



## @USNPEOPLE WEEKLY WIRE

### 1.) Commission: Offer Choices And See Compensation Costs Fall/ 29 JAN 15 [\[LINK\]](#)

Stars and Stripes Tom Philpott

The panel's final report makes 15 recommendations that, if fully implemented, would cut personnel spending for the departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs by \$12 billion a year. The most surprising idea is to replace the triple-option Tricare program for military families and working-age retirees with a selection of commercial health insurance plans.

### 2.) Senior Enlisted Continuation Board Results Released to Command Triads/ 27 JAN 15 [\[LINK\]](#)

The board results for the performance-based Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 Senior Enlisted Continuation Board (SECB) have been approved and posted on BUPERS online (BOL) for command triads, Jan. 27. SECB is a performance-driven review of active duty, full-time support, and Reserve master chiefs, senior chiefs and chiefs with more than 19 years of service and three years' time-in-grade. The board helps to ensure the highest standards are maintained in the senior enlisted ranks.

### 3.) CNP Visits Stennis; Answers Questions / 26 JAN 15 [\[LINK\]](#)

Q: When will we see deployment lengths get back to something more normal, around seven months instead of 10 months? A "Now that we have started to get maintenance under control across the Navy, and we have reduced the number of total deployers out there, we are going to start to see those deployment lengths come back to something more normal. We expect that almost all the deployments for the big decks, both carriers and amphibious assault ships, are going to be down to seven months and back to a normal cycle."

### 4.) Engaging Pacific Fleet Sailors/ 28 JAN 15 [\[LINK\]](#)

We are looking into the PFA to improve your satisfaction with the program. Based on Fleet feedback, we are reviewing the height, weight and body fat requirements to see if changes to the standards or measurement techniques are needed. We are exploring ways to reward and recognize those Sailors who consistently demonstrate outstanding performance on the PFA. We're also looking into ways in which we could perhaps reinforce a culture of fitness with expanded gym hours and improved nutrition support. You're not satisfied with the current PFA – shipmates in Hawaii made that clear. I'll keep you posted on the decisions regarding the above efforts.

### 5.) Sailors Receive More Than \$4 M in HDP-T Pay/ 28 JAN 15 [\[LINK\]](#)

Hardship Duty Pay-Tempo (HDP-T) eligible Sailors have received \$4.2 million in their paycheck as of Jan. 28, according to Navy officials. More than 5,500 Sailors from the George H.W. Bush Carrier Strike Group (CSG) and Bataan Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) received the HDP-T pay in their December and January paychecks.

### 6.) 21st Century Sailor Office bi-weekly roll-up:

Every other week, we roll up the various stories in the 21st Century Sailor Office domain. Below are the latest products for total Sailor fitness:

-There Must Be Resolve (NavyNavStress Blog): [\[LINK\]](#)

-21st Century Sailor Office Director Holds All-Hands Call at Pearl Harbor: [\[LINK\]](#)

To sign up for the @USNPeople Weekly Wire, email [usnpeople@gmail.com](mailto:usnpeople@gmail.com),  
or find it online at [www.navy.mil/cnp](http://www.navy.mil/cnp)

## **1.) Commission: Offer Choices And See Compensation Costs Fall/ 29 JAN 15 [LINK](#)**

Stars and Stripes Tom Philpott

The Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission is urging President Obama to endorse and Congress to enact sweeping changes to military health insurance and retirement options to “empower” service members to make choices that would drive down compensation costs.

The panel’s final report makes 15 recommendations that, if fully implemented, would cut personnel spending for the departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs by \$12 billion a year. The most surprising idea is to replace the triple-option Tricare program for military families and working-age retirees with a selection of commercial health insurance plans.

On retirement, current force members could stay under their High-3 plan. But the commission forecasts 40 percent of them, if given a chance, would replace that plan offering no benefits before 20 years’ service with a “blended” plan that lowers annuities for careerists but offers some retirement savings to the 83 percent of service members who leave short of 20 years.

That menu of health insurance offerings to the military would be similar to the Federal Employees Health Benefits Insurance Program (FEHBP) for civilians. Indeed the Office of Personnel Management, which administers FEHBP, would also run the military plans. But rather than saddle active duty families with the same costs paid by civilians – roughly 28 percent as premiums – they would receive a new two-part Basic Allowance for Health Care (BAHC) to cover at least most of their new health insurance costs.

One part would be paid to the selected insurance plan directly and cover member premiums for an average-priced plan. Part two of BAHC, to cover co-pays and deductibles, would go to members to use as they choose.

