the end of the drawdown.”

Budget Deal Cleared, Next Step Will Be Shaping Omnibus

http://defensecommunities.org/blog/congress-dod/budget-deal-cleared-next-step-will-be-shaping-omnibus/?utm_source=dc360&utm_campaign=000d01eb33-RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_04f8f45e8-000d01eb33-55784537&ct=t%28RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN%29

Defense Communities 360 © November 2, 2015

By Dan Cohen

The Senate early Friday approved a two-year budget deal that will raise the defense and non-defense spending caps by $80 billion over a two-year period, sending the legislation to President Obama who is expected to sign it today. The most immediate impact of the bill will be averting a government default, as the Treasury had been expected to hit the federal debt ceiling this week. The bipartisan agreement extends the nation’s borrowing authority through March 15, 2017. By setting topline levels for discretionary spending, the deal allows appropriators to begin fashioning individual appropriations bills that would make up a fiscal 2016 omnibus. The House and Senate Appropriations committees will have about six weeks to pull an omnibus together before the current continuing resolution runs out on Dec. 11
MacDill AFB –

**MacDill Welcomes 2 New Leaders for Troubled Centcom Region**


Military.com © October 29, 2015

By Howard Altman

MacDill Air Force base is getting two new commanders to help lead U.S. military efforts in the Middle East. Tuesday morning, during a ceremony on base, Marine Lt. Gen. William D. Beydler assumed command of Marine Corps Forces Central Command, which oversees all Marines in the U.S. Central Command region. He replaced Marine Kenneth McKenzie Jr., who is headed to the Joint Chiefs of staff. Hours later, the Pentagon announced that Army Maj. Gen. Darsie Rogers will replace Army Maj. Gen. Michael Nagata as head of Special Operations Command Central, which oversees commando operations in the Centcom region.

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**Federal budget deal protects MacDill, Bay area**


WTSP © October 28, 2015

By Grayson Kamm

A budget deal is set to be approved any time now in Washington, and we're breaking down why that matters to you and to the Tampa Bay area's economy. Republicans in Congress worked with President Barack Obama to seal this deal. It avoids a government shutdown and a crisis with the national debt ceiling. And that's the best news in a long time for MacDill Air Force Base, one of the most important parts of the Bay area's economy. Here's why it matters. After seven years of active duty in the Army and a trip to Afghanistan, Lorenzo Acevedo launched a new life as the owner of Brightway Insurance in Brandon. But he still remembers the nerves that came every time someone talked about a government shutdown or hitting America's debt ceiling in Washington. "You hear news and rumors that there's a government shutdown and you're not going to get paid, immediately, you're distracted," Acevedo told me.
Eglin AFB –

**High-tech torch has Eglin on cutting edge**


Northwest Florida Daily News © October 29, 2015

By KELLY HUMPHREY

Behind closed doors at the Air Force Research Laboratory Munitions Directorate, scientists and engineers get to work on some pretty cool stuff. Take, for example, the Tec Torch, an incredibly powerful tool that can generate a blade-shaped flame that rips through a half-inch steel bar in less than a second. Reminiscent of Luke Skywalker’s light saber, the handheld torch weighs about a pound and is just 13 inches in length and 1.5 inches in diameter. Able to reach temperatures of around 5,000 F, the flame is propelled at a speed of around a mile per second………

**Rockwell Demonstrates Next-Gen Military Test Range System**


GPS World © October 29, 2015

During the first week in September, Rockwell Collins completed Contractor Test and Evaluation flights at Eglin Air Force Base, Fla., for the Common Range Integrated Instrumentation System (CRIIS). The demonstration included ground-to-air uplink of GPS correction messages and network services from multiple data-link towers. In cooperation with the CRIIS System Program Office (SPO), contractors and the University of Iowa Operator Performance Laboratory (OPL), 13 test flights were conducted using an L-29 from the University of Iowa OPL. Throughout the testing, the high reliability of the CRIIS equipment resulted in all test flights being performed as scheduled. Only a single test flight was scrubbed due to bad weather. All the flights were conducted using production form, fit, function airborne and ground equipment………

NS Mayport –
State land deal aimed at helping protect naval station


The Ledger © October 27, 2015

By Jim Turner, News Service of Florida

Gov. Rick Scott and the Florida Cabinet agreed Tuesday to spend $630,000 to obtain the development rights for several acres west of Naval Station Mayport in Jacksonville. The deal is viewed as a way to restrict the amount of future development within the neighboring Mayport Village and as a defense against potential military downsizing in the next round of the federal process known as "Base Realignment and Closure," which could occur in 2017. "We don't know what is going to happen in '17. That's really speculative," said Rocky McPherson, vice president of military and defense programs at Enterprise Florida, the state's public-private jobs recruitment agency. "But we don't want to have a development that's impinging upon the ability of the base to do its mission. And then when people start looking at bases and say, 'that's a problem,' we want to avoid that."........

Eyes To The Skies


By MC3 Timothy Schumaker

Thousands of people gathered to watch high-flying acts perform at the Jacksonville Sea and Sky Spectacular at Jacksonville Beach, Oct. 24-25. The free event featured the F/A-18 Hornets of the U.S. Navy Flight Demonstration Squadron, the Blue Angels. Other attractions included military and civilian flight team performances, live entertainment, the opportunity to see military aircraft and vehicles and the U.S. Special Operations Command (SOCOM) Parachute Team. In addition to the Blue Angels, this year’s performers included numerous free-fall parachute demonstrations from SOCOM Para-Commandos, the Geico Skytypers and the Air National Guard Airshow Team. Military recruiters set up a recruitment zone with displays and simulators to showcase the opportunities they can provide recruits, and an autograph session was held for anyone who wanted to meet the show’s performers.............

Tyndall AFB –

Raptors fly the Big Easy Skies
No sooner did Tyndall’s F-22 Raptors return from a successful mission in Europe, they took off again for an exercise in the Mardi Gras City. Over the past two weeks, 220 Tyndall Airmen participated in exercise Southern Strike at Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base, Belle Chasse, La., just outside of New Orleans. The mock deployment gave F-22 pilots the chance to fly with F-15 Eagles, F-16 Fighting Falcons, F-18 Hornets, T-38 Talons, F-35 Lightning II’s and B-1 Lancer’s from bases around the country. "At Tyndall Air Force Base we train the future of air dominance," said Col. Joseph Kunkel, 325th Fighter Wing vice commander. "What Southern Strike is allowing us to do is bring our students into a realistic environment where they can train with fourth and fifth generation platforms in a high threat scenario." .........

Florida National Guard –

**Army Commission Nears End of Fact-Finding Mission**

After visiting posts around the nation, meeting every geographic combatant command, and hearing from governors and adjutants general, the National Commission on the Future of the Army has gathered much of the information it needs to assess the proper size and force mix for the Army’s three components. Recently the commission spent two days at the Institute for Defense Analyses conducting its own analytical review with analysts from the commission, the Army and outside experts, Chairman Carter Ham told Defense News. –The focus of the review was on the size, the balance across components, the deployment and mobilization ratios,” Ham said........

**Camp Blanding buffer zone to grow**
By Mike Ford

As part of an ongoing land buffer program, a small number of agencies recently came together to purchase 2,000 acres of Bradford County property near Camp Blanding Joint Training Center to protect residents from artillery shells and noise. The Clay County Development Authority gave $400,000 toward the $4 million buffer zone purchase, which also prohibits commercial and residential development from getting too close to the National Guard training installation. Clay County Development Authority Spokesman Josh Cockrell said it was all from a grant. "For the past eight years, the CCDA has applied for a Florida Defense Task Force Grant through Enterprise Florida and this year we were awarded it," said Josh Cockrell, CCDA executive director. "Camp Blanding can’t apply because of federal budgetary rules, so we applied for the grant on their behalf and because the property is in the Suwannee River Water Management District, we partnered with them. We paid it to them and we’ll get reimbursed." ……

NAS Whiting Field –

**NAS Whiting Field recognized for community outreach**

Santa Rosa Press Gazette (c) October 27, 2015

By Aaron Little

Naval Air Station Whiting Field is already known as the base where Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard students learn to fly helicopters, according to Public Information Officer Jay Cope. NAS Whiting Field is standing out again, this time for community service. The base in the running for the USS Bainbridge Award. According to the press release, NAS Whiting Field ranked first in four categories and second in Campaign Drug Free within the region to earn the nod to represent CNRSE (Commander Navy Region Southeast) for the USS Bainbridge award for overall excellence in community service. NAS Whiting Field will compete in the medium ashore category."………. 
NAS Whiting Field Recognized for Collaborating with Neighbors

Naval Air Station (NAS) Whiting Field, Fla., has been selected for the second year in a row as the Navy’s Southeast Region nominee for the Installation Excellence Award for small bases, the region’s commander announced last week.

Much of the reason that Whiting Field, located near the tip of the Florida Panhandle, was recognized was its emphasis on building strong community-military bonds, including:

- partnering with Santa Rosa County to maintain a “Safe Community” designation for the county;
- partnering to secure property around the base to prevent incompatible development;
- incorporating 16 military family life counselors in area schools; and
- hosting military appreciation events for local military personnel and retirees.

“Our county exemplifies an attitude that is unparalleled in maintaining, sustaining and enhancing lives of our military and their families,” Commanding Officer Capt. Todd Bahlau said according to a press release. “The cooperative effort between the county and NAS Whiting Field is truly what enables us to stand out among our peers.”

Fleet Fly-In brings chopper tech to Whiting Field NAS

After being postponed due to inclement weather, Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard helicopters from across the country will finally be descending on Whiting Field NAS to participate in the 26th annual Naval Helicopter Association Fleet Fly-In on Wednesday.

Helicopters from nearly every active platform in the maritime services, such as the MH-53 Sea Stallion, SH-60 and MH-60R Seahawk, MH-60S Knighthawk, Marine Corps CH-53E Super Stallion, and other military and civilian aircraft are expected to be at the event. Stay tuned to pnj.com as Col. Gary Kling, commodore of Whiting Field's Training Air Wing FIVE, delivers
opening remarks to officially begin the Fleet Fly-In including high-tech flight simulators, the Night Vision Device lab, a flight skills competition, golf tournament and more.

**Aviation History Is Being Made At Whiting Field**


WKRG © October 28, 2015

By [Alison Spann](http://wkrg.com/2015/10/28/aviation-history-is-being-made-at-whiting-field/)

Naval Air Station Whiting Field, located right outside of Pensacola, is the training ground for every single helicopter pilot in the United States Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard. “100 percent of every helicopter pilot in the Navy, Marine Corp, and Coast Guard ever is built right here,” Colonel Gary Kling proudly proclaimed this afternoon. This is the first time in aviation history that helicopters make up 51% of the aviation force—and all of those pilots are trained at Whiting Field in Milton, Florida. Today they hosted the annual Fleet Fly-In where helicopters from all across the country fly into Whiting Field. This is a very special event for the aviators—both old and new. Veteran pilots come together at Whiting Field where their careers first began to catch up with old friends. While the newly winged, rookie pilots have the opportunity to see all of the different helicopters and make some final decisions about which aircraft they would like to fly………….

**World’s busiest air base trains America’s future aviators**


Pulse Gulf Coast © October 30, 2015

By [Derek Cosson](http://pulsegulfcoast.com/2015/10/worlds-busiest-air-base-trains-americas-future-aviators) and [Drew Buchanan](http://pulsegulfcoast.com/2015/10/worlds-busiest-air-base-trains-americas-future-aviators)

The story of Whiting Field is one of evolution.

Nestled between cotton and soybean fields several miles north of the sleepy town of Milton, Fla., the air base has been a vital part of both Northwest Florida and America’s naval air training apparatus for nearly three-quarters of a century. Established in 1943 as Naval Auxiliary Air Station Whiting Field, the base has grown to become the world’s busiest naval air station, with more than 1.2 million flight operations last year alone. To put that into perspective, Chicago O’Hare International Airport, the busiest commercial airport in the world last year, had less than 900,000. In the 19th century, the town of Milton was a thriving lumber community, but by the 1930s, opportunity had dried up. The Great Depression and the inevitable clearcutting of the
area’s longleaf pine stock left Milton and other Santa Rosa communities without an industry to fuel the economy.

Patrick AFB –

**Iconic AFTAC demolition near end**

[Link](http://www.floridatoday.com/story/news/local/2015/10/29/aftac-demolition-near-end/74754454/)

Florida Today © October 30, 2015

By R. Norman Moody

The Air Force Technical Applications Center’s former headquarters building stood for decades as an iconic structure, and for a time with a display of rockets out front — symbols of the early space race. The rockets are long gone, and the building, just across the roadway from the Atlantic Ocean, is all but rubble. Workers demolishing the old building have knocked most of the structure down to the first floor and have begun hauling away some of the debris. Jesse Crawford-Mancini, the Army Corps of Engineers resident engineer for Patrick Air Force Base and Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, said most of the building down to the ground has been demolished. One section of the building, which is in use by the 45th Space Wing for the Launch and Test Range System Launch Integrated Support contractor, remains after careful separation from the rest of the structure that was the AFTAC headquarters.

Defense Industry –

**Fla congressional delegation praises bomber contract award**


Florida Today © October 27, 2015

When he was a contract worker with the Apollo program, Rep. Bill Posey watched Brevard County become ground zero for the nation’s space program. And he watched glumly as thousands of engineers and aerospace workers lost their jobs after the space shuttle retired. So Tuesday’s announcement that Northrop Grumman will receive a multi-billion-dollar contract to
build the next-generation Air Force bomber had the Republican congressman from Rockledge talking about the area’s resurgence. “If you want to make a movie, you want to make it in Hollywood,” he said shortly after the award was announced. “If you want to be in space, where you going to be? The Space Coast of course. If you’re a real player.”

**Northrop Grumman Wins Air Force's Long Range Strike Bomber Contract**


Defense News © October 28, 2015

By Lara Seligman, Andrew Clevenger and Aaron Mehta

Northrop Grumman has won the contract to build the US Air Force’s next-generation Long Range Strike Bomber (LRS-B), an industry-shaping award that breathes new life into the world's sixth-largest defense company. After US financial markets closed Tuesday evening, Defense Secretary Ash Carter and Air Force leadership announced that Northrop beat out the team of Boeing and Lockheed Martin for the contract, which is expected to top $55 billion over the life of the program. It's the largest military aircraft contract since Lockheed Martin won the Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) more than a decade ago. Northrop now has the Pentagon's blessing to build a new fleet of aircraft to replace the Air Force’s aging B-52s and B-1s. As builder of the B-2 stealth bomber, Northrop beat out a joint Lockheed Martin-Boeing team in a closely watched competition that has lasted months longer than anticipated.

