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1) Focus on Ethics / 9 FEB 14 [\[LINK\]](#)

By Adm. Jonathan Greenert, Chief of Naval Operations

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I expect honor, courage and commitment – commitment to the institution. We have to have the honor to not lie, cheat or steal. We have to have the courage to not stand for those who do. We need to talk about it and I charge our leaders to talk about what our values mean because they are the foundation of what we're about.

2) Accountability Actions in Sexual Assault Cases / 10 FEB 14 [\[LINK\]](#)

By Rear Adm. Sean Buck, Director 21st Century Sailor Office

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From Chief of Naval Operations Public Affairs

WASHINGTON (NNS) -- Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Adm. Jonathan Greenert released a video blog message Sunday reinforcing the Navy's commitment to ethics, particularly integrity.

Speaking about ethical failure and cheating on tests at the Navy's Nuclear Power Training Unit in South Carolina, Greenert said, "These events must serve to remind us that, although the vast majority of our Sailors live our navy ethos and core values, we must always remain vigilant to the potential to make mistakes. This is particularly critical when it comes to integrity."

"A failure of integrity undermines a unit's trust," said Greenert in his Ethics blog to Shipmates. "As Sailors, our very survival is founded on trust - it is the core of our success at sea - and has been for centuries."

Based on recent incidents across all the services there is an invigorated effort across the Department of Defense to reinforce ethics and service core values. Before the weekend, on Friday, in light of recent allegations of misconduct in the military services the Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel announced that a senior officer will be appointed to promote and enforce a culture of ethical behavior and good moral character. Additionally, DoD released last week further details into Hagel's ethics initiatives and orders to Navy and Air Force to conduct reviews of the nuclear enterprise.

During one of Greenert's three videos is this blog he explains what these reviews will look at within the nuclear enterprise. And in a second video he provided initial thoughts on what Navy leaders need to reinforce as they face a recent number of missteps.

"I don't think we have an ethics problem across the Navy. But I think we need to reinforce our core values and our core commitment to that," he said. "We need to talk about integrity."

Core values should be an everyday discussion, in every operating environment. The discussion should be active and reciprocal, Greenert stated.

Lastly in the video blog Greenert addressed what is expected from today's Sailor, be it senior or junior.

Senior leaders are especially tasked with upholding the example of strong core values to the junior sailors, said Greenert.

"What I expect from our leadership is honor, courage and commitment," said Greenert.

Commitment to the institution should be the basis of ethical decision making, said Greenert.

"When we raised our right hand we said, 'I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same' that means the institution," said Greenert. "We need to and we will remain vigilant. We will continue to drive home to our people the importance of integrity: the fact that it is the foundation of all that we do in the U.S. Navy."

2) Accountability Actions in Sexual Assault Cases / 10 FEB 14 [\[LINK\]](#)

By Rear Adm. Sean Buck, Director, 21st Century Sailor Office

Several national papers ran a wire service article this weekend that analyzed sex crimes reported in Japan between 2005 and early 2013. The article made it clear that military leaders recognize that sexual assault is a crime that destroys trust, divides teams and degrades the military's operational effectiveness. Unfortunately, the article provides numbers without context or background. Without rebutting the article point by point, I want to raise a few issues that should be considered.

First, it's important to note that there are multiple offenses covered under Article 120 of the UCMJ, ranging from rape to non-penetrating contact offenses, such as groping. Second, each case is judged on its own merits, and if there is a conviction, the sentencing is awarded based on the unique facts in that case.

The article might lead Sailors to think that commanders – particularly those in Japan — do not take their responsibility to make accountability decisions in sexual assault cases seriously. This is simply not true. In Japan, as in all other locations, every report of sexual assault is and will continue to be taken seriously, fully investigated by the Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS), and presented to commanders for action as appropriate.

NCIS agents and commanders do not work alone. Vice Adm. Nan DeRenzi, Judge Advocate General of the Navy, has noted the involvement military lawyers have in the process. "Prosecuting attorneys and staff judge advocates work with NCIS and commanders every step of the way," she said, "offering legal advice on investigative actions and advising commanders on the appropriate disposition of cases." Cases which may warrant trial by general court-martial go through an Article 32 pretrial investigation process that is presided over by a judge advocate who makes recommendations regarding proper disposition. Then, before any case is referred to a general court-martial, the commander's staff judge advocate provides separate written advice as to appropriate disposition.