The intent of those dollars is to incentivize military families to be careful consumers of health care. They are not today, the report says. Tricare Prime users, for example, make 55 percent more outpatient visits than do civilians enrolled in HMOs who have to cover co-pays out of pocket.

Participating insurance plans would have to include military treatment facilities in their provider networks. Patients and plans would be enticed to use on-base care with offers of reduced co-pays and fee reimbursements, particularly for complex medical cases that keep wartime skills sharp. Tricare administrative costs are excessive, the report says, and yet too many beneficiaries don’t get timely care or quality care. Also, Tricare provider networks have coverage gaps because contractors set physician fees too low. Relying on commercial insurance would improve access, speed referrals for specialty care, save millions of dollars in administrative costs and leave beneficiaries more satisfied, the commission predicts.

The commission would leave unchanged Tricare for Life, the golden supplement to Medicare that elderly retirees have prized for a dozen years.

Working-age military retirees and families, however, would fare less well. Initially they would have to pay five percent of health plan premiums. That cost share would grow by one percentage point a year over 15 years so that retirees under age 65 eventually pay 20 percent of health insurance costs. The costs would stop when eligible for Medicare and Tricare for Life.

Commissioners say beneficiaries, from during their site visits and public hearings, expressed a desire for more health care choices than the ponderous Tricare program can provide.

The retirement plan they propose for new entrants and for any current members drawn to its features would still provide an immediate although reduced annuity after 20 or more years' service. But among its new features would be a Thrift Savings Plan with government matching of member contributions up to five percent of monthly basic pay. This would be portable like 401k plans in the private sector. TSP would vest after only two years and members could roll it into civilian employer 401ks on leaving service.

Also, 12 years into a military career, members would receive a lump-sum "continuation" payment, equal to at least two-and-a-half months of basic pay, more if they have a critical skill. To take the cash, members would have to agree to serve four more years. Presumably 16 years in, most careerists would decide to serve for at least 20 years to gain the immediate annuity. But with the new plan retiring members would have more choices.

They could draw an immediate annuity based on 2 percent (not the current 2.5 percent) of average basic pay for each year served; or accept a lump sum amount and a smaller annuity; or accept a full cash out and forego any military annuity until they age into social security.

At that point, military retired pay would start and equal the retired pay of their peers who elected to draw full annuities since time of retirement.

The nine-member commission, including two retired generals and four former members of Congress, endorses current basic pay tables and the tradition of paying tax-free allowances for housing and subsistence. They also unanimously recommend streamlining, not dismantling, commissary and exchange systems to preserve current on-base shopping discounts.

Other recommendations would strengthen support of families with more childcare and improved access to services for special needs children.

The commission doesn't endorse ending the offset of Survivor Benefit Plan payments for thousands of widows who also receive VA Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC). But it would give retirees the option of paying higher SBP premiums to ensure that their surviving spouses, if deemed eligible for DIC, would also receive full SPB.

Commission ideas to "safeguard" the Post-9/11 GI Bill could spark some of the sharpest protests from military and veterans associations. One would impact many of the more than 423,000 members who have elected to transfer GI Bill benefits to family members in return for serving longer. The transferred benefit now includes a housing stipend equal to monthly housing allowance locally for a mid-grade enlisted member. The commission says that stipend shouldn't be paid to family member students after June 2017 even if it was part of the original deal.

<http://www.stripes.com/news/us/commission-offer-choices-and-see-compensation-costs-fall-1.326556>

## **2.) Senior Enlisted Continuation Board Results Released to Command Triads/ 27 JAN 15 [LINK](#)**

From Chief of Naval Public Affairs

WASHINGTON (NNS) -- The board results for the performance-based Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 Senior Enlisted Continuation Board (SECB) have been approved and posted on BUPERS online (BOL) for command triads, Jan. 27.

Commands will personally notify the 161 Sailors not selected for continuation or in a hold status.

Of the 7,017 eligible candidates 98 percent or 6,854 candidates were selected for continuation.

Next Tuesday, Feb. 3, all results will be posted on BOL at <https://www.bol.navy.mil> where all Sailors may check their results.

Senior enlisted considered by the FY15 board are classified in one of three categories in BOL:

S - Selected for continuation.

N- Not selected for continuation.

H- Not selected for continuation - In a hold status.

SECB is a performance-driven review of active duty, full-time support, and Reserve master chiefs, senior chiefs and chiefs with more than 19 years of service and three years' time-in-grade. The board helps to ensure the highest standards are maintained in the senior enlisted ranks.

The FY15 SECB convened at Navy Personnel Command (NPC) Oct. 27. The board reviewed 7,015 active duty, full-time support, and Reserve records; 3,412 chiefs, 2,111 senior chiefs, and 1,492 master chiefs.