**Defense World Reacts to Northrop LRS-B Win**


Defense News © October 27, 2015

By Aaron Mehta and Andrew Clevenger

As the Air Force announced Northrop Grumman will produce the service's next-generation bomber, reactions from industry, Wall Street and the Hill began quickly flowing in. This article will be updated with comments as they come in. In a comment to Defense News before the contract award, Randy Forbes, R-Va., chairman of the House Seapower and Projection Forces subcommittee, voiced his support for the program as the time for the announcement approached. "We're 150 percent behind the bomber. It's strategically important to the country," Forbes declared. "It's incredibly important that we move in this next phase. We're excited they're moving
forward with it, whoever wins. Our subcommittee and I believe the full committee is going to be one hundred per behind making sure this becomes a reality.

DOD Issues –

**Pentagon: ‘We’re in combat’ in Iraq**


Washington Post © October 28, 2015

By Missy Ryan

— We will not be sending U.S. troops back into combat in Iraq.” – President Obama, June 13, 2014. — As I have said before, these American forces [in Iraq] will not have a combat mission.” – President Obama, Sept. 10, 2014. About 3,300 U.S. troops are now stationed in Iraq, where they are helping local forces battle the extremist group. Over both Iraq and Syria, U.S. planes have been flying bombing and surveillance missions for over a year. In keeping with Obama’s promises to keep U.S. troops out of another prolonged ground war in the Middle East, the Pentagon has given American troops a limited mission in Iraq, consisting primarily of advising local forces and rebuilding the country’s hollowed-out army. While U.S. forces are not confined to bases, officials say, their mission is very different from that of the 2003-11 war, when U.S. troops fought — often house by house — to end a powerful insurgency.

**U.S. looking at expanding role on ground in Iraq, Syria**


Military Times © October 28, 2015

By Jim Michaels

The Pentagon is considering plans that would place U.S. advisers closer to ground combat in Iraq and Syria in a move that could amount to a major escalation in its war against the Islamic State, a senior defense official told USA Today. The potential move reflects growing concern at top government levels that U.S. military operations in Syria and Iraq are not making sufficient progress against the Islamic State. The official, who is familiar with the plans, was not
authorized to discuss the possible changes publicly because no decisions have yet been made. The options under consideration include placing U.S. advisers alongside local combat units in Iraq and embedding a small number of U.S. advisers with Syrian forces fighting the Islamic State, the official said.........

Other Items of Interest –

**Pentagon Wants Inexpensive, Less Complex Ships**


By Jon Harper

The Defense Department is placing more emphasis on affordability over capability when it comes to ship procurement, according to a top acquisition official. "In the ship community, we're looking at mass," said Katrina McFarland, assistant secretary of defense for acquisition. "We are looking at numbers, quantities." It is counterproductive to build ships with a multitude of “Swiss army knife” capabilities if the cost severely limits the amount of vessels the military can purchase, she said Oct. 27 at a National Defense Industrial Association expeditionary warfare conference in Portsmouth, Virginia. “If I can only buy and afford one great Swiss army knife … [I can’t put it] in three places at the same time,” she said. “So I have to have scalable capability.” McFarland’s remarks come at a time when some officials worry that the U.S. Navy is too small, and high-profile shipbuilding programs have run into trouble.......... 

**Employers Commit to Hiring Military Spouses**


DoD News, Defense Media Activity © October 29, 2015

Thirty-seven new companies and organizations were formally inducted into the Military Spouse Employment Partnership during a ceremony in Alexandria, Virginia, yesterday, bringing the total number of partners to 297. The partners of the Military Spouse Employment Partnership are committed to recruiting, hiring, promoting, and retaining military spouses in portable careers. Since Dr. Jill Biden, wife of Vice President Joe Biden, launched the partnership in June 2011, partners have hired tens of thousands of
military spouses, according to Stephanie Barna, acting assistant secretary of defense for manpower and reserve affairs. “I state for the record and for the first time publicly, you -- our valued partners -- have hired more than 82,000 military spouses,” Barna said during the induction ceremony at the Mark Center. “Although MSEP is still a young program, we have known from Day One how eager each of you is to hire our spouses,” Barna said. “You clearly see our spouses as having the knowledge, skills and, most importantly, values that your business needs to develop and reach out to new markets, and deliver new and improved products and services.”
TF members --

1. **November Task Force Meeting in Tallahassee** – The November meeting of the Florida Defense Support Task Force will be on Thursday, November 19, 2015 at the Doubletree by Hilton – 101 S. Adams St., Tallahassee FL in the 2nd floor conference room. The meeting will begin with closed session from 9:00 – 10:45 AM. The Task Force meeting beginning at 11:00 AM will be open to the public. Please note the adjusted starting times for both open and closed sessions.

2. **Attachments:**

   - Draft Task Force meeting agenda
   - TPG Monthly Report
   - Notes from TPG bi-weekly conference call

Regards, BG.

**Bruce Grant**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, FLORIDA DEFENSE SUPPORT TASK FORCE

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The $5 billion defense cut dictated by the budget deal between Congress and the White House will be painful for as-yet-unnamed programs, a powerful lawmaker on defense said Monday. "There will be real programs that are cut, and that's what we're trying to finalize today with the appropriators and the Senate," said House Armed Services Committee Chairman Rep. William "Mac" Thornberry, R-Texas. "We are looking at them all and trying to do the least damage, but nobody should be under the illusion that you can do this in a non-painful way. There's going to be pain." The House and Senate Armed Services Committees are nearly done identifying the source of the $5 billion they must cut as part of a two-year budget deal that gives the Pentagon nearly everything it wanted. Under the plan, fiscal 2016 defense spending would be raised to $607 billion, $5 billion less than the top-line figure authorizers budgeted to before the deal.

The budget deal reached by Congress sets up a $14 billion gap in fiscal year 2017 that the Pentagon will need to adjust for, according to Deputy Secretary of Defense Robert Work. On Monday, Work said the budget deal leaves the Pentagon with a "reasonable target" for fiscal 2016, but said the situation becomes more complicated the following year. "We calculate it will be about a $14 billion delta in that given year than what we had planned," Work said at a Defense One conference. "That's going to be a harder target to hit, and we're working through that right now." Conversely, Work said, "If '16 had been a big, big delta in what we had been
planning that would have been extremely, extremely disruptive. We're happy to say it's within reach. So we don't expect '16 to be a huge, major disruption." The good news, as Work sees it, is stability……….

House plans a new defense authorization bill this week


Military Times © November 3, 2015
By Leo Shane III

House lawmakers are preparing to vote this week on a new draft of the annual defense authorization bill, which would trim spending totals by about $5 billion but leave intact an overhaul of the military retirement system and the renewal of a host of specialty pays. On Tuesday, House Republican leaders announced they will drop plans for a veto override vote on their earlier authorization bill, passed last month before the administration and Congress settled on a new overarching two-year budget deal. House Majority Whip Steve Scalise, R-La., told reporters that he expects the new authorization bill to be voted on this week. –There is a strong bill that's going to be coming forward that not only provides troops with pay raises, provides our troops with the tools and resources that they need and deserve, but also helps our allies, helps give resources to the Ukrainians, who want to fight against Russian aggression, helps our Middle East allies, who want to fight ISIS,” he said……….

House Opts to Move New Defense Bill Reflecting $5B Reduction


Defense Communities 360 © November 4, 2015
By Dan Cohen

The House will take up a new version of the fiscal 2016 defense authorization bill this week that reflects last week’s budget agreement, rather than attempt to override President Obama’s veto of the original legislation, House Republicans said Tuesday. The revised measure will authorize $5 billion less in funding after the two-year budget agreement called for $33 billion in defense spending above the Budget Control Act cap for FY 2016, an increase that didn’t quite meet the $38 billion in extra funds Congress and the administration had planned for. –The new legislation,
which is otherwise identical to the NDAA that passed the House and Senate earlier this year, has been introduced in the House of Representatives by Chairman Thornberry,” according to a statement from the House Armed Services Committee.

**Potential Remains for Political Bickering to Upset Plans for a 12-Bill Omnibus**

http://defensecommunities.org/blog/congress-dod/potential-remains-for-political-bickering-to-upset-plans-for-a-12-bill-omnibus/?utm_source=dc360&utm_campaign=15ce74b91a-RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_04f8ff45e8-15ce74b91a-55784537&ct=t%28RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN%29

Defense Communities 360 © November 5, 2015

By Dan Cohen

With topline spending levels established in the two-year budget deal cleared last week, appropriators believe they can craft 12 individual spending bills into a year-end omnibus in time for both chambers to pass the package by the time the current continuing resolution (CR) runs out on Dec. 11. Senior appropriators already are figuring out how to allocate the $1.067 trillion in discretionary dollars the budget deal provides for fiscal 2016 among the 12 appropriations subcommittees, reports CQ. The committees plan to provide the subcommittees their allocations by the end of the week, with a goal of hashing out the details of their spending bills between both parties and chambers by Thanksgiving. That timeline would leave two weeks for committee leaders to work through high-profile issues — likely, contentious policy riders — and bring the measure to the floor in both chambers.

**House Votes To Approve 2016 Defense Policy Bill**


Defense News © November 5, 2015

By Joe Gould

The US House voted overwhelmingly Thursday to approve the 2016 defense policy bill that complies with the terms of the overarching budget deal between the president and congressional leadership, teeing up a vote in the Senate next week. This is the second time around for this 2016 National Defense Authorization Act, whose provisions authorize spending on a wide range of acquisition programs across the services, overhaul the military retirement system and reauthorize a host of military pays and benefits. The bill also includes significant provisions aimed at reforming acquisitions. Thursday's House vote tallied 370-58 — netting significantly more
Democrats than the last time. Many Democrats voted against the previous version, and President Obama vetoed it because it inflated Pentagon funding via the overseas contingency operations (OCO) wartime account to skirt budget caps but refused to include an equal increase domestic spending………

MacDill AFB –

**New MacDill commander takes over on eve of Syria mission**


Tampa Tribune © November 1, 2015

By Howard Altman

The newest commander at MacDill Air Force Base is taking charge of a complex organization at a complex time. And with President Barack Obama’s announcement Friday that he was ordering about 50 Special Operations Forces into Kurdish-controlled areas of northern Syria, the job of Army Maj. Gen. Darsie Rogers, who took the reins of Special Operations Command Central on Wednesday morning, might have just gotten even more complex. The mission of the commandos being sent to Syria, the boots on the ground Obama was so desperate to avoid, is exactly the kind over which Soccent has operational control. But so far, the details on who will be in charge are still being worked out, according to the Pentagon. The commandos, most likely Green Berets, are being sent to train and advise the Kurds and Arabs fighting the Sunni jihadi group that calls itself Islamic State. It’s the biggest escalation in Operation Inherent Resolve, the war against the jihadi group………

**Environmental Study to Delay Ferry Service Plan for MacDill AFB**


Defense Communities 360 © November 9, 2015

By Dan Cohen

A federally mandated environmental study will delay by one or more years planned construction of a high-speed ferry project intended to ease traffic congestion experienced by commuters to
MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa. A study to determine the best location for a ferry terminal could take two years, and likely force postponement of the 2017 start date for construction, reported the Tampa Tribune. The project calls for running high-speed ferries from a yet-to-be-determined point in South Hillsborough County across Tampa Bay to MacDill. The service would relieve traffic congestion on clogged highways as well as lessen the bottlenecks that occur each morning at the base’s front gates. Much of the project’s $20 million price tag would be paid for by Hillsborough County, the state and private partners, but the smaller role played by the federal government is forcing the delay, said Jeff Seward, CFO for the Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority. The Federal Transit Administration is slated to contribute $4.7 million to the ferry project……..

Eglin AFB –

Okaloosa County and Eglin AFB deploy “Concrete to Reefs” project


Pulse Gulf Coast © November 2, 2015

The Okaloosa County Board of County Commissioners and Tourist Development Department, in conjunction with Eglin Air Force Base, is moving forward with deploying 2,000 tons of clean, durable concrete material, provided by the county and the Air Force Research Laboratory, for the purpose of building two artificial reefs in the Gulf of Mexico. The program, a Department of Defense mandated Community Partnership Initiative, is the first of many including the joint forces of Eglin and the Board of County Commissioners with positive community, environmental, and economic implications. The pilot project is funded using grant money awarded to Okaloosa County by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission with matching funds provided by Okaloosa County. Eglin typically pays a contractor to dispose of its unneeded concrete material; however, in order to save money and promote recycling, Eglin initiated the “concrete to reef” community partnership initiative. The initiative will save over $60,000 dollars in concrete disposal cost and will benefit the local community and tourism industry for years to come……..

Air Force Reserve's special ops wing a modernizing military installation

http://www.nwfdailynews.com/article/20151107/NEWS/151109429

Northwest Florida Daily News © November 7, 2015

By KELLY HUMPHREY
By Eglin Air Force Base’s massive standards, Duke Field is a relatively small installation. There’s nothing small, however, about the growth — and changes — taking place at the secluded compound just three miles south of Crestview. As the only special operations wing in the Air Force Reserve, Duke’s host unit, the 919th Special Operations Wing, has benefited from the military’s growing dependence on Air Commandos, Army Rangers, Navy Seals, and other special forces. Over the past seven years, the Air Force Special Operations Command has spent a little more than $45 million on new construction at Duke. During the same time period, the Air Force Reserve Command has allocated between $40 and $45 million, while the Air Force Material Command has kicked in about $45 million, mostly to improve the installation’s runways……….

Hurlburt Field –

Completion of U.S. 98 Interchange Project celebrated at Hurlburt Field


Pulse Gulf Coast © November 2, 2015

By Drew Buchanan

Today, Air Force and government officials celebrated the completion of the U.S. 98/Cody Avenue interchange project in Okaloosa County. The state of Florida invested the full $18 million to complete the project, which increases safety and convenience for the thousands of military members, business owners, residents, and visitors who travel through this area each day. The project elevates the U.S. 98 travel lanes above Cody Avenue to create a grade-separated interchange where traffic destined for Hurlburt Field accesses the main gate via on- and off-ramps. The Florida Department of Transportation partnered with the United States Department of Defense, U.S. Air Force, Okaloosa County and the Okaloosa-Walton Transportation Planning Organization on the project. FDOT Secretary Jim Boxold and U.S. Air Force 1st Special Operations Wing Commander Colonel Sean M. Farrell were also on hand to celebrate the opening of the new interchange……….