If you read my blogs you know that a lot is happening, not just in Japan, but around the world to prevent sexual assault in our Navy. The truth is, only relatively recently did we begin to understand the magnitude of the challenge. As soon as we learn, we act – and not just piece by piece, but along the entire continuum of care.

We've created changes in our reporting, investigative, and adjudicative procedures – changes which have earned critical trust and resulted in increased reporting, which deepen our understanding.

First and foremost, responsibility for fostering a climate intolerant of sexual assault lies with our commanding officers. They, along with their executive officers and senior enlisted advisors, have the responsibility of creating a professional command climate that will not tolerate, condone or ignore sexist language and behavior, hazing, sexual harassment, or sexual assault. Over the past year, we have aggressively implemented a variety of new

initiatives designed to improve victim confidence, including reforms to the military justice system, creation of dedicated legal support to victims, enhanced access to victim advocacy, and increased training and awareness for the entire force.

The FY14 NDAA provided the most sweeping reform to the Uniform Code of Military Justice since 1968 – over 30 different military justice provisions that are intended to enhance victims’ rights and improve the military justice process. The Navy believes that these reforms significantly strengthen our prevention and response program.

If we are to continue to gain the trust of service members, then we must ensure that our process of investigation and adjudication not only protects the due process rights of the accused but also fully respects victims’ rights, to include that the victim be protected from the accused, accorded every means of privacy, and treated with dignity and respect.

And in fact, we’ve already seen a significant increase in reporting this year; a 46 percent increase since last year. That’s good. That proves to me that the awareness level of this problem has already improved. Faith in our process is growing to the point that more victims are now coming forward. I’m hoping that sooner than later, the survey data will match the reporting data. Both numbers need to come down.

3) Taking the Helm of Your Career, Career Waypoints Update / 11 FEB 14 [\[LINK\]](#)

Career Waypoints (C-WAY) is the program through which Sailors apply for their reenlistment approval.

Since coming online in June, there's been a lot of information published on the ins and outs of the program, but many Sailors are finding that getting a quota is as simple as verifying their information with their career counselor, and receiving approval with one click of a mouse.

Petty Officer 2nd Class Molly Greendeer, assigned to Naval Station Norfolk said she thinks C-WAY offers Sailors more options for their future in the Navy.

"I did not have any experience with PTS, but the big difference I saw was the conversion choices. With PTS if you didn't get selected in rate and you chose to ride it out until your last look, that was it for you and you were separated," said Greendeer. "With C-Way you're not only given the choice to stay Navy in rate, but also given the choice to convert to another rate if yours is overmanned."

Since the program began, first class petty officers in participating ratings received approval on their first request. Now (since Feb. 1) all Sailors in open ratings will be approved instantly.

"In the past, applications get processed through a rack and stack that could take up to 6 weeks," said Capt. Karan Schriver, the head of enlisted plans and policy at the Bureau of Naval Personnel.

Schrive said since C-WAY has been instituted, it's been much easier for Sailors to get a quota and on a quicker timeline. One of the early enhancements was the auto-generation of pre-populated reenlistment requests when Sailors entered their C-WAY reenlistment window.

"These enhancements save career counselors and Sailors a lot of time and also save on administrative workload," said Schriver. "The majority of Sailors receive approval on their first request. In fact, the overall final disapproval rate has been less than one percent since the introduction of Career Navigator."

Sailors can also plan on having more control when the "Sailor Portal" is launched later this year. Once in place, Sailors will be able to see their application before it's submitted, and if information needs updating, they can inform their career counselor to make the necessary changes.

"It's really important to maintain your own records," said Petty Officer 1st Class Joshua Skiles, a career counselor at Fort George G. Meade, Md. "Your previous evals, PRT scores and clearance information are all part of the application, so it's important to keep up with that stuff and make sure you're doing well [in those areas]."

Although rating categories can change month to month, it's important that Sailors approaching their C-WAY window monitor their rating outlook. Sailors who know they're in a closed rating should look at their conversion options early, which may include transition to the Reserves. Some Sailors may need to retake the AFCT (in-service version of the ASVAB) to help them qualify for a wider range of conversion options.

"It's your career," said Skiles. "If you're in your window, you need to be right next to your career counselor doing the application and actively seeking your quota."

To find out more about Career Waypoints, talk to your command career counselor or visit www.npc.navy.mil and click the Career Waypoints link on the left side of the page.

Click [HERE](#) for a Career Waypoints User Guide.