Active duty and full-time support Sailors not selected for continuation must transfer to the Fleet Reserve or retire by Aug. 31, unless operationally waived by the Deputy Chief of Naval Personnel to remain on active status by Nov. 30.

Reserve Sailors must transfer to the Retired Reserve (with or without pay) by Sept. 1. Those with an approved operational waiver from Commander, Navy Reserve Forces Command can remain in a drilling status until an approved date of not later than Dec. 1.

The deadline for non-continued Sailors requesting transfer to Fleet Reserve, retirement or Retired Reserve (with or without pay) to NPC has been extended to March 15 from the original date of Jan. 31 announced in NAVADMIN 180/14.

The deadline for submitting operational waivers and readiness appeals has also been extended to March 15. Formats for operational waivers and readiness appeals can be found at <http://www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/boards/enlistedcontinuation/Pages/default.aspx>.

More information on the SECB board can be found at <http://www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/boards/enlistedcontinuation/Pages/default.aspx>.

For more news from Chief of Naval Personnel, visit [www.navy.mil/local/cnp/](http://www.navy.mil/local/cnp/).

### **3.) CNP Visits Stennis; Answers Questions / 26 JAN 15 [LINK]**

Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Andrew P. Holmes

Pacific Ocean – The chief of naval personnel (CNP) and fleet master chief responsible for naval manpower embarked aboard USS John C. Stennis (CVN 74) to meet with Sailors, Jan. 23 and 24.

Vice Adm. William Moran, CNP, and Fleet Master Chief April Beldo, Moran's senior enlisted advisor, visited to the crew of Stennis for the first time since the ship finished her Docking Planned Incremental Availability (DPIA) period November 2014.

"Last time we were out here was when you were back in the yards, back in November 2013," said Moran. "I remember walking through the hangar bay at that time thinking 'When are we ever going to be able to see this

ship underway?’ And here we are, almost 15 months later, so it’s great to see you underway, great to see you operating.”

With Stennis currently undergoing carrier qualifications in preparation for deployment, Moran and Beldo spoke with the crew in a live question and answer session over ship’s SITE TV.

“We’re out here to listen and learn from you,” said Moran. “And we get a lot of great questions and comments. Some of the things we can answer and those things we can’t answer we take back with us and try to answer for you.”

Here are a few of the questions asked by Stennis’ crew:

Q: When will we see deployment lengths get back to something more normal, around seven months instead of 10 months?

A: “That question comes up often,” said Moran. “As you know, Vinson is out there in the northern Arabian gulf on a scheduled 10-month deployment, a very long time. Prior to her, Bush was out there for nine months. Bataan was out there for 10 months. The reason we’ve been on these long deployments is, quite frankly, we’ve been running these platforms very hard for the past 10 or 12 years. And maintenance is taking it in the shorts.” “Now that we have started to get maintenance under control across the Navy, and we have reduced the number of total deployers out there, we are going to start to see those deployment lengths come back to something more normal. We expect that almost all the deployments for the big decks, both carriers and amphibious assault ships, are going to be down to seven months and back to a normal cycle.” “Prognosis is good; the secret to success is good maintenance periods. A tip of the hat to Stennis for getting this ship out in very close to being right on time, which is unusual for carrier maintenance periods today. That effort does not go unnoticed, and I know how much this crew participated to get this ship out of the yards and ready to go to sea. If we keep seeing efforts like yours around the fleet, we’ll be able to get back to those normal schedules, about seven months.”

Q: Is it true that after August 2015 we will no longer be able to pick orders for our next command?

A: “That is not a true statement,” said Beldo. “What billet based distribution (BBD) is going to do is allow commands to make sure their billets are put into the system with exactly what they want. And then once that is done, once you go into CMSID, which will still be available, when you pick your job you will have to meet the particular criteria that the command has set. BBD is going to make sure commands have the Sailors they need to fit the billets they have.”

Q: When can conventional Machinist Mates expect to get pro pay for reactor work?

A: “Your junior officers brought that up in a call last night with us,” said Moran. “It’s the first time I’ve heard that request, and I’ve got to be honest with you, I know how hard those conventional guys are working down in the reactor department. We are going to take that back and ask the people who fund that program to see if we can’t carve out a little bit of money for those guys. No promises, but I am going to take it back and work on that.”

Q: Why are you changing uniforms? The best way to fix it, is to stop fixing it.

A: “You’re probably right, shipmate,” said Beldo. “The Admiral and I get this a lot as we travel. If we just stop, it would work itself out. But one of our responsibilities is to listen to the fleet. A lot of the feedback we get is that we need to fix this in the uniform, or fix that, or this doesn’t fit right.”