NS Mayport –

Chinese naval ships to visit Florida port
By Heather Goldin

Three Chinese naval ships are scheduled to visit Naval Station Mayport in Jacksonville, Florida, Tuesday as part of a routine goodwill port visit. The ships are expected to arrive following visits to ports in Europe. Sailors from both navies are expected to participate in sporting events and ship tours during the Mayport visit. "Goodwill visits by ships from foreign navies help build trust and foster shared understanding," according to a statement from the U.S. Navy. "Foreign navy ships routinely conduct port visits to Mayport, as ships from Peru and Canada have stopped here in the last few months," U.S. Navy spokesman Cmdr. William Marks said. "Engagements like this and the July 2015 port visit to China by USS Stethem demonstrate a continuous navy-to-navy bilateral relationship between our two countries." This is the first visit by Chinese naval ships to Florida but not the first to a U.S. port. Last month, Chinese navy ship Zheng He visited Pearl Harbor-Hickam in Hawaii.

Opening of Mayport's littoral ship headquarters brings hundreds of jobs to area

By John Bachman

Six hundred new jobs are coming to Mayport this week. The Navy will open a $16 million building on Friday in which sailors and civilians will perform those new jobs. Action News Jax’s John Bachman got exclusive access to what will be classified space. He also learned how the new littoral combat ships will help the 3,000 local employees working in the area's billion-dollar ship repair industry. The new combat ships are the future of the Navy and Mayport. Navy ships still fill the basin, but instead of 20-plus ships home-ported in Mayport, it's down to about 14. Fewer ships means fewer shops along Mayport Road. "Most of this is closed up for a year or more. It's just kind of dead end. Little restaurants usually close up," Mayport resident Lisa Strickland said.

People’s Liberation Army-Navy visits Naval Station Mayport
Story by Petty Officer 3rd Class Nathan Lang

Three China’s People’s Liberation Army-Navy [PLA(N)] ships arrived at Naval Station (NS) Mayport for a routine port visit. The Chinese Jiangkai II-class frigate Yiyang (FFG 548), Luyang II-class destroyer Jinan (DDG 152) and Fuchi-class oiler Qindaohu (AOR 886) are on an around-the-world deployment. They are visiting NS Mayport after making previous port calls in Europe. Rear Adm. Mary M. Jackson, Commander, Navy Region Southeast, and U.S. Navy host ship for the visit, amphibious assault ship USS Iwo Jima (LHD 7), held an arrival ceremony for crewmembers of the ships to welcome them to NS Mayport. “I am confident as the sailors and professionals from Escort Task Group 152 interact with the visit host ship USS Iwo Jima and other sailors here in Mayport, a feeling of respect and friendship will be formed,” said Jackson. “The memories made here this week will last a lifetime.”

Navy dedicates 'new chapter' in surface warfare with Mayport Naval Station's littoral combat ship support facility

By Dan Scanlan

The first step in the transformation of Mayport Naval Station into the East Coast hub of the U.S. Navy’s newest weapon was accomplished Friday morning with the snip of golden scissors on Bonhomme Richard Street. Within a year, the ribbon cutting for the new Littoral Combat Ship Squadron Two headquarters will be followed with the USS Little Rock, the first of eight compact combat ships slated to be at Mayport by 2020. Capt. Paul Young is commodore of the squadron, which will ultimately support 12 littoral crews of 50 each, plus 250 to 300 military and civilian support staff at the Navy’s East Coast littoral combat ship base. A new training center follows in 2018, with a mission support facility by 2019, a “very big deal,” Young said. “We are stepping off onto a new chapter of surface warfare in the Navy,” Young said. “Hundreds will be coming here, and once you add the crews and the modules, you will be adding thousands — sailors, civilians and families.”

NSA Panama City –
Various cultures mingle, dance at Naval Support Activity Panama City


WJHG © November 4, 2015

Four different cultural groups came together as one Wednesday at Naval Support Activity (NSA) Panama City. It's the third time NSA has hosted "Diversity Day." People of African-American, Asian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic and American Indian/Alaskan Native heritage spent a few hours immersed in one diverse community through food and dance. Event organizers said it enables people with diverse backgrounds to bring different ideas to the table and ultimately make more solid decisions in the workplace. "Look at the cultures that are represented in our restaurants here in the local community," Pete Hamilton, the Special Emphasis Program Manager, said. "There's a broad range there and so we bring that together in one local setting right here at the Long Glass here on NSA PC and we bring all the people together and they celebrate that."

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NAS Pensacola –

Blue Angels Homecoming This Weekend

http://wkrg.com/2015/11/05/blue-angels-homecoming-this-weekend/

WKRG © November 5, 2015

By Debbie Williams

A last chance to see the Blue Angels this year. It marks the end of a great season. It’s bittersweet for those leaving. This is the last time we get to fly in a blue jet and perform in front of all these people.” Flight leader and commanding officer Captain Tom Frosch, or "Boss" as he is called, has led the elite squadron for the last three years. He’s been there when the team was grounded by sequestration. "You learn so much from a season and we lost a lot of lessons learned that year. Last year and even this year was a rebuilding year and everybody just stepped up and we got to the point where we were before and if not, we’re better.” Frosch has also watched as the aging fleet of F/A-18 Legacy Hornets were tested time and time again. —The jets
are designed for six thousand hours and we’re going to probably fly em for ten thousand hours. So to do that requires a lot of extra maintenance and it will continue to be a challenge not only with the navy but with all the services as we continue to use our material more than they were planned for.”

**Navy, Florida Utility Agree on Leases for Solar Plants at Two Bases**


Defense Communities 360 © November 9, 2015

The Navy and Gulf Power signed a real estate outgrant last month to develop large-scale solar electric generating facilities at airfields used by two bases on the tip of the Florida Panhandle — Naval Air Station (NAS) Pensacola and NAS Whiting Field. Gulf Power, a Southern Company subsidiary, will develop solar facilities with a total capacity of 117 megawatts of direct current on: 290 acres at Navy Outlying Landing Field (NOLF) Saufley in Pensacola — 65-megawatt capacity; and 300 acres at NOLF Holley in Navarre — 52-megawatt capacity. Gulf Power’s third-party solar energy developer, Coronal Development Services, will build, own, operate and maintain the facilities. The utility will then acquire all of the energy and associated renewable energy credits generated by the projects to serve all of its customers, reported the Navy News Service.

**Florida National Guard –**

**Camp Blanding Veterans Day ceremony honors all veterans**


Historic City News © November 6, 2015

Historic City News reminds all area veterans that on the eleventh month, and the eleventh day, at the eleventh hour, the Camp Blanding Museum will host its annual Veterans Day Ceremony honoring those who serve our nation. The Ceremony will include the playing of all 5 military service songs and recognition of all veterans present near the main gate of the Camp Blanding Museum & Memorial Park, located at 5629 SR-16 West, in Starke. The featured speaker for the event is Colonel Daniel (Matt) Johnson, the incoming Commander of Camp Blanding Joint
Training Center. Colonel Johnson enlisted in the Florida Army National Guard February 1986 as a Single Channel Radio Operator and then attended Officer Candidate School at the Florida National Guard Military Academy, receiving his commission in August 1988.

Defense Industry –

As Pentagon Reconsiders F35s, Pratt And Whitney Could Be Affected


Hartford Courant © November 5, 2015

By ANA RADELA

For years, the Pentagon was inflexible when talking about the number of F-35s it wants to buy — 2,443 — pushing back against any suggestions that it should trim that shopping list. But no more. The high price tag of the F-35, a Lockheed Martin aircraft whose engine is made by Pratt & Whitney, based in East Hartford, Conn., has made some Pentagon officials consider whether the Defense Department can afford as many of the Joint Strike Fighters as they had once planned. Gen. Joseph Dunford, now the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, wrote in testimony to the Senate Armed Services Committee this summer that the Pentagon is "presently taking the newest strategic foundation and analyzing whether 2,443 aircraft is the correct number." When asked by the same committee: "Do you believe the Navy can afford and needs to procure 310 more F-35Cs with a procurement cost of over $42 billion?" Chief Naval Officer Adm. John Richardson said he would work to "revalidate the appropriate number of aircraft the Navy requires."........

Boeing Protests Northrop's Long Range Strike Bomber Contract


Defense News © November 6, 2015

By Andrew Clevenger and Lara Seligman

Boeing, which along with partner Lockheed Martin submitted the losing bid in the competition to build the US Air Force's new Long Range Strike Bomber, filed a protest Friday with the Government Accountability Office over the DoD awarding the contract to Northrop Grumman
on Oct. 27. The GAO now has 100 days to review the protest and issue a ruling. Boeing and Lockheed Martin concluded the selection process for the Long Range Strike Bomber was fundamentally flawed, the companies said in a joint statement. Specifically, they take issue with the cost evaluation performed by the government for not properly rewarding the team's proposals to break the upward-spiraling historical cost curves of defense acquisitions, and for not properly evaluating the relative or comparative risk of Northrop Grumman's ability to perform, as required by the solicitation……..

DOD Issues –

Pentagon Paid Up To $6.8 Million Of Taxpayer Money To Pro Sports Teams For Military Tributes

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/defense-military-tributes-professional-sports_5639a04ce4b0411d306eda5e

Huffington Post © November 4, 2015

By Laura Barron-Lopez and Travis Waldron

The Department of Defense doled out as much as $6.8 million in taxpayer money to professional sports teams to honor the military at games and events over the past four years, an amount it has “downplayed” amid scrutiny, a report unveiled by two Senate Republicans on Wednesday found. Arizona Sens. John McCain and Jeff Flake began looking into the Defense Department’s spending of taxpayer dollars on military tributes in June after they discovered the New Jersey Army National Guard paid the New York Jets $115,000 to recognize soldiers at home games. The 145-page report released Wednesday dives deeper, revealing that 72 of the 122 professional sports contracts analyzed contained items deemed “paid patriotism” -- the payment of taxpayer or Defense funds to teams in exchange for tributes like NFL’s “Salute to Service.” Honors paid for by the DOD were found not only in the NFL, but also the NBA, NHL, MLB and MLS. They included on-field color guard ceremonies, performances of the national anthem, and ceremonial first pitches and puck drops……..

US Defense Chief Jabs at Beijing in South China Sea Visit


Defense News © November 5, 2015
Defense Secretary Ash Carter on Thursday visited a US aircraft carrier in the South China Sea, where he took a jab at Chinese actions that have been blamed for raising tension in the disputed waterway. Carter flew to the USS Roosevelt — an enormous, nuclear-powered supercarrier — as it churned through international waters about 150-200 nautical miles south of where China is constructing artificial islands to underpin its expansive claims to the region. "There's a lot of concern about Chinese behavior out here," Carter said aboard the ship. He described the vessel's presence as "a sign of the critical role that United States military power plays in what is a very consequential region for the American future."……..

More US Troops Possible in Syria, Defense Sec. Ash Carter Says

http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/defense-sec-ash-carter-us-troops-syria/story?id=35044370

ABC News © November 8, 2015

By Benjamin Bell

Just days after the White House announced that President Obama had authorized the deployment of a small contingent of special operations forces to the war-torn country of Syria, Secretary of Defense Ash Carter said more American troops could "absolutely" be sent into the country if the United States can find more "capable" local forces to partner with in the fight against ISIS. "If we find additional groups that are willing to fight ISIL and are capable and motivated, we'll do more. The president has indicated a willingness to do more, I certainly am prepared to recommend he do more, but you need to have capable local forces; that's the key to sustainable victory," Carter told ABC News' Bob Woodruff this week during an interview aboard the USS Theodore Roosevelt in the South China Sea……..

As U.S. Escalates Air War on ISIS, Allies Slip Away


By ERIC SCHMITT and MICHAEL R. GORDON

As the United States prepares to intensify airstrikes against the Islamic State in Syria, the Arab allies who with great fanfare sent warplanes on the initial missions there a year ago have largely vanished from the campaign. The Obama administration heralded the Arab air forces flying side by side with American fighter jets in the campaign’s early days as an important show of solidarity against the Islamic State, also known as ISIS or Daesh. Top commanders like Gen. Lloyd J. Austin III, who oversees operations in Syria and Iraq, still laud the Arab countries’
contributions to the fight. But as the United States enters a critical phase of the war in Syria, ordering Special Operations troops to support rebel forces and sending two dozen attack planes to Turkey, the air campaign has evolved into a largely American effort………

Other Items of Interest –

**Army Cutting Civilian Workforce in Line with Active-Duty Drawdown**


Military.com © November 4, 2015

By Richard Sisk

The U.S. Army began preliminary talks with Congress on cutting the size of its civilian workforce in tandem with the continuing downsizing of the active duty ranks. Army officials were meeting with staffers on Capitol Hill on Tuesday to discuss the process and methodology for the civilian cuts suggested by the military. The initial statement from the service didn't say how many civilians would be cut or which bases would be most affected, but said the reductions would be in line with "military end-strength reductions to meet legislative mandates and ongoing budget constraints." "Reductions at specific locations and the total number of (civilian) reductions required across the force are difficult to predict," the Army said, but the reductions will be in line with the service's projected reduction of active-duty strength to about 450,000 in 2019………

**Installation Management Post; Halverson Remains ACSIM**


Defense Communities 360 © November 6, 2015
By Dan Cohen

Lt. Gen. David Halverson relinquished command of Army Installation Management Command (IMCOM) on Tuesday after the Army split apart its senior installation management post, leaving Halverson as the Army’s assistant chief of staff for installation management (ACSIM). At a change-of-command ceremony at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, Halverson passed the unit’s colors to Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Milley, who then passed the flag to IMCOM’s new commanding general, Lt. Gen. Kenneth Dahl. Halverson had served as both ACSIM and commanding general of IMCOM since April 2014. The creation of a new three-star position and the decision to make IMCOM a direct report to the Army chief of staff indicates how important the mission is to senior Army leadership, reported IMCOM Public Affairs. The split will benefit IMCOM by posting its commander at Fort Sam Houston, rather than have the ACSIM lead from the Pentagon remotely, according to Milley……..

