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Navy Sailors' and civilians' compensation would not be directly cut, but rather the rate of growth would slow from roughly three percent to one percent in pay and slow for BAH raises, Greenert said.

Continuing to speak on compensation, the conversation turned toward retirement.

"There is no plan, today, to change retirement," Greenert said. "There is a commission studying it, and heavy media coverage about the proposed ideas will continue. Anybody who is wearing a uniform today - that retirement system will be grandfathered which means: today's retirement system is their retirement system."

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You can download the app now at the [Apple iTunes](#) or [Google Play](#) app stores.

### 4) Navy, Marine Leaders Press Sequester Concerns; Face Fleet, Force Structure Questions / 12 MAR 14 [\[LINK\]](#)

By Otto Kreisher, SeaPower Magazine

In their opening statements and response to questions, Navy Secretary Ray Mabus, Chief of Naval Operations ADM Jonathan W. Greenert and Marine Corps Commandant Gen James F. Amos generally supported the funding provided by the fiscal 2015 budget request. But they all acknowledged that the reduced funding that would be allowed under sequestration in the following years would cut their force structure and readiness status to levels that would add significant risk to their capabilities to meet their commitments.

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## **1) CNO talks Compensation: Pay, BAH, and Tuition Assistance / 12 MAR 14 [\[LINK\]](#)**

By Chief Mass Communication Specialist Julianne Metzger, Chief of Naval Personnel Public Affairs

Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Adm. Jonathan Greenert sat down this week to film another episode of "Conversation with a Shipmate" discussing aspects of Navy's Fiscal Year 2015 Budget Proposal.

The Department of the Navy released its proposed \$148 billion budget for fiscal year 2015 (FY15), March 4. The budget is part of the \$495.6 billion defense budget President Barack Obama submitted to Congress the same day.

"Compensation is about half of our budget. We'd like to keep it to one half," said Greenert. "The idea is to limit the growth, not take out."

Navy Sailors' and civilians' compensation would not be directly cut, but rather the rate of growth would slow from roughly three percent to one percent in pay and slow for Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) raises, Greenert said.

In 2013 alone, BAH rates overall were raised 3.8 percent, depending on geographic location. In the FY15 budget new BAH rates will take into account the current five percent out of pocket expense along with a proposed one percent change to renter's insurance.

Inserting these changes incrementally and as members PCS, assures members who have made long-term commitments in the form of a lease or contract are not penalized if the area's housing costs decrease, said Greenert.

He went on to highlight that members will not see changes in their next pay check if they remain in their current duty station and that changes will be gradual if Sailors are moving to new duty stations.

Three components are included in the BAH computation: median current market rent; average utilities (including electricity, heat, and water/sewer) and average renter's insurance.

The new budget proposes that BAH does not include the average renter's insurance since some members choose not to make that purchase, said Greenert.

Continuing to speak on compensation, the conversation turned toward retirement.

"There is no plan, today, to change retirement," Greenert said. There is a commission studying it, and heavy media coverage about the proposed ideas will continue, Greenert said.

"Anybody who is wearing a uniform today - that retirement system will be grandfathered which means: today's retirement system is their retirement system," Greenert said.

If and when new options become available service members may have the option of transitioning to a new system. However, they will not be forced to accept a different retirement system than the one that was in effect during their service, Greenert said.

Greenert was asked about the projected FY15 budget that slated Tuition Assistance to 75 percent Navy funded, 25 percent funded by the Sailor. Greenert challenged this proposed change and said it needs rethinking and that

there will be more to follow on this issue.

"That's very important to me to have an educated force, I want [Sailors] to get the right education," said Greenert. "So they get something that is useful while they're in the military and when they leave the military and that enhances their life."

In FY14 Tuition Assistance remains 100 percent funded by the Navy and Greenert hopes to keep it that way.

"The bottom line is I want our kids to have the best education they can get," said Greenert.

This year's budget submission prioritizes funding for forward presence and continues to make critical investments in people and future capabilities. The additional investments proposed will be for retaining Sailors through the Quality of Service initiative.

The Navy seeks to reduce manning gaps at sea and improve the sea-to-shore flow of personnel to increase job satisfaction for Sailors.

"Every penny that the Navy gets out of compensation reform, will go into areas to improve the quality of service and work," Greenert said.

For more episodes of Conversation with a Shipmate [\[CLICK HERE\]](#)

## **2) Increased Assignment Flexibility Allows Detailers to Fill Anticipated Vacancies / 13 MAR 14 [\[LINK\]](#)**

A change to personnel policy now allows detailers to write orders directing the transfer of Sailors up to six months prior to or after their Projected Rotation Date (PRD).