4) Unanimous Approval in U.S. House for In-state Tuition for Vets / 11 FEB 14 [\[LINK\]](#)

Lawmakers in a deeply divided House of Representatives can't agree on much anymore, but they're unanimous on at least one thing: Veterans shouldn't be stuck with out-of-state tuition costs at public universities.

A bill that would force schools to ease such residency rules for vets — or lose GI Bill eligibility entirely — passed the House Feb. 3 without a single dissenting vote, 390-0.

The measure must still pass the Senate and be signed by the president to become law, and a more expansive veterans bill in the Senate, which covers many issues in addition to in-state tuition, appears to lack the broad, bipartisan support of the House bill. But such a show of support in the House likely means the chances are good that some version of the in-state tuition proposal will become law by the end of the year.

The House vote "sends a strong message that both parties believe veterans should never be disqualified for in-state tuition at public colleges because of past military obligations," Ryan Gallucci, deputy legislative director for Veterans of Foreign Wars, said in a written statement.

The Post-9/11 GI Bill covers the full cost of tuition at public universities at the in-state rate but does not pay for the extra fees charged to students designated as out-of-state. This can often be a problem for vets, who have been ordered by Uncle Sam to move around the country or the world.

The cost difference is substantial. The average cost of in-state tuition at public schools in the 2012-13 school year was \$8,655, according to the College Board. For out-of-state students, it was \$21,706.

VFW and other veterans service organizations have pushed strongly for the House proposal. But some people have expressed reservations.

Under H.R. 357, dubbed the GI Bill Tuition Fairness Act, any school that doesn't offer in-state tuition to vets when the bill becomes effective in summer 2016 would be prohibited from accepting any GI Bill benefits.

Veterans using GI Bill benefits prior to that deadline could continue to do so as long as they remain enrolled at the school. But all other vets would have to either find another school or find another way to pay.

"In-state tuition requirements vary across all 50 states, and within schools, and one of our concerns is: Could, or how would, we help define a program that would not limit choices to our veterans?" Curtis Coy, a deputy undersecretary for the Veterans Affairs Department, said in an April 2013 congressional hearing.

Questions have also been raised about what the bill would mean for the bottom lines of federal and state governments, as well as universities.

"The men and women who served this nation did not just defend the citizens of their home states, but the citizens of all 50 states. This bill will ensure our veterans' educational benefits reflect that important principle," Rep. Jeff Miller, R-Fla., said in a written statement. "And because H.R. 357 saves the government money, it's a win for taxpayers as well as veterans."

But schools and state governments could have to make up for some of the money that the federal government saves.

Currently, public universities can help vets make up for the gap between in-state and out-of-state tuition with the Yellow Ribbon program, which is paid for jointly by schools and VA. The bill would make Yellow Ribbon unnecessary by essentially holding schools entirely responsible for the cost difference.

Barmak Nassirian, director of federal policy for the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, said his organization supports efforts to offer low-cost public university education to vets, but the legislation "abdicates all of the responsibility for balancing the books."

The in-state tuition rate is significantly lower than what it costs to educate students, Nassirian said. State budgets provide schools with extra money to make up that difference. But the House bill provides no extra money for schools.

"For Congress to simply come in and basically legislate a free lunch without paying for it ... would throw an enormous monkey wrench into the operation of public institutions," Nassirian said.

He added that state legislatures and boards of education sometimes control such tuition policies — not the universities themselves — so some schools might not be able to offer the tuition discount to vets even if they want to, and would become ineligible for the GI Bill as a result.

In order to qualify under the House bill, a vet must have at least 90 days of active-duty service and be within three years of separating from the military. Schools can require that vets “demonstrate an intent” to establish residency in their particular states.

In addition to its in-state tuition mandate, the bill would also:

- Impose stronger infectious disease reporting requirements on VA hospitals.
- Ban performance bonuses for VA executives for five years.
- Allow veterans to use vocational rehab benefits up to 17 years from discharge, instead of the current 12 years.

5) COLA Cap Repealed, Except for New Entrants / 13 FEB 14 [\[LINK\]](#)

By Tom Philpott

Bowing to colossal pressure from military associations, younger retirees and angry careerists who served through long and nasty wars, Congress has repealed the retiree COLA cap it enacted only six weeks ago.

Cost-of-living adjustments for military retirees under age 62 will not be set a full percentage point below annual inflation, starting in January 2016, as Congress previously approved in bipartisan debt reduction deal.

The COLA cap, however, will stay in effect for new entrants, those who first entered the military on or after Jan. 1 this year and eventually serve long enough to gain a lifetime annuity.