Enactment of Defense Bill Should Ease Blockade of Civilian Nominees


Defense Communities 360 © November 6, 2015

By Dan Cohen

Senate Armed Services Chairman John McCain (R-Ariz.) this week indicated he would allow civilian nominations to the Defense Department to advance to the chamber floor as soon as President Obama signs the reworked version of the fiscal 2016 defense authorization bill into law. ―We want the NDAA signed,‖ McCain said, reported Politico. ―Then, we’ll look at the whole situation.‖ McCain has been sitting on more than a dozen civilian nominees, refusing to schedule confirmation hearings. On Thursday, the House easily approved the revised fiscal 2016 authorization bill, 370 to 58. The Senate is scheduled to take up the measure next Tuesday. The amended version authorizes $5 billion less in funding than the original, after last week’s budget agreement called for $33 billion in defense spending above the Budget Control Act cap for FY 2016, an increase that didn’t quite meet the $38 billion in extra funds Congress and the administration had planned for………..
November 16, 2015 – FDSTF Update

TF members --

1. **Task Force Meeting in Tallahassee This Week** – The November meeting of the Florida Defense Support Task Force will be on Thursday, November 19, 2015 at the Doubletree by Hilton – 101 S. Adams St., Tallahassee FL in the 2nd floor conference room. The meeting will begin with closed session from 9:00 – 10:45 AM. The Task Force meeting beginning at 11:00 AM will be open to the public. DRAFT Agenda attached. **Please note the adjusted starting times for both open and closed sessions.**

2. **Attachment:** Task Force Meeting Agenda

Regards, BG.

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Articles of Interest:

BRAC –

**BRAC Still Required despite Budget Deal, Conger Says**

The recent budget agreement will provide the Pentagon $56 billion in budget relief compared to the discretionary spending caps over the next two years, but it doesn’t lessen DOD’s need to right-size its infrastructure and free up funds to fix up facilities falling into disrepair, according to the department’s top installations official. “We need to become more efficient because of the budget situation of the department,” John Conger, DOD’s acting assistant secretary for energy, installations and environment, told the Fort Worth Star-Telegram. “Even in the wake of the budget deal … that’s still the case,” he said. Budget pressures aren’t the only factor fueling the administration’s push for a new round of base closures; officials estimate more than 20 percent of military infrastructure is excess to DOD’s needs, a share that continues to grow as its force structure declines.

Public Private Partnerships –

'Mac’s Reef' will save Air Force money, provide fishing, diving benefits

http://www.nwfdailynews.com/article/20151104/NEWS/151109716

Northwest Florida Daily News © November 4, 2015

By KELLY HUMPHREY

The late Charles “Mac” McClenahan, a weapons developer at the Air Force Research Laboratory Munitions Directorate, was known as an “out of the box” thinker who was always finding innovative approaches to solve problems. So it came as no surprise to his family and friends when Eglin Air Force Base and Okaloosa County officials agreed to name one of their most innovative, collaborative projects in his honor. The Charles H. McClenahan Memorial Reef, or Mac’s Reef, is the culmination of more than a year of planning and logistics that began with a simple idea. “The Air Force usually pays a contractor to dispose of our destroyed concrete used in weapons testing,” said John Yelverton, environmental coordinator for the AFRL.

DOD Budget–


International Business Times © November 10, 2015

By Adam Lidgett

The U.S. Senate passed a revised version of the National Defense Authorization Act Tuesday, according to CNBC. The act has restrictions on closing Guantanamo Bay, the controversial U.S. prison facility in Cuba. The revised $607 billion legislation was approved 91-3, according to the Hill. The legislation made it through the House of Representatives easily last week with a 370-58 vote. The legislation would not allow for Guantanamo detainees to be moved to the United States for at least a year, according to the Hill. The Guantanamo prison restriction hurts President Barack Obama’s plan to close the facility, which would likely necessitate moving dozens of detainees to the United States. The restrictions would also hold back detainees being transferred to Libya, Somalia, Syria or Yemen. The next step for the legislation will be for it to go to Obama, who vetoed the original $612 billion version because of extra war funding in the 2016 Department of Defense budget. Some of the cuts to the new version include $250 million to Obama’s counterterrorism fund, $250 million to Army readiness and a little more than a billion in fuel savings……..

Defense authorization bill clears Congress again


Military Times © November 10, 2015

By Leo Shane III

The 2016 defense authorization bill is headed to the White House — again. Senators gave final congressional approval to the military policy measure on Tuesday by a 91-3 vote, advancing a host of military pay renewals, an overhaul of the military retirement system, and a series of planned reforms to the defense acquisition process. The question now is whether this measure, the second defense authorization bill passed by Congress this fall, will be sent back with the same presidential veto stamp as the last one. Last month, President Obama vetoed the then-$612 billion defense bill over concerns that congressional Republicans were using temporary war
funds to get around caps on fiscal 2016 military spending, while leaving caps on other government agencies intact ............

White House expects Obama to sign defense bill


The Hill © November 10, 2015

By Jordan Fabian

President Obama is expected to sign an annual defense policy bill even though he opposes language that hampers the closure of the Guantanamo Bay military prison, an aide said Tuesday. “There are a number of provisions in the [National Defense Authorization Act] that are important to running and protecting the country,” press secretary Josh Earnest told reporters. “That’s why I would expect you will see the president sign the NDAA when it comes to his desk.” Obama’s decision to sign the $607 billion legislation “does not reflect a change in our position” on closing the Guantanamo Bay prison, Earnest said. “We have long expressed our disappointment at the repeated effort by Congress to impede the closing of the prison at Guantanamo Bay,” he added. “The president believes closing that prison is a national security priority.”..........

Senate Approves Milcon Spending Bill in Unanimous Vote


Defense Communities 360 © November 11, 2015

By Dan Cohen

The Senate on Tuesday approved the fiscal 2016 military construction-veterans affairs spending bill by a 93-0 vote, wrapping up debate on the eve of Veterans Day. “Today the Senate put our veterans first,” Sen. Mark Kirk (R-Ill.), chair of the Military Construction-VA Appropriations Subcommittee, said after the Senate finished consideration of its first full-year appropriations bill for FY 2016. Prior to the final vote, the chamber adopted a substitute amendment that adjusted spending levels in the legislation originally advanced by the Senate Appropriations Committee to reflect the recent two-year budget agreement. The substitute amendment added $2.1 billion to the committee-reported measure to provide a total of $79.7 billion in discretionary funding. As a result, military construction and family housing accounts would receive $8.2 billion, or about $100 million more than the committee had recommended in the spring........
Fate of Pentagon War Budget Left to Obama’s Successor

When President Obama departs the White House, he won’t only be leaving thousands of troops in Afghanistan, but also the special budget account that pays for most of the military’s operations overseas. The spending account – known as the Overseas Contingency Operations, or OCO, budget – that many had hoped to get rid of or shrink substantially will be part of Obama’s final budget proposal, which he will most likely send to Congress in early February. “They’ve been pushing us more than we’ve been pushing to try and find some way to wind out of OCO, but the [budget] caps have made that so hard,” Pentagon Comptroller Mike McCord said in a briefing with reporters Friday. “I think that we’re unfortunately going to have that problem with us and greeting the next administration,” McCord said. That means the next president will have to decide how to pay for all of the military operations that have become the new normal over the past 15 years……..

Team Orlando –

Over Governor’s Objection, State Votes to Purchase Leased Space for Team Orlando

The Florida Cabinet on Tuesday voted to purchase almost 10 acres of land in central Florida that hosts a number of DOD tenants primarily focused on simulation. The purchase would allow DOD to reduce its leasing expense for Team Orlando as part of a state-led effort to retain Orlando’s defense simulation cluster in the event of a new BRAC round. DOD pays about $5.4
million annually in rent for 200,000 square feet of commercial space in Orlando. “In this current budget environment, that’s a terrible place to be,” Thomas Baptiste, president of the National Center for Simulation, told News4Jax. Last year, Baptiste told the Central Florida Partnership that he fears DOD could end its leases in Orlando and move to other federal or military sites that have spare capacity.

Eglin AFB –

**County to ask Eglin to allow gas station at airport**


Northwest Florida Daily News © November 5, 2015

By KARI C. BARLOW

Folks using Destin-Fort Walton Beach Airport soon could be able to gas up their vehicles before heading on their way. Okaloosa County Commissioners have agreed to ask Eglin Air Force Base for permission to locate a convenience store and gas station on airport land. “This proposal is a win-win for everybody,” Commissioner Carolyn Ketchel said. “I think a gas station and convenience store would serve our community well.” The gas station is part of a larger proposal the county is submitting to Eglin asking for a more flexible lease of the 130-acre airport. The county is seeking to restructure its annual lease payment of $403,000, to eliminate the existing 3 percent escalator in the contract and get approval to explore non-aeronautical revenue streams. “We’re looking to diversify,” Interim Airports Director Tracy Stage said, adding that Eglin has signaled support for the gas station. “This is in agreement with Eglin. All indications are it is favorable.”

**Eglin AFB wins 2015 federal energy award**


Press Release Point © November 9, 2015

By Mike Spaits, Eglin Air Force Base Public Affairs / Published November 09, 2015

The U.S. Department of Energy's Federal Energy Management Program has chosen the 96th Civil Engineer Group as the recipient of a 2015 energy and water conservation award. The award recognizes Eglin Air Force Base's innovative approach for combining advanced
technologies and common sense to saving critical energy resources and reducing utility costs for the base. The Federal Energy and Water Management Awards recognize individuals, groups and agencies for their outstanding contributions in the areas of energy efficiency, water conservation and the use of advanced and renewable energy technologies at federal facilities. In fiscal year 2014, the 96th CEG combined its energy management control system (EMCS) with real-time pricing to maximize energy savings through reduced energy consumption and avoided utility costs. By integrating direct digital controls, facility meters and comprehensive energy analyses, the project saved 181 billion British thermal units of electricity and natural gas across 131 buildings valued at $3.4 million……..

Hurlburt Field –

**Gulf Coast plays host to special operations training**


The Pulse © November 9, 2015

By [Drew Buchanan](mailto:)

Special operators have been busy at Hurlburt Field this past month, holding multiple large-scale training exercises based out of the nation’s busiest Air Force installation. The exercises included joint operations with Marine Special Operations Command and other special operations forces within the DoD. In preparation for future deployments and operations, the training exercises were held in Florida’s panhandle, where the terrain is comparable to that of tropical deployment destinations, as the DoD shifts focus from operations in Southeast Asia to the Asian-Pacific region……..

NS Mayport –

**Mayport Takes Next Step As LCS Hub**


Mayport Mirror © November 11, 2015

By MC3 Nathan J. Lang
A year after Littoral Combat Ship Squadron (LCSRON) Two was established at Naval Station Mayport, the squadron has a place to call home. LCSRON Two, along with guests from the Navy and Jacksonville community, commemorated the opening of the Atlantic Fleet’s First Littoral Combat Ship Support Facility, as well as the official arrival of the East Coast’s first LCS crews, with a ribbon cutting ceremony on Nov. 6. Special guests from the Savannah Navy League also attended the ceremony to officially adopt the ships and crews from USS Little Rock, USS Sioux City, as well as LCSRON Two. “It was just a year ago that I stood right across the street and reported LCSRON number two had joined formation with our sister squadron LCSRON 1 in San Diego as the future hub of LCS operations in the Atlantic Fleet,” said Capt. Paul Young, Commander LCSRON 2. “We were excited about new ships with a new concept of operations and new systems, and the knowledge that none of us had ever really done anything like this.”

Tyndall AFB –

**Tyndall Air Force Base starts night training missions**


WJHG © November 9, 2015

If you happen to hear loud noises and see mysterious lights in the sky, don't worry, it's not an UFO, it is actually the 325th Fighter Wing. Tyndall Air Force Base announced Monday the group will be conducting training missions starting Monday night until Friday, November 20th. Flying at night is critical for F-22 pilots so they'll be ready if they are sent on a mission after sundown.

Patrick AFB –

**Head of Patrick AFB space unit honors veterans**


Florida Today © November 11, 2015
By Dave Berman

The commander of the 45th Operations Group at Patrick Air Force Base called Veterans Day "a celebration of the very best the country has to offer." "Celebrating Veterans Day is one of the most important duties we have" as a nation, Air Force Col. Thomas Falzarano said in his speech Wednesday to the Propeller Club of Port Canaveral. "One of our most important civic duties is to honor our veterans." Falzarano said he typically talks about rocket launches and other missions of his command during such speeches. But he said that took a back seat Wednesday, in honor of the nation's "20 million heroes" who previously served in the U.S. military and are living, including about 1.5 million who now live in Florida. He asked those in his audience to think about something on Veterans Day and every day: "Am I worthy of the sacrifices of our veterans — past, present and future.".........

DOD Issues –

Carlisle: A-10 retirement could be delayed by several years

http://www.airforcetimes.com/story/military/2015/11/10/carlisle--10-retirement-could-delayed-several-years/75517856/

Air Force Times © November 10, 2015

By Phillip Swarts

The Air Force could delay retirement of the A-10 Thunderbolt II by a few years to meet demand for close-air support missions, Gen. Herbert J. "Hawk" Carlisle, head of Air Combat Command, said Tuesday. "I think we would probably move the retirement slightly to the right," he said at a Defense Writers Group breakfast. "Eventually we will have to get there. We have to retire airplanes. But I think moving it to the right and starting it a bit later and keeping the airplane a bit longer is something to consider, based on things as they are today and what we see in the future." The service needs more close-support craft to meet demand for missions in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan, and for the possibility of missions in trouble spots like Libya or Yemen, Carlisle said. The possible retirement of the Warthog has been a point of contention between Congress and the Air Force, with the service hoping to decommission the planes and move crews over to the F-35 Lightning II.......

Kurds, Backed by U.S. Air Power, Try to Regain Sinjar From ISIS
Kurdish forces aided by thousands of lightly armed Yazidi fighters began a long-awaited offensive early Thursday to reclaim Mount Sinjar and an accompanying town from the Islamic State, which seized the northern Iraqi territory last year and murdered, raped and enslaved thousands of Yazidis. United States-led coalition air forces pounded the area in preparation for the offensive, which also sought to cut a major jihadist supply line between Syria and the Iraqi city of Mosul. A statement from the security council of the Kurdish autonomous region in Iraq said that up to 7,500 Kurdish pesh merga fighters were moving on three fronts to cordon off Sinjar City, take control of ISIL’s strategic supply routes, and establish a significant buffer zone to protect the city and its inhabitants from incoming artillery.” ISIL is an acronym for the Islamic State.

Other Items of Interest –

**Army to Eliminate 2,400 Civilian Jobs over Next Two Years**

The Army plans to eliminate 2,400 civilian positions by the end of fiscal 2017, with further cuts possible after that, an Army spokesman said this week. The service already has reduced the number of civilian positions by 37,000 since 2011, reported Army Times. Over the same period, the Army’s active-duty end strength has shrunk by 80,000 soldiers. The latest news about reductions in the Army’s civilian workforce follows the announcement in July that its active-duty end strength would decline by an additional 40,000 troops by the end of FY 2018. At this point, officials are still trying to figure out how the impact of paring back its active-duty forces and further budget reductions will affect the size of its civilian workforce. Last week, Army officials met with congressional staffers to discuss the methodology and process by which the Army is reducing civilian manpower,” the Army said. But officials are not announcing specific numbers of civilian reductions by installations,” the statement added.
**State Creates Position to Promote New Jersey Installations**


Defense Communities 360 © November 12, 2015

By Dan Cohen

The state of New Jersey on Tuesday created a new position to coordinate efforts to advocate on behalf of the state’s military installations ahead of federal budget cuts or a future BRAC round. On Wednesday, acting Gov. Kim Guadagno (R) — with Gov. Chris Christie (R) out of state for the Republican presidential debate — named Clark Martin as the state’s military and defense economic ombudsman, a post responsible for spearheading efforts to preserve the economic vitality of New Jersey’s military installations. Martin served as commander of the New Jersey Air National Guard for 23 years and retired at the rank of major general.

