

First Flight News

FIRST FLIGHT MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION
NEWSLETTER

December , 2019



Hello to everyone.

I hope everyone had a great Thanksgiving Holiday!!

The Duck Woods Country Club was the overwhelming choice for our December luncheon.

So:

Our next meeting will be Tuesday, December 3rd, 1130 AM, at Duck Woods Country Club, 50 S Dogwood Trlail, Southern Shores, NC 27949. Please make **your reservations with Pete at petecamerota@yahoo.com, or 252-330-4000 no later than Monday, 2 December**. This will greatly assist with our planning.

A special thanks to Dave Connaughton for handling the coordination with Duck Woods.

Some important news:

Year-end Shutdown Looms as Budget Uncertainty Paralyzes the Uniformed Services

By: Mark Belinsky

NOVEMBER 26, 2019

(Photo by Teddy Kwok / EyeEm)

Our servicemembers need your help. Tell Congress to pass a budget now!

Congress has failed again to deliver a federal budget for the new fiscal year that started Oct. 1, opting instead for another continuing resolution (CR), this one funding the government through Dec. 20.

Another CR creates more uncertainty and less predictability for uniformed servicemembers and their families, and may set the stage for a government shutdown during holiday season amid turbulent times and partisanship on Capitol Hill. Federal agencies have unfortunately become accustomed to the CR

problem: In 13 of the last 18 years, the federal government has started the fiscal year under a continuing resolution.

[RELATED: [Tell Congress to Pass a Budget Now](#)]

Why Is a CR So Bad?

A CR is very restrictive because no new projects, acquisitions, or changes to contracts may occur. Each of the military services have compelling reasons why a CR is damaging to our national security and fiscally irresponsible. Some examples from recent news coverage:

- **Army:** Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy and his chiefs of staff have identified [31 modernization projects](#) requiring immediate funding to maintain progress in innovation, specifically in urgent areas of cybersecurity and technology.

- **Navy:** Service leaders have [outlined the cost of continuous CRs](#), which may have reached \$4 billion since 2011. The funding is vital to build up the strength of the service to address contemporary threats.
- **Air Force:** About [145 projects in development will be negatively affected](#) by the budget impasses, according to Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. David Goldfein ... if they have not been already. Included on the list is an estimated \$466 million for funding the natural disaster recovery efforts at Tyndall AFB, Fla., and Offutt AFB, Neb.

Another example that may be closer to the daily lives of military families: When discussing the long road to bringing Army barracks and family housing back to standard at a recent roundtable, Sergeant Major of the Army Michael A. Grinston reminded the crowd, “We can’t work on anything new under a CR and we can’t start any construction.”

When our lawmakers come back from Thanksgiving break, they will only have three weeks to get a budget signed into law before the end of the first session in the 116th Congress. House Appropriations Committee Chairwoman Rep. Nita Lowey (D-N.Y.) and Senate Appropriations Chairman Sen. Richard Shelby (R-Ala.) were able to reach an agreement over this last weekend, signaling they are ready to get to work and pass the appropriations. The agreement provided subcommittee funding allocation, but challenging topics regarding the border wall and military construction funding still remain contentious.

MOAA urges our members and readers to reach out to your members of Congress and let them know that our servicemembers and their families need their help in passing a budget before the Dec. 20 deadline so they can resume normal lives and operations. [Send a letter to your legislator](#) today.

Some more important news:

MOAA, Other Groups Ask VA to Expand List of Diseases Linked to Agent Orange Exposure

By: Amanda Dolasinski

NOVEMBER 15, 2019

Air Force photo

MOAA is among 20 veteran and military service organizations asking the VA to add four diseases to the Agent Orange presumption list in an effort to help thousands of affected veterans receive benefits.

In a Nov. 15 letter to VA Secretary Robert Wilkie, leaders of the groups requested the immediate addition of hypertension, bladder cancer, hypothyroidism, and Parkinson's-like symptoms to the list. Each of the diseases has been linked to exposure to Agent Orange by researchers from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine.

“However, VA has yet to take any actions on these four presumptive diseases, leaving thousands of veterans waiting,” according to the letter (Read it [here](#)).

An estimated 900,000 veterans have been exposed to Agent Orange, an herbicide sprayed from the air to destroy the vegetation enemy fighters used as cover during the Vietnam War.

There are [14 diseases](#) on the VA’s current Agent Orange presumptive exposure list. The designation offers veterans an easier path to qualify for disability benefits.

During congressional hearings earlier this year, top VA leaders said they were considering adding four diseases, with a decision to be released by summer. No decision was announced.

[RELATED: [VA Reaching Out to Blue Water Navy Vets Previously Denied Benefits](#)]

The veteran service organizations said they are concerned by the recent release of internal VA documents that indicate officials challenged former VA Secretary David Shulkin's decision to add the diseases. They said they are concerned the VA believes the cost outweighs the need to get veterans help.

“Mr. Secretary, the men and women who served in Vietnam were exposed to Agent Orange and far too many have suffered effects scientifically linked to that exposure,” the leaders wrote to Wilkie. “We call on you to end the wait.”

Looking forward to seeing everyone Tuesday, December 3rd, at Duck Woods Country Club.

All the best,
AI

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www.moaa.org/chapter/firstflight

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