To be able to lift the COLA cap for most members and still save more than \$6 billion in federal spending over the next decade, Congress also voted to extend some across-the-board budget cuts, called sequestration, by a year through 2024. This will largely impact Medicare funding, congressional staff explained.

"I can't call it a clear cut victory because we were looking for full repeal" of the COLA cap, said retired Air Force Col. Michael F. Hayden, director of government relations for Military Officers Association of America. Though the "most egregious" features of the cap are rescinded, he added, it "still affects members of the future force."

The late-hour decision to retain the COLA cap for new entrants recalled for Hayden how Congress had voted to impose the "Redux" retirement plan on new entrants starting in 1986. Years later, when Redux was blamed for a drop in career force retention, Congress restored more robust retirement plan retroactively, enticing only a portion of careerists to stay under Redux in return for a \$30,000 bonus.

Congress now has started a "mini-Redux" generation, Hayden said. The effect over time, he said, could create new retention challenges. In the short term it violates promises made by lawmakers to avoid piecemeal changes to military retirement and await, instead recommendations due next year from a special commission on military compensation reform.

Following a now familiar script for a divided and largely dysfunctional Congress, a few powerful lawmakers again shaped a last-minute solution to sticky problem, behind closed doors when colleagues couldn't compromise.

It this case the urgent goal was repeal of the COLA cap that many lawmakers said they vehemently opposed, even though they voted for it in December as part of the bipartisan budget agreement negotiated by their budget committee chairmen, privately and on deadline as Christmas neared.

Adding to the urgency to act this time was a massive snowstorm that threatened to ruin lawmakers' plans for a two-week respite away from Washington D.C. if they spent too long debating how to pay for COLA cap repeal. The final solution was to extend sequestration by a year to replace more than \$6 billion in mandatory savings from military retirement.

The COLA cap repeal provision created a new mystery, similar to that surrounding parentage of original COLA cap idea. Recall that House Budget Committee Chairman Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) said the cap idea came from the Department of Defense. Senior Defense officials later denied that.

The new mystery is who added language that keeps the COLA cap in place for members who enter the military for the first time on or after Jan. 1, 2014. Most likely that was Speaker of the House John Boehner (R-Ohio), or a key adviser. Boehner was the first to reveal the feature at Capitol Hill press conference Tuesday morning. The last question was whether a vote to repeal the COLA cap, as planned for later that day, would make military compensation "reform" more difficult for Congress to achieve down the road.

"No, I don't think so," Boehner said. "What we're proposing [is that only] those who enlist from January 1st on will be covered under this new formula." Boehner called it a "fairer way" to save retirement dollars than by targeting those "already retired" and "already signed up for service."

Boehner had his modified COLA cap repeal language added to an obscure bill, S 25 from Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah), which the Senate had had approved last year to convey to a local utility in southern Utah access to an electrical distribution system built on nearby federal lands.

As a vehicle to repeal of the COLA cap, S 25 suddenly drew enormous support but also some strong objections. Rep. Adam Smith (Wash.), ranking Democrat on the House Armed Services Committee, complained about the both details of the bill and the process being used by leadership.

"This has been dropped on us at the absolute last minute," Smith told colleagues during a brief flood debate. "In fact, on a bill that has profound impacts on the budget in a number of different areas, we just moments ago received a broad outline of a [Congressional Budget Office] score of how it is going to impact that budget," leaving no time to consider its effect.

Critics of the COLA cap, including Hayden, noted that Congress had rushed to approve it in December with perhaps even less consideration.

Smith also criticized replacing nearer-term budget savings from the retiree COLA cap with cuts to other entitlements starting in eight years.

"So we are really simply robbing one group of deserving people to pay another group of deserving people," Smith said. "That is hardly responsible."

Dominating House debate, however, was the notion that it was wrong to break a promise to protect retirement benefits for service members who had sacrificed so much for so long in Iraq and Afghanistan. The House passed S. 25 on a 326 to 90.

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) that evening said he opposed the House plan to pay for COLA cap repeal by extending sequestration. By morning, with a snowstorm bearing down and Senate colleagues deadlocked, Reid had changed his mind.

Senate Democrats wanted to repeal the COLA cap and worry later about how to replace the savings. Senate Republicans favored repeal but wanted the savings replaced by closing a "loophole" in federal tax credits that benefitted the children of illegal immigrants.

That showdown was avoided when the Senate passed S 25, as amended, by a resounding vote of 95 to 3, and then promptly adjourned.