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**Florida most veteran-friendly state, new report shows**


Florida Politics © November 10, 2015

Florida is the most veteran-friendly state in the U.S., offering some of the most generous tax benefits for former and current service members, according to a new report by independent government watchdogs Florida TaxWatch. To coincide with Veterans Day, TaxWatch released the study about the 1.6 million veterans living in the Sunshine State, a number which translates to one out of every 12 adult Floridians. More World War II vets live in Florida than any other state, the report says, and nearly half of all veterans in the state are over 65 years of age. TaxWatch outlines how Florida lawmakers actively promoted policies to support veterans, including passage of the Florida “G.I. Bill” in 2014. The goal of the bill was to make Florida the most “veteran friendly” state in the nation, creating Florida Is For Veterans, Inc., an agency with a mission to promote Florida to retired and recently separated military service members.

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**N.C. opens new Department of Military and Veterans Affairs**
Gov. Pat McCrory and nearly 200 veterans and service members at the Seaboard Building on Salisbury Street in Raleigh held a ribbon cutting and dedication ceremony Tuesday of the newly created Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, his office said in a news release. For years, the state has had offices for veteran and military matters. But to reflect the military's importance to the state, these are being put into the new department. And the person in charge is now a cabinet-level secretary. Retired Marine Maj. Gen. Cornell Wilson Jr. was appointed last month as secretary of military and veterans affairs............
TF members --

1. **No Task Force Meeting in December** – The next meeting of the Florida Defense Support Task Force will be on Thursday, January 21, 2016 at the Doubletree by Hilton – 101 S. Adams St., Tallahassee FL.

2. **Attachments:** Approved contract extensions on Task Force grants.

Regards, BG.

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**Articles of Interest:**

Public Private Partnerships –

**AF strengthens ties with community through partnership program**
The Air Force Community Partnership Program (AFCP), one of the 13 Make Every Dollar Count initiatives launched by the Air Force, is currently working with 51 installations and local communities to improve and strengthen community and Air Force partnerships. The AFCP program offers opportunities to military installations and local communities to partner and achieve mutual value and benefit, such as reducing operating and service costs and achieving mutual economic goals and interests. Since October 2012, the AFCP program has generated more than 1,000 initiatives with a potential value/benefit of approximately $160 million over the next five years. These partnerships are identifying new and innovative ways of supporting Airmen and their families. Current initiatives include medical, emergency response, grounds maintenance, shared use firing ranges, joint fire/police training, and operations of installation services. —Partnering starts with committed Air Force and community leaders,” said Steve Zander, the AFCP program director. —The greatest results are achieved when installation and community leaders embrace the concept of partnering and use the Air Force’s well-structured process as a means to achieve mutual value and benefit.” According to the AFCP program, there are many initiatives being conducted throughout the Air Force. Here are a few examples on ways the Air Force is helping to improve and strengthen bonds with the local community:

- Robins Air Force Base, Georgia: Medical leaders realized renewal certification training for medical and dental doctors was available at local community hospitals around Houston County, Georgia. Attending local training eliminated the need for military members to travel to other locations, resulting in cost savings of more than $434,000 for the Air Force and up to $2 million for the community.

- Ellsworth AFB, South Dakota: Leased underutilized facilities to a health care management firm with lease income equal to $635,000 in June 2015. Total rentable space comprised 21,521 square feet along with associated office equipment including desks, chairs, cubicles, tables, etc. This partnership will provide good-paying jobs in western South Dakota, income to offset base operating costs, and access to base services for the firm’s employees.

- Tyndall Air Force Base, Florida: Leadership recently signed a lease with a local medical center. The lease is for a one-year period and will enable the 325th Medical Group to provide primarily pediatric and Minute Clinic type care to patients at the center two days per week………….
By Dan Cohen

A collaboration among Eglin Air Force Base, the Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL) and Okaloosa County has enhanced fishing opportunities off the Florida Panhandle while saving the federal government money. AFRL donated 2,000 tons of concrete pieces to the county that had outlived their usefulness as targets on the Eglin range, reported Team Eglin Public Affairs. The county, which paid to haul the concrete from the range, used the rubble to create two artificial reefs in the Gulf of Mexico earlier this month. —Not only did the Air Force save more than $60,000 in disposal costs of the concrete, Okaloosa County gained two artificial reefs that will enhance the local residents and tourism base with more scuba diving and fishing opportunities,” said Col. Nate Smith, acting deputy director of the Air Force Research Lab Munitions Directorate. The county named one of the reefs —Mac’s Reef,” after a long-time AFRL employee who had passed away earlier this year.

DOD Budget–

Beyond US Budget Deal, Defense Faces Uncertainty


By Joe Gould

When the two-year federal budget pact announced earlier this month hewed fairly closely to the president’s requested defense budget, defense hawks and industry leaders applauded. The bipartisan deal upended pessimistic predictions of a year-long continuing resolution that would have kept defense spending flat and prohibited new-start programs. But experts warn that beyond the pact’s horizon, the picture gets fuzzier, subject to the forces of national politics, inter-service rivalries, global politics, and the strength of the US economy. The 2011 budget caps were eased for 2016 and 2017, but not repealed, and the US faces major national security challenges in the Mideast, Europe and the Pacific.

SASC, HASC Want More DoD $$ For 2017; Odds Are Long
The budget deal setting spending levels for 2016 and 2017 is less than a month old, but pro-defense legislators already want to revisit. A top aide to Sen. John McCain said the Senate Armed Services Committee chairman and his allies will “absolutely” try to revise the 2017 Pentagon topline upward. But our sources — on and off the Hill, from the left and from the right — said they’ll fail. “In six to eight months, my assumption is we’ll be having this argument once again,” said Christian Brose, staff director of the Senate Armed Services Committee. SASC chairman John McCain, his House counterpart Mac Thornberry, and other members of the committees will absolutely be [pushing for] moving that topline up,” Brose told a Center for Strategic and International Studies conference yesterday.

**Authorization Bill Heads Back to President for Second Time**

House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) on Tuesday signed a revised version of the fiscal 2016 defense authorization bill policy before sending it to the president’s desk for the second time. The Senate approved the annual policy measure last week, but the House had to make technical corrections to it before it could be sent back to Obama, who is expected to sign the legislation after vetoing it last month. Obama vetoed the initial conference report over its reliance on DOD’s overseas contingency operations account which would have allowed the Pentagon to skirt the spending caps without providing equivalent budget relief for non-defense programs. The new version authorizes $5 billion less in funding than the original, after the recent budget deal called for $33 billion in defense spending above the Budget Control Act cap for FY 2016, an increase that didn’t quite meet the $38 billion in extra funds Congress and the administration had planned for.

**Ryan sends defense policy bill to White House**
By Kristina Wong

House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) on Tuesday signed the 2016 defense policy bill, which now heads to the president's desk for his signature for the second time. Ryan hailed the bipartisan bill, which authorizes $607 billion for the Pentagon, as "the kind of legislation that gives our armed forces the tools they need to be agile, to be effective, to be ready." The president had vetoed the bill the first time, over its authorization of the use of a war fund to bypass spending caps on defense spending, without also lifting the caps on non-defense spending. The bill was sent through Congress again after the White House and Republicans reached a two-year budget deal that would lift spending caps on both defense and non-defense spending. Ryan said the bill included two "very important" provisions in particular……..

McCain floats bill to lift defense budget caps

http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/mccain-floats-bill-to-lift-defense-budget-caps/article/2576795

By Charles Hoskinson

Senate Armed Services Chairman John McCain on Thursday introduced legislation that would repeal mandatory budget caps enacted in 2011 for national security spending, citing new challenges from Russia, China and the Islamic State that have strained shrinking Pentagon resources. "Again and again, national security requirements have materialized after the Budget Control Act was passed, but we have forced our military to tackle a growing set of missions with arbitrary and insufficient budget levels, revised periodically with whatever additional resources the Congress is able to scare up," the Arizona Republican said in a Senate floor speech announcing the legislation. "The results speak for themselves: Since 2011, as worldwide threats have been increasing, we have cut our defense spending by almost 25 percent in annual spending."……..

Appropriators Continue to Work toward Dec. 11 Deadline for Omnibus

http://defensecommunities.org/blog/congress-dod/appropriators-continue-to-work-toward-dec-11-deadline-for-omnibus/?utm_source=dc360&utm_campaign=a183b1c98f-RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_04f8f45e8-a183b1c98f-55784537&ct=t%28RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN%29

Defense Communities 360 © November 23, 2015
Appropriators continue to hash out the differences between House and Senate versions of each of the 12 fiscal 2016 spending bills as they aim to beat the Dec. 11 deadline to pass a $1.1 trillion omnibus before the existing continuing resolution expires. Subcommittee-level talks are scheduled to finish soon, with unresolved issues over funding and language slated to be handed over to the full House and Senate Appropriations committees afterward. Committee leaders will need to release a bill text by the end of the first week in December to leave time for the two chambers to consider the omnibus, reported CQ. Negotiations are ongoing but are making significant progress. They will continue over the Thanksgiving break. While many hurdles remain, none are insurmountable,” according to a Republican aide. “The expectation is the bill will be ready for the floor prior to the Dec. 11th deadline.”

Will Paris Attacks Spur Congress To Hike Defense Spending?


Defense News © November 23, 2015

By Joe Gould

In the wake of the Islamic State group’s terrorist attacks on Paris, Sen. John McCain on Nov. 19 called for the Pentagon and other other national security agencies to be exempted from the Budget Control Act caps. Though the president and congressional leadership have a two-year budget deal in hand that was touted for creating stability and predictability for the Pentagon, the move by McCain — as chairman of the Senate Armed Service Committee — signals he thinks the defense budget’s half-trillion-dollar top-line for 2017 should be revised upward in light of the attacks. Immediately before an impassioned speech on the Senate floor, McCain said as much to reporters — that defense should be increased — in spite of the deal.” The bipartisan budget agreement, which leaves the caps in place through 2021, allows the Pentagon to spend $606.8 billion in 2016 and $609.8 billion in 2017, including $8 billion in overseas contingency operations (OCO) each year……..
A small city on the Florida Panhandle is attracting veteran entrepreneurs through an economic development initiative offering $25,000 grants to veteran-owned businesses willing to set up operations in Fort Walton Beach. The city offered grants to seven companies this year, along with an invitation to an entrepreneurial bootcamp, access to collaborative workspace in Fort Walton Beach for one year and exposure to potential investors, reported Stars and Stripes. Mayor Mike Anderson persuaded the city council to set aside $500,000 for the program with the aim of encouraging service members stationed at nearby Eglin Air Force Base and Hurlburt Field to stay in the area after they leave the military………

Tyndall AFB –

AVT spearfishing team, base civil engineers track down energy savings

The Air Force Civil Engineer Center's Asset Visibility Team worked with base civil engineers at Malmstrom Air Force Base, Montana, and Patrick AFB and Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, Florida, recently to identify energy-saving opportunities and provide substantial savings for the Air Force. One tool used by the AVT to identify energy conservation measures is the "spearfishing" methodology. The AVT coined the term "spearfishing" to describe an expedition that involves taking a deeper dive into rediscovering and harvesting previously-realized energy and water saving opportunities. The spearfishing initiative is part of the AVT concept of operations which was put into place in 2014. Energy-saving opportunities that are identified can be funded either through AFCEC's "Just Do It," or JDI, funding list or the integrated priority list, or IPL. The JDI funding initiative opened the door for the AVT to fund "micro" energy projects that are of work order scope, rather than project scope, while the IPL focuses on larger, long-term savings projects………
NAS Pensacola –

Gulf Power, Navy Partnering On Solar Power Production

http://wuwf.org/post/gulf-power-navy-partnering-solar-power-production#stream/0

WUWF © November 18, 2015

By Dave Dunwoody

Gulf Power Company and the U.S. Navy are weighing anchor on a new partnership, aimed at developing and distributing solar power. Under a 37-year lease, Gulf Power will use almost 600 acres of property aboard NAS Pensacola, Whiting Field, and two outlying landing fields, Holly and Saufley. Natalie Smith at the utility says plans are to build two large generating facilities. ―Those are some of the details we have to work out, and figure out how much space would be needed,‖ said Natalie Smith at the utility. ―And we’ll be using a third party [Virginia-based] Coronal Development Services – they will actually build and maintain the facilities.‖ When complete, the plants will look like your garden-variety solar farm – only bigger with a larger generating capacity. Smith says along with the Navy project, they’re also involved in similar work with the Air Force……..

Cradle of Naval Aviation


Pensacola News-Journal © November 21, 2015

Pensacola has been dubbed the Mother-in-Law of the Navy and the Cradle of Naval Aviation — both terms of endearment making reference to the family nature of the relationship between the coastal city and the military base that calls it home. It’s a strong relationship that brings out the best in both parties. Navy personnel consistently rank Pensacola Naval Air Station among the favored locations at which to be stationed. The beautiful beaches, mild climate and hospitable people are the reasons given for its popularity. The economic importance of NAS to Northwest Florida cannot be overstated. The Pensacola naval complex — NAS, the Center for Information Dominance at Corry Station, Whiting Field and Saufley Field — is one of the largest employers of civilians in the Southeastern United States, and generates 20 percent of the local economy……
Florida National Guard –

**Army National Guard Considers Increasing Annual Training Days**


Military.com © November 21, 2015

by Matthew Cox

The head of the Army National Guard is looking to see if training one weekend a month and two weeks in the summer is enough to ensure Guard troops are ready for future fights. Army Maj. Gen. Timothy Kadavy, who took over as director for the Army National Guard in March, is assessing the readiness needs of the Guard at the request of Army Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Milley. "The chief of staff has challenged our current thoughts on training and readiness," Kadavy told an audience at a Nov. 18 Institute of Land Warfare breakfast sponsored by the Association of the United States Army. As part of the assessment, Kadavy is examining if the current minimum of 39 annual training days is the right number to maintain readiness. That minimum number of training days, he said, was established in the 1900s and may no longer be relevant.