Moran added, “I’m with you shipmate, about too many changes. I’d love to slow down the pace of change on our uniforms, and I think we’ll get there once we get this next trudge of Cracker Jack uniforms out. We just finished the wear test on that, got a lot of good feedback on that. Got a lightweight version of the NWU coming out, just finished the wear test on that. Beyond that there are very few changes in the enlisted force, other than

the fire resistant coverall, which we are redesigning to be more utilitarian, more lightweight, more breathable, and frankly looks sharper than the one we have today.”

Q: How come the Navy only pays 80 percent of Tuition Assistance (TA), making us pay more out of pocket?

A: “Not true, shipmate,” said Moran. “We fund TA at 100 percent. I tried to go to 75 percent last year during the last budget cycle, but your CNO braced me up and said ‘what don’t you understand about 100 percent TA?’ So we fully funded TA, and it will not be reduced. What has happened was last year the Department of Defense set a policy that we would no longer fund the fees for registration and labs. That’s it. Beyond that, nothing’s changed.”

Q: Are you a Seahawks fan?

A: “As long as I’m on board this ship, I’m a Seahawks fan,” said Moran. “The minute I walk off this ship I’m a Giants fan. It’s been a rough couple years for the Giants, and a great couple years for the Seahawks. But I’ll be cheering for the Seahawks in the Super Bowl because I love Russell Wilson. I love the leadership of that team and I think they’re going to win, so good luck to the Seahawks.”

#### **4.) Engaging Pacific Fleet Sailors/ 28 JAN 15 [\[LINK\]](#)**

By Rear Adm. Rick Snyder Director, 21st Century Sailor Office

As the 21st Century Sailor Office Director, it’s important for me to get out into the Fleet to share the latest information on 21st Century Sailor programs from the D.C. perspective, but also because it’s vital that I hear from Sailors, both at senior levels and on the deck plate. Several topics were at the forefront in a recent trip to visit the Fleet in Hawaii – the physical fitness assessment (PFA), mental health, sexual assault, and prescription drugs.

We are looking into the PFA to improve your satisfaction with the program. Based on Fleet feedback, we are reviewing the height, weight and body fat requirements to see if changes to the standards or measurement techniques are needed. We are exploring ways to reward and recognize those Sailors who consistently demonstrate outstanding performance on the PFA. We’re also looking into ways in which we could perhaps reinforce a culture of fitness with expanded gym hours and improved nutrition support. You’re not satisfied with the current PFA – shipmates in Hawaii made that clear. I’ll keep you posted on the decisions regarding the above efforts.

Sailors were also concerned about mental health – theirs and that of their shipmates. It’s a concern I share. Last year was a tough year in the Navy for suspected deaths by suicide. We lost 68 Sailors, 53 active and 15 reserves. Every one of those losses is tragic; one is one too many. Being there for every Sailor every day means knowing your shipmates – build those relationships so you’ll know when something’s wrong and step in to help without having to ask.

Many of you are asking for more stress control training and better access to mental health specialists. We will continue to provide Operational Stress Control (OSC) Mobile Training Teams (MTTs) to the Fleet. Though limited in number and availability, I’ve heard nothing but outstanding feedback on the training the teams provide.

We’re looking to increase the number of teams available to the Fleet, and I encourage you to explore the [www.navynavstress.com](http://www.navynavstress.com) website for additional resources. You can access many of the training tools the OSC MTTs provide. We’ve also added deployed resilience counselors on big-deck ships to provide better deckplate, non-medical counseling support for Sailors faced with challenges. We want to ensure Sailors understand the tools to help navigate stress and have access to mental health specialists wherever and whenever they need them.

Sexual assault, like suicide, is a vexing problem. We must continue together towards our goal of a Navy in which every Sailor understands what sexual assault is, how to play a role in prevention, and how to report it; a Navy in which if prevention fails, victims know they will be supported and everyone knows that perpetrators will be held appropriately accountable.

To that end, we're making progress. We know that compared to 2012, the occurrences of unwanted sexual contact are down and reports of sexual assault are up. This means fewer Sailors are being sexually assaulted, and more of those assaulted are confident to come forward to get the help they need and help us hold the perpetrators appropriately accountable. However, we still have work to do. Male Sailors who are sexually assaulted are reluctant to come forward. We need to address this challenge by encouraging and supporting those Sailors. We also know that retaliation for reporting sexual assault is a problem that we must continue to address. People who have the courage to come forward after a traumatic event must be treated with dignity and respect. They cannot be stigmatized or unfairly disadvantaged. We're looking to better understand the problem of retaliation and get after it.