**Army Commission Considers Greater Integration of Active, Reserve Forces in Aviation Units**


Defense Communities 360 © November 23, 2015

By Dan Cohen

The commission evaluating the structure and size of the Army is considering the possibility of multi-component aviation units that include both regular Army and reserve personnel, partly as a way to embrace the "Total Army" concept. The National Commission on the Future of the Army’s aviation subcommittee is studying the Army’s controversial plan to move the National Guard’s AH-64 Apache attack helicopters to the service’s active component. The subcommittee — led by Commissioner Robert Hale, the former DOD comptroller — is looking not just at force
structure options but also at organizational options,“ including ways the Army could make greater use of multi-component units, Hale told Defense News. “By multi-component I mean organizations that have one part of the regular Army and one from the reserve components,” Hale explained.

NAS Whiting Field –

Local bases on board for renewable energy project


Pensacola News-Journal © November 16, 2015

By Marketta Davis

Gulf Power has signed a 37-year lease with the Navy, including Holley and Saufley Navy outlying landing fields, and Whiting Field and Pensacola naval air stations, for the purpose of developing two large solar electric generating facilities. "These solar projects will put electricity on the grid for all customers," said Jeff Rogers, Gulf Power external communications manager. "We're looking at sustainable goals that are economically doable and cost efficient." It takes approximately 1 megawatt per month to power the average Northwest Florida home. On a sunny day, the combined solar energy facilities — providing a total of 117 megawatts — will power about 18,000 homes, according to Rogers. Gulf Power customers' rates will not increase due to the new facilities, Rogers said. The DON-Gulf Power agreement includes facility development covering 300 acres of NOLF Holley at Whiting Field and 290 acres at NOLF Saufley at Pensacola NAS.

Whiting Park Marina receives recognition for green efforts


Pensacola News-Journal © November 20, 2015

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection joined the Clean Boating Partnership Friday to recognize Naval Air Station Whiting Field's Whiting Park Marina for its commitment to environmental stewardship and the protection of Florida's waterways. The Whiting Park Marina joins nearly 300 other marinas as a member of the Florida Clean Marina Program,
according to a Florida Department of Environmental Protection press release. Whiting Field’s Whiting Park Marina is a water recreation and picnic park serving active duty and retired military. Located on the Blackwater River, east of downtown Milton, the family-orientated facility offers many amenities, including sheltered picnic pavilions with barbecue grills, a swimming area, playground and boat rentals. The facility also hosts an annual kid’s fishing day, teaching children about marine life and fishing ethics firsthand.

Defense Industry –

**Defense Department Trying to Tackle Industry Consolidation**

http://www.nationaldefensemagazine.org/blog/Lists/Posts/Post.aspx?List=7c996cd7-cbb4-4018-baf8-8825eada7aa2&ID=2016&RootFolder=%2Fblog%2FLists%2FPosts

By Jon Harper

National Defense Magazine © November 16, 2015

The Defense Department needs to find ways to foster competition and innovation in an era where the industrial base is consolidating, according to a Pentagon official and independent analysts. The number of “platform” prime contractors has shrunk from about 300 in the 1980s to five today, noted Andre Gudger, acting deputy assistant secretary of defense for manufacturing and industrial base policy. “The department is looking at that in a way that we haven’t had to before,” he said during a panel discussion at the Center for Strategic and International Studies on Nov. 16. Consolidation is also happening among service providers, the panelists noted. “We now have a lot of single points of failure in the supply chain because we are left with only one company that is of medium size doing something critical,” said Denis Bovin, senior advisor at Evercore Partners, a New York-based consulting firm.

DOD Issues –

**Defense Secretary Ash Carter signals an escalation against ISIL**


Politico © November 19, 2015

By Eliza Collins
The U.S. is prepared to change the rules of engagement in Syria, Defense Secretary Ash Carter said Thursday, signaling a possible escalation in America’s military campaign against the Islamic State. “If you look at the data, the thing that most enhances the impact of the air campaign is better and better intelligence,” Carter said in an extensive interview at the Pentagon that aired Thursday on MSNBC's "Morning Joe." “We’re prepared to change the rules of engagement. We’ve changed tactics as we just did with the case of the fuel trucks,” Carter said, referring to the recent airstrikes aimed at ISIL’s oil infrastructure, which helps bolster the group's finances……

McCain calls for 10,000 troops in Syria


The Hill © November 19, 2015

By Bradford Richardson

Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) is calling for the U.S. to deploy 10,000 ground troops in Syria to combat terrorists following last week's deadly attack in Paris. McCain said that defeating the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) would take "on-ground troops, about 10,000 Americans, with a coalition of other Arab countries, hopefully maybe NATO countries, maybe even France,” in an interview with network France 24 on Thursday, as first reported by the Washington Examiner. McCain did not say whether those ground forces could also take action against Syrian President Bashar Assad. The U.S. has pushed for Assad to step down from power but has mainly backed rebel groups that are focusing their fight against ISIS in the divided country. The chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee called ISIS the "godchild” of both al Qaeda and the Assad regime, but he also pinned blame for the terrorist group on U.S. policies……

Obama to Pentagon: 'Get to the bottom' of altered Islamic State intelligence


USA Today © November 22, 2015

By Gregory Korte

President Obama said Sunday he has told top military officials to "get to the bottom" of reports that intelligence assessments have been altered to give a rosier assessment of progress in turning back the Islamic State. Obama was responding to a report in The New York Times that the Pentagon's inspector general has expanded its probe of intelligence reports from Central Command, or CENTCOM, and that congressional committees were seeking answers about whether that intelligence had been shaded to make it appear more progress is being made. The
Times reported that the Pentagon has added more investigators who have seized documents related to intelligence reports. Obama said he didn't know what that inspector general's investigation would find. But he appeared to be more concerned about the issue than he's been in previous responses, saying he's asked Defense Secretary Ash Carter and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joseph Dunford, to investigate…….
November 30, 2015 – FDSTF Update

TF members --

1. No Task Force Meeting in December – The next meeting of the Florida Defense Support Task Force will be on Thursday, January 21, 2016 at the Doubletree by Hilton – 101 S. Adams St., Tallahassee FL.

2. Attachments:
   - Task Force Budget for Current Year – FY 15-16
   - Notes from TPG conference call

Regards, BG.

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Articles of Interest:

DOD Budget–

Pentagon’s FY’17 Budget Proposal Almost Ready for Prime Time
Defense officials are putting the final touches on the department’s fiscal 2017 budget proposal, with all programmatic decisions having been completed, according to Deputy Defense Secretary Robert Work. “We hope to have the whole thing locked by the 18th of December,” Work told reporters. After going to the Pentagon Comptroller’s Office, the request is due at the Office of Management and Budget on Jan. 5, reported Politico. The Obama administration is scheduled to submit the federal budget to Congress on Feb. 1. One major challenge of crafting the new budget was finding about $17 billion in savings from the department’s draft FY 2017 budget released this past February. “That’s the $14 billion between the president’s budget request in [FY 2016] and what the budget deal was, and then the president’s decision to keep more troops in Afghanistan will cost money. So it’s about a $17 billion kind of swing,” Work said.

Appropriators Continue to Work toward Dec. 11 Deadline for Omnibus

Appropriators continue to hash out the differences between House and Senate versions of each of the 12 fiscal 2016 spending bills as they aim to beat the Dec. 11 deadline to pass a $1.1 trillion omnibus before the existing continuing resolution expires. Subcommittee-level talks are scheduled to finish soon, with unresolved issues over funding and language slated to be handed over to the full House and Senate Appropriations committees afterward. Committee leaders will need to release a bill text by the end of the first week in December to leave time for the two chambers to consider the omnibus, reported CQ. “Negotiations are ongoing but are making significant progress. They will continue over the Thanksgiving break. While many hurdles remain, none are insurmountable,” according to a Republican aide. “The expectation is the bill will be ready for the floor prior to the Dec. 11th deadline.”

Obama signs defense bill, finalizing military retirement overhaul
After an extra month wait, the annual defense authorization bill is finally law. President Obama signed the budget and policy bill on Wednesday, marking the 54th consecutive year the measure has survived Washington political fights to become law. The most significant result for troops is the renewal of dozens of specialty pay and bonus authorities, and a massive overhaul of the military retirement system. Starting in 2018, newly enlisted troops will no longer have the traditional 20-year, all-or-nothing retirement plan. Under the changes, it will be replaced with a blended pension and investment system, featuring automatic contributions to troops' Thrift Savings Plans and an opportunity for government matches to personal contributions……..

MacDill AFB –

**Sen. Bill Nelson calls for CENTCOM firings if manipulated intelligence reports are true**


Tampa Bay Times © November 24, 2015

By Alex Leary

Sen. Bill Nelson says people should be fired at CENTCOM if a report is true about the manipulation of intelligence regarding the fight against the Islamic State. "If the Inspector General finds out that the *New York Times* report is true, then people ought to be fired. Immediately," the Florida Democrat told the *Tampa Bay Times* in an interview Tuesday. Nelson said he relayed those concerns in a letter to Defense Secretary Ash Carter. Still, Nelson said there has been progress in the fight against the Islamic State. "The U.S. role should continue with allies in the air. But the Arabs are going to have to own this and coalesce and that's not going to happen until you can get a political settlement on the ground. At the moment, that looks very difficult."……..
**Fighting ISIS from Central Command at MacDill Air Force Base: Is the strategy working?**


ABC Action News © November 24, 2015

Front and center in the fight against ISIS -- the brain of all military operations in the Middle East is based right here in Tampa. U.S. Central Command is a facility full of our neighbors and friends, with thousands of people deciding how to defeat the world’s most infamous terrorist organization. The questions today: What’s being done and is the strategy working? “On any given day, something that we’re doing in this headquarters is impacting US national security in the Middle East, Central or South Asia,” Colonel Patrick Ryder, US Central Command spokesperson said. Col. Ryder is just one of the nearly 4,000 people working in the highly secured facility with the goal of keeping Americans safe through actions in the Middle East..........

**‘Gray Zone’ conflicts far more complex to combat, says Socom chief Votel**

http://www.tbo.com/list/military-news/gray-zone-conflicts-far-more-complex-to-combat-says-socom-chief-votel-20151128/

Tampa Tribune © November 28, 2015

By Howard Altman

Between peace and all-out war exists the Gray Zone. To Army Gen. Joseph Votel, commander of U.S. Special Operations Command, the Gray Zone is a familiar place of ambiguity. It’s a place where the Islamic State operates. A place where Russia has taken on Ukraine. And it’s home to many other spots, hot, lukewarm or otherwise, around the globe. “The Gray Zone,” said Votel, “really defines this area between ... for the most part healthy economic, political competition between states, and open warfare.” It’s a place, he said, where actors, sometimes state actors and sometimes non-state actors, act in a manner just below what would normally take us into normal open warfare.” In September, Socom, headquartered at MacDill Air Force Base, issued a paper on Gray Zone challenges. The paper says that while traditional war might have been the dominant means of deadly conflict, Gray Zone challenges have now become the norm, and that countering foes like the former Soviet Union in many ways proved far less complex than taking on current adversaries...........
NAS Jacksonville –

**Tri-base team learns to support military families when disaster strikes**


Florida Times-Union © November 24, 2015

It’s the emergency scenario that nobody wants to imagine, but many must train for – a direct hit on Northeast Florida by a category 2 or larger hurricane. The Nov. 17 drill took place at the Naval Reserve Center Jacksonville where crisis response teams from three installations — Naval Submarine Base (NSB) Kings Bay, Ga., Naval Station (NS) Mayport, and Naval Air Station (NAS) Jacksonville — mobilized to assist families, single Sailors and retirees. In this simulated hurricane scenario, Kings Bay and Mayport sustain serious structural damage, as well as flooding in certain areas. Commander, Navy Region Southeast (CNRSE) Rear Adm. Mary Jackson directed NAS Jacksonville to make its Emergency Family Assistance Center (EFAC) operational in order to support the recovery of all three bases……..

**DASN presents fourth ‘Gold’ Energy Award to NAS Jax**


Florida Times-Union © November 24, 2015

At a ceremony held aboard NAS Jacksonville Nov. 17, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Energy (DASN) Joseph Bryan presented the Navy’s Gold Energy Award to Capt. Howard Wanamaker, commanding officer, NAS Jax and Mike Chmura, installation energy manager. This marks the fourth year in a row that outstanding energy achievement has been maintained and recognized aboard the installation. Upon presenting the award, Bryan said, “On behalf of the Secretary of the Navy, it is a pleasure to present this Gold Energy Award to NAS Jacksonville. Optimizing energy use helps keep our installations up and running and improve their ability to perform the mission. When you look across the Department of the Navy, NAS Jacksonville is consistently a top energy performer. This award is just the latest evidence of that and I applaud your efforts.”……..

**Sailors supporting fight against ISIS return home to NAS Jax**
It’s a holiday homecoming for dozens of Jacksonville Sailors. About 35 members of Helicopter Antisubmarine Squadron Eleven returned to Naval Air Station Jacksonville today, running quickly into the arms of loved ones, who waited eight months to reunite. The Squadron overall numbers about 200- most have trickled in to Jacksonville over the past few weeks, and a few are still in the process of coming back. “We’re so happy that he’s safe and sound, and all of the rest of the fliers are too,” says Nancy Coats, who joined several generations of family members for the arrival of her grandson Jake………..

NS Mayport –

Farewell To ‘Seahawk’ Helicopter

Naval Station Mayport’s last SH-60B helicopter was craned onto a truck and driven away on Nov 16, ending the Seahawk’s legacy in the Navy’s fleet. August marked the retirement of the Navy’s last two deployed SH-60B Seahawk helicopters. The aircraft returned to Naval Station Mayport in July 2015 from a six month deployment on board USS Kauffman (FFG 59) as part of HSM-60’s Detachment One –The Immortals”. USS Kauffman was deployed in support of Operation Martillo in the coastal waters surrounding Central America in both the Caribbean and the Eastern Pacific. Operation Martillo is a multinational effort launched in 2012 aimed at countering organized crime and illicit trafficking operations. Detachment One was equipped to conduct the Airborne Use of Force (AUF) mission. During AUF missions, U.S. Coast Guard precision marksmen are carried in the cabin of the mighty SH-60B helicopter to provide warning shots and, when necessary, disabling fire into the engines of non-compliant vessels suspected of participating in illicit trafficking. The HSM-60 –Jaguars,” a Navy Reserve squadron, is one of the few Navy squadrons qualified to conduct the arduous AUF mission at night………..
New Skipper At HSM-46

Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron 46 (HSM-46) held a change of command ceremony on Nov. 19 at Naval Station Mayport. Cmdr. Chris Richard relieved Cmdr. Grahame Dicks as the squadron’s commanding officer. Originally established in 1988 as HSL-46, today HSM-46 trains and supports combat-ready detachments of pilots, aircrew, and maintenance technicians for assignment and deployment aboard U.S. Fleet Forces surface combatants. Cmdr. Dicks assumed command of the Grandmasters in Aug 2014. During his tenure as commanding officer, the squadron deployed five MH-60R helicopter detachments in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and overseas contingency operations. Previously, Dicks deployed twice with HSL-46, completed a tour with Air Test and Evaluation Squadron One, and later served as Officer-in-Charge of a detachment with HSL-44. Previous assignments include service as a Flag Aide for Commander, Strike Force Atlantic, and the successful tour with the Joint Staff (J-3) as the Operations Officer for the Deputy Director for Regional Operations. Dicks’ next assignment will be to the Nimitz Operational Intelligence Center.

NSA Panama City –


U.S. Sen. Bill Nelson and Rep. Gwen Graham toured the Naval Diving and Salvage Training Center on Monday for a firsthand look at how the Navy is using oxygen to treat wounds and promote physical and mental healing. At the dive school, Graham, D-Tallahassee, and Nelson, D-Fla., examined the facilities, including the hyperbaric chambers, a high-oxygen environment where divers slowly readjust to surface pressure. Nelson said both he and Graham are looking into using similar techniques to expand treatment beyond decompression sickness. “That’s the question Gwen [Graham] and I are wanting to ask our Navy doctors! What about the use of oxygen to accelerate the healing of wounds?” he said. –What about the real problem that
we have coming back from Iraq and Afghanistan, that being traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress disorder? We’re going to explore that.”

Florida National Guard –

**Army Commission Drops Hints On Final Report; Reorg Likely**


Breaking Defense © November 24, 2015

By Sydney J. Freedberg Jr.

As it hustles towards a February 1st deadline, the National Commission on the Future of the Army remains pretty tight-lipped on what it’ll say in its report to Congress. Even our usually savvy sources are mostly shrugging their shoulders. However, the commissioners have dropped enough hints for us to make two educated guesses. First, the final report will probably recommend the Army make more use of so-called “multi-component” organizations which combine both regular active-duty soldiers and reserve or Guard personnel. If they’re not heading in that direction, they’ve certainly teased people” with enough mentions of it, said one long-time observer of Guard issues……..

**Johnson new commander at Camp Blanding**


Clay Today Online © November 26, 2015

By Mike Ford

With a chest full of ribbons reflecting a distinguished career, Green Cove Springs resident Col. Matt Johnson is now the top chief at Camp Blanding Joint Training Center. Johnson has been in the Florida National Guard since 1986 – just two years after graduating from Orange Park High School. The Georgia native moved to Orange Park when he was 15, graduated from high school
and enrolled at an area community college before transferring to Florida State. He finished his bachelor’s degree and enrolled in graduate school while teaching in Tallahassee where he took part in weekend drills. "I spent 11 years as a traditional guardsman and in 1999, I went active duty with the National Guard. My status is called active guard reserve – it’s kind of like a church. You have a full-time pastor, but the laity are only there on Sundays. Yet, you need someone to keep the lights on," he said.

NAS Whiting Field –

Sen. Nelson OK with Syrian refugees (Article discusses F-35’s, drilling in the gulf and Whiting Field)


By Carlos Gieseken

Pensacola News Journal © November 24, 2015

Nelson spoke about the recently passed Fiscal Year 2016 Defense Authorization Act and the provision that authorizes the Navy to swap Outlying Field 8 on Nine Mile Road with similar land in Santa Rosa County near Whiting Field Naval Air Station. "We've only tried 40 years to get that," said Escambia County Commissioner Wilson Robertson. "It's a win for everybody." Outlying Field 8, near the Navy Federal Credit Union campus, is 640 acres and is used by the Navy's Training Wing 5 for helicopter pilot training. The Navy would get a helicopter-landing facility closer to Whiting Field, and economic developers will have a site near Interstate 10 to show prospective tenants. "It has been a long time coming," Nelson said. "The good news is that it is going to happen." ……..

NAS Key West –

Blue Angels pay a visit to the Keys in anticipation of spring air show


KeysNet © November 25, 2015

By ANTHONY CAVE
U.S. Marine Corps Capt. Corrie Mays was a ballerina growing up. She still graces the air, however, but as a naval flight officer. Mays is an events coordinator for perhaps the U.S. Navy's most notable group of air professionals -- the Blue Angels demonstration team. "I've shared a passion for aviation my entire life," Mays said shortly after landing the Blue Angels No. 7 F/A-18 jet with Navy Lt. Tyler Davies Monday afternoon on the Boca Chica field at Naval Air Station Key West. The Blue Angels are scheduled to return to Boca Chica Field in April for their semi-annual Southernmost Air Spectacular, a show of aviation skill. The last time the Blue Angels staged a Key West show was in 2013 -- their second and final show that year because the U.S. government shut down due to budget fights in Congress. The other show was at Naval Air Facility El Centro, Calif.

DOD Issues –

**Retirement changes mean tough choices for troops ... eventually**


Military Times © November 23, 2015

By Leo Shane III

In the coming days, President Obama will sign legislation putting in motion a massive military retirement overhaul that will affect the personal finances of hundreds of thousands of service members for decades to come. Just not right away. Defense officials still have dozens of details to work out with the new system, and the first individuals to feel the impact likely haven’t enlisted yet. The new retirement plan, included in the 2016 defense authorization bill expected to be signed into law by the president before Thanksgiving, represents not only a dramatic shift in the government’s approach to recognizing troops’ service but also a shift toward bringing Defense Department benefits more in line with private-sector offerings.

Other Items of Interest –

**Grueling pace for old planes: Tankers and their maintainers can’t afford to slow down**
Air Force Times © November 23, 2015

By Jeff Schogol

―Thirty feet, nice and slow. … Twenty feet. … Fifteen, nice and slow. Ten feet. Five feet. And contact, boom interphone.‖ Senior Master Sgt. Jimmie Rush Jr., an Air Reserve Technician and boom instructor with the 514th Air Mobility Wing at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, moves the boom from his KC-10 into position to refuel another tanker, giving his pilot constant updates as two massive jets inch toward an aerial hook-up. Every 15 minutes, somewhere in the world, an Air force tanker like Rush’s KC-10 takes to the skies. The flying fuel tanks spend their days — and nights and weekends — standing ready to provide badly needed fuel to most any friendly who asks. They even top off Air Force One. But the tankers are among the oldest airplanes in the Air Force. The average age of a KC-135 is 55 years old; the "newer" KC-10s average 30 years old, officials said……..

Beyond the Draft: Rethinking National Service

Defense One © November 29, 2015

By Stan McChrystal

In light of the recent coordinated attacks in Paris, the bombings in Beirut and the downing of a Russian airliner, the United States and other countries are grappling with questions about the best way to strengthen our security and defeat the Islamic State, or ISIS. Despite disagreements on strategy and tactics, most agree that this is not a battle that can be won overnight or through military solutions alone. Like many global challenges we face, it will require commitment, resolve, flexibility and resilience– not just our military strength and prowess. While there is no single antidote to the myriad of challenges we face here at home and overseas, there is a single idea that we believe can contribute to bolstering our citizenry’s ability to address all of them: national service………..

Senior Navy Officer Nominated to Lead Pentagon’s Installations, Energy Office

DefenseCommunities.org © November 23, 2015

By Stan McChrystal

In light of the recent coordinated attacks in Paris, the bombings in Beirut and the downing of a Russian airliner, the United States and other countries are grappling with questions about the best way to strengthen our security and defeat the Islamic State, or ISIS. Despite disagreements on strategy and tactics, most agree that this is not a battle that can be won overnight or through military solutions alone. Like many global challenges we face, it will require commitment, resolve, flexibility and resilience– not just our military strength and prowess. While there is no single antidote to the myriad of challenges we face here at home and overseas, there is a single idea that we believe can contribute to bolstering our citizenry’s ability to address all of them: national service………..
President Obama has nominated Vice Adm. Philip Cullom, who has served in command positions at sea and in senior policy posts ashore during a three-decade career, to become assistant secretary of defense (ASD) for energy, installations and environment. Cullom has served as deputy chief of naval operations for fleet readiness and logistics since March 2012. Previously he was director of the Navy’s energy and environmental readiness division; from 2008 to 2010, he was director of the fleet readiness division. From 2007 to 2008, he commanded the Eisenhower and George Washington strike groups as commander of Carrier Strike Group 8. Cullom would replace John Conger, who has led the installations and energy office on an acting basis since it was created last December. Conger previously served as acting deputy undersecretary of defense (DUSD) for installations and environment. The fiscal 2015 defense authorization bill directed DOD to create the new energy and installations post by merging the office of the ASD for operational energy plans and programs with the office of the DUSD for installations and environment…….
TF members --

1. **No Task Force Meeting in December** – The next meeting of the Florida Defense Support Task Force will be on Thursday, January 21, 2016 at the Doubletree by Hilton – 101 S. Adams St., Tallahassee FL.

2. **Attachment: TPG Monthly Report**

Regards, BG.

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Articles of Interest:

DOD Budget–

**Second CR Possible, McCarthy Says**
Defense Communities 360 © December 1, 2015

By Dan Cohen

A second continuing resolution (CR) may be in the works as the Dec. 11 deadline for clearing a fiscal 2016 omnibus to keep the federal government open quickly approaches. On Tuesday House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) said he was open to passing a one-week stopgap if negotiators need more time to complete work on the $1.1 trillion spending package, reported CQ. ―I’m hopeful to get it all done and voted on by the 11th. If not, we’re here until the 18th and it won’t make any difference that we will get that done,” McCarthy told reporters. The White House similarly signaled it would not block a short-term CR if it would allow lawmakers to finish hashing out the details for an omnibus. At this point, negotiators still are aiming to reach a deal in time to meet the Dec. 11 deadline, according to the story. Appropriations staff and committee members worked through the Thanksgiving holiday to iron out remaining disputes, with discussions still continuing around the clock. A final bill likely won’t be released until next week, at the earliest……

GOP leader sees security fights, but no shutdown

Military Times © November 30, 2015

By Leo Shane III

House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy predicts a host of security fights in Congress over the next few weeks, but none contentious enough to force a government shutdown. Speaking to reporters on Monday, the No. 2 Republican in the House said that security issues like proper screening of Syrian refugees and ease of travel from conflict areas have become his caucus’ top short-term priority, with lawmakers looking for quick legislative avenues to address the problems. That could include adding provisions to a pending budget omnibus bill that lawmakers must finalize by Dec. 11 or risk another partial government shutdown. But McCarthy said he does not see that focus derailing progress on the budget issue. ―I don’t see a shutdown happening,” the California representative said. ―I don’t hear people talking about shutting the government down on this.”……
House GOP Moves to Sidestep Showdown over Refugee Issue in Spending Package

http://defensecommunities.org/blog/congress-dod/house-gop-moves-to-sidestep-showdown-over-refugee-issue-in-spending-package/?utm_term=0_04f8ff45e8-278cf5a204-55784537&ct=t%28RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN%29

Defense Communities 360 © December 2, 2015

By Dan Cohen

House Republican leaders are planning to advance legislation tightening the visa waiver program as part of an effort to avoid a government shutdown over language many conservatives are pushing to restrict the acceptance of refugees from Syria and other Middle Eastern countries. By moving a measure to make it tougher for some foreigners to travel to the United States without a visa, House leaders plan to avoid a fight in the fiscal 2016 omnibus spending package over more contentious language requiring the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security to sign off on resettlement applications from Middle Eastern refugees, reported the Hill. A bill overhauling the visa waiver program is expected to draw bipartisan support and most likely President Obama’s signature. The measure could be added to the omnibus package as well........

Kendall: 'Disproportionate' Cuts Planned to Modernization, R&D


Defense News © December 2, 2015

By Aaron Mehta

The Pentagon expects to make “disproportionate” cuts to modernization and research and development funding in its fiscal 2017 budget request, while personnel and readiness remain stable, according to the department’s top acquisition official — cuts which may well include a slowdown in F-35 production. Those decisions could slow down the much ballyhooed “Third Offset” strategy, identified by Defense Secretary Ash Carter as key to maintaining America’s military technological dominance. Speaking Wednesday, Frank Kendall, undersecretary for acquisition, technology and logistics, said — what you’ll see in ’17 is disproportionate hits to modernization, R&D and procurement.” While acknowledging that the budget deal reached by Congress was — much better than it could have been,” he still warned that the budget decisions will have an impact on the ability to push forward with the Third Offset strategy.........
Democrats Reject GOP’s Omnibus Proposal over Policy Riders

http://defensecommunities.org/blog/congress-dod/democrats-reject-gops-omnibus-proposal-over-policy-riders/?utm_term=0_04f8ff45e8-8e1eba5f7b-55784537&ct=t%28RSS_dc360_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN%29

Defense Communities 360 © December 3, 2015

By Dan Cohen

Democratic leaders on Wednesday slammed the Republicans‘ opening offer for a fiscal 2016 omnibus spending bill over more than 30 “poison pill” add-ons covering policy issues including the environment, financial regulations and Syrian refugees. “Their offer wasn’t real. We couldn’t accept it,” said Rep. Nita Lowey (N.Y.), the top Democrat on the Appropriations Committee. When you’re working on a bill that, you know, we hope can pass the House and the Senate, you don’t send over an offer … that’s going nowhere,” Lowey said, reported the Hill. On Wednesday night, Democrats said they intended to respond to the GOP with a counteroffer shortly. The back-and-forth comes as lawmakers are trying to strike a deal over a $1.1 trillion spending package before the current continuing resolution expires Dec. 11. Even though topline spending levels were agreed to in October’s two-year budget deal, Congress still needs to come to terms over 12 separate spending titles, including any language affecting federal policy……..