Another topic that came up during the All Hands Calls was the rise in prescription drug misuse and abuse. Positive hits on urinalysis tests are down for illicit drugs. However, the number of Sailors popping for prescription drugs is increasing. Prescription drugs may only be taken when validly prescribed to you by a medical professional. To help you understand what exactly this means, we're working with the Bureau of Medicine to make it clear to Sailors what validly prescribed means. If you're not sure whether it's a legal use of your medication, don't take it. Contact your doctor – it's not worth risking your career.

On a positive note, when I arrived in my room at Pearl Harbor Naval Station, one of the first things I noticed was the MWR 'glossy' – the booklet listing MWR activities available to Sailors – fantastic gyms, Mongolian BBQ, standup paddle boarding, fishing trips, painting classes surf lessons, hikes to waterfalls, group fitness classes, bike trips and more. Wow – this is how we help prevent destructive behaviors. Provide the opportunity for lots of constructive behaviors – a chance to make good decisions. BZ to the Hawaii MWR team!

I also got to meet with one of my favorite groups – the local CSADD chapters. CSADD is the Coalition of Sailors Against Destructive Decisions – Sailors helping Sailors. These Sailors get it. They take full advantage of the activities listed in the MWR 'glossy.' In fact, they add to the list by organizing events within and amongst the commands, in port and at sea. If you don't know CSADD, you're missing an opportunity to help yourself and help your shipmates...get involved.

My thanks to all Sailors for your hard work, sacrifices, and support of our Navy and our Nation. My particular thanks to the many Sailors who spoke up during my visit to the Pacific Fleet. As always, please continue to share your feedback with me. I will be traveling again throughout the year to engage face-to-face, but in the meantime, feel free to email [usnpeople@gmail.com](mailto:usnpeople@gmail.com) to share your comments and questions. I'll see you out in the Fleet .

#### **5.) Sailors Receive More Than \$4 M in HDP-T Pay/ 29 JAN 15 [\[LINK\]](#)**

From Chief of Naval Public Affairs

WASHINGTON (NNS) -- Hardship Duty Pay-Tempo (HDP-T) eligible Sailors have received \$4.2 million in their paycheck as of Jan. 28, according to Navy officials.

More than 5,500 Sailors from the George H.W. Bush Carrier Strike Group (CSG) and Bataan Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) received the HDP-T pay in their December and January paychecks.

The Sailors received HDP-T at \$16.50 daily, and did not exceed the \$495 monthly maximum when they were

operationally deployed beyond 220 consecutive days.

The Sailors that received the money are part of the aircraft carrier USS George H.W. Bush (CVN 77), Carrier Air Wing (CVW ) 8, Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 22, the guided-missile cruiser USS Philippine Sea (CG 58), and the guided-missile destroyers USS Truxtun (DDG 103) and USS Roosevelt (DDG 80).

The Bataan group was comprised of the multipurpose amphibious assault ship USS Bataan (LHD 5), the amphibious transport dock ship USS Mesa Verde (LPD 19), and the amphibious dock landing ship USS Gunston Hall (LSD 44).

Sailors who left on deployment with Bataan were the first to benefit from HDP-T.

"I think it's important that the younger Sailors who experience a long and arduous deployment for the first time understand that the Navy recognizes their hard-work, and is prepared to offer monetary reward for it," said Intelligence Specialist 1st Class Charles Kirby, a Bataan Sailor.

Bataan returned to her homeport in Norfolk Oct. 31, 2014 and George H.W. Bush returned to its homeport , Nov. 15, 2014.

A Bush Sailor added how he appreciated the extra money for all his extra time and work he spent away from home.

"It was a nice added bonus for me giving my time, sweat and effort for the government," said Information Technician 1st Class (SW/DW/AW) Gregory Thomas. "It feels like the government's looking out for us."

HDP-T, took effect Sept. 17, 2014 and Sailors and Marines will receive the pay on a monthly basis. Reservists serving in individual augmentee assignments that meet the 220-day threshold will receive their pay upon completion of their mobilization. The DoD has authorized HDP-T for two years.

For more news from Chief of Naval Personnel, visit [www.navy.mil/local/cnp/](http://www.navy.mil/local/cnp/).

#### **6.) 21st Century Sailor Office bi-weekly roll-up:**

Every other week, we roll up the various stories in the 21st Century Sailor Office domain. Below are the latest products for total Sailor fitness:

-There Must Be Resolve (NavyNavStress Blog): [\[LINK\]](#)

-21st Century Sailor Office Director Holds All-Hands Call at Pearl Harbor: [\[LINK\]](#)