DOD Comptroller Takes Significant Cuts in Force Structure off the Table for FY’17 Budget


Defense Communities 360 © December 4, 2015

By Dan Cohen

Defense officials primarily focused their attention on the department’s weapons programs as they looked for ways to cut $15 billion from the draft fiscal 2017 budget released at the beginning of the year, Comptroller Mike McCord said earlier this week. October’s two-year budget deal will provide DOD $23 billion in relief compared to the Budget Control Act spending cap for FY 2017, but its funding still falls short of the Pentagon’s draft plan. The size of the force, compensation and readiness are largely off limits as officials try to make up the shortfall, McCord told the audience at the Center for Strategic and International Studies……..
**Budget '17: Pentagon Planning Cuts in Production, R&D**


Defense News © December 6, 2015

By Aaron Mehta

As it puts the finishing touches on its fiscal 2017 budget plan, the Pentagon is preparing to slow down programs in production and limit R&D funds to protect end strength and readiness levels. Over the past week, two top Pentagon officials, Comptroller Mike McCord and Frank Kendall, undersecretary for acquisition, technology and logistics, made it clear that to make up an expected $15 billion delta between what the congressional budget deal gave the department and what the Pentagon planned on having will require targeting the equipment, and not personnel, side of the budget. On Nov. 30, McCord said, "There will probably be some slowdowns in modernization programs," in the Pentagon's budget request, noting that he does not see "any major changes to the size of the force" being included. Then on Dec. 2, Kendall warned that "the disproportionate hits on '17 are going to be on modernization. I think that will probably be more on production than R&D."………

Space Coast –

**SpaceX wants to land next booster at Cape Canaveral**


Florida Today © December 1, 2015

By James Dean

After its next launch, SpaceX hopes to fly a Falcon 9 booster back to a landing site on Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, making its first attempt to bring a booster down on land rather than on a platform in the ocean. The Cape landing attempt has not yet been approved as part of a commercial launch license to be issued by the Federal Aviation Administration, and the timing of SpaceX’s next launch – the company’s first since a failed flight in June – remains uncertain. SpaceX could try to launch of a group of small commercial communications satellites for New Jersey-based Orbcomm Inc. as soon as Dec. 15, but has not yet confirmed a date with the Air Force’s 45th Space Wing………
MacDill AFB –

Credit for medics: Which colleges are giving it a shot

http://www.militarytimes.com/story/veterans/best-for-vets/education/2015/11/30/credit-medics-which-schools-have-degree-programs/75148990/

Military Times © November 30, 2015

By Patricia Kime

Air Force Staff Sgt. Kedrian Guy was a medic for eight years, including a deployment to Qatar in 2009, where he worked in various hospital settings, caring for injured combat troops, transporting patients and running an immunization clinic in the evenings. Today, he is in clinical rounds at Tampa General Hospital, Florida, as a student nurse. On a recent Tuesday, the 30-year-old was in the transplant ward caring for patients waiting for, or having received, organ donations. “This means the world to me. It's a dream come true, treating people and helping them as a nurse,” said Guy, who will graduate in December from the University of South Florida and be commissioned through the Air Force Nurse Enlisted Commissioning Program……..

Socom leader explains his support for women as commandos


Tampa Tribune © December 3, 2015

By Howard Altman

U.S. Special Operations Command, headquartered at MacDill Air Force Base, will play a major role in carrying out the decision by Defense Secretary Ash Carter to open all military positions to qualified women. Starting in January, women will be allowed to drive tanks, fire mortars and lead infantry soldiers into combat,” Carter said at a Pentagon news conference Thursday. “They’ll be able to serve as Army Rangers and Green Berets, Navy SEALs, Marine Corps infantry, Air Force parajumpers, and everything else that was previously open only to men.” The decision comes after consultation with the officers commanding the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines, as well as Army Gen. Joseph Votel, Socom’s commander. Each service and Socom was allowed to request that certain jobs be exempt from full gender integration, but only the Marines did, and Carter denied it…………
Eglin AFB –

Fire truck repair saves wing thousands, ensures readiness


DVIDS © November 30, 2015

Story by Samuel King

The 96th Logistics Readiness Squadron's Fire Truck Maintenance Section recently saved the wing thousands of dollars through a little bit of luck and innovative thinking. The $25,000 savings came when Airmen and civilians here procured and installed a 5,000 pound axle and differential assembly on Tanker 46, a broken 1989 model 2,000-gallon water tanker fire truck. "Finding parts and repairing Tanker 46 was more than efficient. It was priceless," said Tech. Sgt. Golangia Jenkins, vehicle control officer for the 96th Civil Engineer Group. "Its parts are obsolete and the repair job saved money the Air Force didn't have. There is no funding in the foreseeable future to replace that vehicle."

McCain Says F-35's Cost May Force Pentagon to Cut Back Purchases


Bloomberg © December 2, 2015

By Anthony Capaccio

The Pentagon must reevaluate whether it can afford to buy its entire planned fleet of F-35 jets, the costliest U.S. weapons system, Senator John McCain said. Under the original plan crafted after Lockheed Martin Corp. beat Boeing Co. in 2001 in a competition to build the fighter, 1,013 of the program’s 2,443 jets were supposed to be delivered by next Sept. 30. So far, 179 have actually been delivered, McCain, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, said at a session with reporters Wednesday hosted by the Christian Science Monitor. “That leaves well over 2,000 to complete the program” so “we would have to purchase 100 F-35s per year for more than 20 years at a cost of $10 billion to $12 billion a year,” said McCain, an Arizona Republican. “That seems unlikely, and all that assumes the F-35 will provide the necessary capability.”

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AFSOC Leveraging Lessons from Navy for AC-130J Laser


Defense News © December 3, 2015

By Lara Seligman

Air Force Special Operations command is working with the Navy to leverage lessons learned from the deployment of a shipboard laser weapon system to inform the development of a miniaturized version that could be mounted on an AC-130 gunship. The Air Force plans to install a high-energy laser on the Lockheed Martin special operations gunship by 2020, AFSOC chief Lt. Gen. Bradley Heithold said Dec. 3. Heithold announced the pursuit earlier this year, but gave additional details during a presentation at the Association of Old Crows annual symposium in Washington, including the test aircraft to be used in the program………..

Thousands gather to see top military training equipment


My News 13 © November 30, 2015

By John Davis

It’s more than a game. –We are the epicenter of modeling simulation for training for the world,” said Operation Blended Warrior Director Kent Gritton. Nearly 15,000 people gathered in Orlando this week to get a first-hand look at some of the top military training simulation equipment in the world. The National Training and Simulation Association's annual conference in Orlando is highlighting one of Central Florida's best kept economic secrets. It’s big business and that’s why nearly 70 companies with offices in Orange County are among the 500 exhibitors showing off new technologies, like the U.S. Navy's augmented reality training program based in Orlando. –Augmented reality, you’re taking the actual scene and you're augmenting it by placing digital elements of relevant meaningful information into that scene. So, the idea of that a picture
is worth a thousand words, we look at that augmented reality is worth a million if you will,” explained U.S. Navy Lt. David Rozovski, who is based in Research Parkway near the University of Central Florida. “With augmented reality I can take that 600 page manual and condense it into a 12-step vignette or slideshow if you will that shows not only the different steps that are needed but the motions in which they need to accomplish said steps.”

NS Mayport –

**Inaugural Award Ceremony Held At Afloat Training Group Mayport**


Florida Times-Union © December 2, 2015

By Lt.j.g. Cassandra Caswell

Afloat Training Group Mayport (ATGM) believes that the future of the Navy lies not only in the sailors within the Mayport basin, but in the military dependents as well. As such, the Chief Petty Officer’s Association at ATGM has organized an annual Military Dependent Leadership and Academic Award (MDLAA) in effort to recognize the best all-around military child dependent throughout the academic year. On Nov. 20, the inaugural awards ceremony was held in which Chase Gardner was honored as not only the first recipient, but as the inspiration behind the award. “When we brought Chase in for a mock interview, he didn’t do well and he knew it,” said Junior Ashwood, ATGM’s Command Master Chief. “But he took the potential harsh words of the truth and ran with them. He’s used it as fuel to become a better student and leader.”

Avon Park Air Force Range –

**Air Force range tests jet-stopping equipment**


Highlands Today © December 4, 2015

By Paul Catala
Powering up to 100 knots — about 115 mph — the F-16 U.S. Air Force fighter jet roared about a quarter mile toward a cable barrier spanning across the runway. In a matter of seconds, the pilot had soared down the runway and engaged the cable, using a hook on the back of the aircraft, which absorbed the plane’s energy, halting the aircraft and slowly pushing it back to a complete stop. In that instant, one of the ongoing annual safety and regulatory tests that take place annually at the Avon Park Air Force Range was over. Thursday, Air Force 93rd Fighter Squadron pilots, using two fighter jets flown in from Homestead Air Reserve Base, spent the day getting the base’s arresting gear and BAK Certification updated. “Arresting gear” is the mechanical system used to rapidly decelerate an aircraft as it lands. The gear is primarily used to stop jets landing on aircraft carriers, but on land-based airfields, it’s used for expeditionary or emergency uses........

NAS Whiting Field –

**Whiting Field named top base in Navy**


Pulse © December 2, 2015

By Drew Buchanan

Naval Air Station Whiting Field has been named the best small base in the Navy for 2015. The Navy’s annual Installation Excellence Award winners were announced today by the Commander, Navy Installations Command. NAS Whiting Field has earned the title for the second year in a row. This installation excellence award program recognizes the Navy’s top three large and small installations, and rewards installation performance consistent with the command’s strategic goals and Office of the Secretary of Defense criteria for the DoD-wide Commander in Chief Installation Excellence Awards. RDML Jeff Ruth, Commander, U.S. Navy Region Northwest and RDML Mary Jackson, Commander, Navy Region Southeast display the awards for the Navy’s top installations at Navy Installations Command headquarters...........

Defense Industry –

**Experts: Pentagon’s Tech Edge Faltering**

The Pentagon’s weapons buying system needs an overhaul if the US military is to maintain its waning technological edge, experts told senators on Tuesday. The president last week signed a 2016 defense policy bill laden with acquisition reform measures, but lawmakers want to make even more changes. The remarks during the Senate Armed Services Committee are the latest over a series of hearings in that chamber and in the House Armed Services Committee in recent months to explore further reforms. Witnesses testified that the system labors under 180,000 pages of regulations, struggles to keep talented workers and is being outpaced by the proliferation of commercial technology and by other nations. Once the leader in night vision technology, the US has been eclipsed by France, and import controls have driven countries who want to buy from the US to competitors like China………

DOD Issues –

Special operations strike force heading to Iraq


USA Today © December 1, 2015

By Tom Vanden Brook

The Pentagon plans to send a special operations intelligence and strike force of between 100 and 150 troops to Iraq to conduct raids on Islamic State targets in Iraq and Syria, a senior Defense official told USA TODAY Tuesday. Defense Secretary Ash Carter told Congress about the extra troops Tuesday but did not specify how many. The Defense official spoke on condition of anonymity because officials were not authorized to comment publicly on details of the new force. The team will include intelligence analysts and special operations troops skilled in conducting raids, the source said. Often those troops include Navy SEALs and the Army's Delta Force. Carter told the House Armed Services Committee that the commandos will coordinate with the Iraqi government and fight with Iraqi and Kurdish peshmerga troops. The new troops will be above the U.S. forces already in Iraq, the official said. The unit will have intelligence gathering and analysis capabilities and the forces to strike targets………..

Gen. Mark Welsh sounds alarm on undermanned Air Force
"Virtually every mission area" faces critical manning shortages, according to Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Welsh, and the Air Force risks burning airmen out. "We're at 82 to 85 percent manning levels in virtually every mission area," Welsh said during a discussion Tuesday at the Atlantic Council in Washington, D.C. "We can't reach in someplace and grab more manpower to fix a problem anymore. And so we have got to figure out different ways of using our people in a more efficient way or we will wear them out. And if we lose them, we lose everything." One reason for the undermanning is that the Air Force is far smaller than it used to be, while its responsibilities are increasing, Welsh said. In 1990, for example, the Air Force had more than 535,000 active-duty airmen. A quarter-century later, the Air Force had an end strength of 312,980, a roughly 41 percent decline.

All combat jobs open to women in the military

The Defense Department will lift all gender-based restrictions on military service starting in January, Defense Secretary Ash Carter announced Thursday. The historic change will clear the way for women to serve alongside men in combat arms units. Carter's decision comes as a rebuke to an internal recommendation from the Marine Corps that sought to keep some jobs closed to women. "While the Marine Corps asked for a partial exception in some areas such as infantry, machine gunner, fire support reconnaissance and others, we are a joint force, and I have decided to make a decision which applies to the entire force," Carter said at a Pentagon press briefing Thursday. "The important factor in making my decision was to have access to every American who could add strength to the joint force," he said. In effect, Carter's decision will open to women about 220,000 jobs in all, or about 10 percent of the entire active and reserve force. Most of those jobs are in Army and Marine Corps infantry and armor units.

US Air Force Running Out of Bombs to Fight ISIS
The US military says its 15-month bombing campaign on the Islamic State is depleting its munitions supply and that additional money and other support is "critical" for "the long fight." "We're expending munitions faster than we can replenish them," Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Welsh said Friday. "We need the funding in place to ensure we're prepared for the long fight. This is a critical need." The Air Force has reportedly fired more than 20,000 bombs and missiles in Syria in the fight to dismantle the self-proclaimed Islamic State. Air Force officials say they have enough munitions right now but project a shortage and want more long-term planning and funding to meet future needs. "B-1s have dropped bombs in record numbers," Welsh also said. "We are able to manage inventories to sustain operations against ISIL at this time. We do need funding in place and the ability to forecast for production to be ready for the long fight ... We continue to work on a longer term funding strategy which is absolutely required." ………

Other Items of Interest –

**USAFL Wants To Buy 100 Long Range Strike-Bombers**

http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/air-space/2015/12/02/usaf-wants-buy-100-long-range-strike-bombers/76682822/

Defense News © December 2, 2015

By Lara Seligman 6:13 p.m. EST December 2, 2015

The US Air Force wants to buy 100 Long Range Strike-Bombers, Secretary Deborah Lee James said today, a figure at the high end of the 80-to-100-aircraft purchase the service predicted earlier. "I believe the number is 100," James said today at an event at the National Press Club, offering a rare detail on the service's plans for the hush-hush contract recently awarded to Northrop Grumman. The service has faced mounting pressure in recent months to procure more LRS-Bs than the planned 80 to 100 planes, particularly in the face of increased aggression from Russia and China.………

**White House considers opening the draft to women**
The White House announced Friday that it will consider making women eligible for the draft, one day after the Pentagon's historic decision to allow women in all combat roles. White House spokesman Josh Earnest said officials at the Pentagon are deliberating on the change and will work with Congress on the review of the Military Selective Service Act. On Thursday, Defense Secretary Ash Carter announced all military jobs will be opened to women, including the most dangerous combat posts. Earnest said Pentagon officials notified Congress about Carter's decision and provided an analysis on the impact that it could have on the law. "We're going to work with Congress to look at that analysis, to review it, and sort of get others' opinions to determine if additional reforms or changes to the act are necessary in light of this specific decision," he said……