Additionally, shore duty Sailors in paygrades E-4 to E-9 may be pulled for Early Return to Sea Duty, after having completed at least 24-months ashore.

A change to MILPERSMAN 1306-104 gives Navy detailers increased flexibility in filling anticipated fleet vacancies on time with a fully trained and qualified relief, according to NAVADMIN 058/14. Although the use of the Voluntary Sea Duty Program, Sea Duty Incentive Pay, and the Chief Petty Officer Early Return to Sea programs have made progress in improving fleet manning, there are times when the number of fleet vacancies and/or the associated training requirements for those positions do not align with the number or availability dates of Sailors in their orders negotiation window.

PRDs will not be adjusted and the current Career Management System/Interactive Detailing (CMS/ID) application and detailing policies remain unchanged. Sailors will still enter their CMS/ID order negotiation window nine months prior to their PRD. However, when they are selected for their next assignment, their orders may direct transfer earlier than the previous three months prior to four months after their PRD allowed. The actual transfer date will be determined by the commencement of training for the prospective job and the date of the anticipated fleet vacancy they are being ordered to fill.

Additionally, when the number of critical fleet vacancies exceeds the number of sea duty rollers, detailers may contact shore duty Sailors that are approaching or beyond 24-months ashore, and consider them for an early return to sea move. When being considered for an early return to sea requirement, Sailors will be contacted by their detailer, and their current command will be contacted by their placement coordinator, and they will be

afforded a 30-day window to submit an impact statement for consideration regarding their early transfer.

Also, nuclear enlisted sailors will have their initial sea tour PRDs set in accordance with their prescribed sea tour lengths. This change removes unnecessary administration from the ships, allows for more accurate personnel inventory reports and provides our Sailors with more accurate PRDs upon receipt of orders to their initial aircraft carrier sea tour.

For more information, read the message at [www.npc.navy.mil](http://www.npc.navy.mil).

### **3) Navy Releases New Mobile Game / 6 MAR 14 [\[LINK\]](#)**

The Navy Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention (NADAP) Office released a mobile game March 3 as part of the Keep What You've Earned campaign.

"Pier Pressure" was designed to promote responsible drinking among Sailors by incorporating real-life choices in an entertaining work-and-play scenario. The app also enables all Sailors to have important alcohol-related resources at their fingertips 24/7, including a blood alcohol content (BAC) calculator and local taxi search.

"During the development of the Keep What You've Earned Campaign, we heard from young, enlisted Sailors that the best way to reach them was through their mobile phones," said Dorice Favorite, Director of NADAP. "Pier Pressure will help Sailors understand how responsible drinking can keep their careers on track, and alternatively, how abusing alcohol can lead to serious consequences."

Favorite said the idea for the game came from the Sailors themselves, and NADAP engaged more than 110 Sailors in the testing process to make sure the app was both entertaining and educational. She explained that the goal of the game is to advance one's career, but players must make the right choices to be successful.

"In the game, the choices you make at the bar affect your skill level at work the next day, which in turn affects your player's evaluation reports," said Mike Aukerman, Alcohol Program Manager at NADAP. "Just like in real life, smart drinking choices help advance your career, while poor choices can get you separated from the Navy-a.k.a. game over."

Pier Pressure also features leaderboards, enabling players to compete with friends and shipmates. In addition to the game, the app provides resources to help Sailors drink responsibly in real life. The BAC calculator can help remind Sailors when they have had too much to drive, and the local taxi search can help them find a safe ride home.

You can download the app now at the [Apple iTunes](#) or [Google Play](#) app stores.

#### 4) Navy, Marine Leaders Press Sequester Concerns; Face Fleet, Force Structure Questions / 12 MAR 14 [\[LINK\]](#)

By the Otto Kreisher, SeaPower Magazine

Members of the House Armed Services Committee joined the Navy Department leaders March 12 in expressing concern that a return to sequestration-level funding in 2016 would severely affect the ability of the Navy and Marine Corps to execute their global presence mission and to meet the challenge of deterring or defeating a major adversary.

In their opening statements and response to questions, Navy Secretary Ray Mabus, Chief of Naval Operations ADM Jonathan W. Greenert and Marine Corps Commandant Gen James F. Amos generally supported the funding provided by the fiscal 2015 budget request. But they all acknowledged that the reduced funding that would be allowed under sequestration in the following years would cut their force structure and readiness status to levels that would add significant risk to their capabilities to meet their commitments.

Pressed by committee Chairman Howard "Buck" McKeon, R-Calif., on the effect of cutting the Corps to the projected sequestration limit of 175,000, Amos said that would be a "moderate risk force" built around 21 infantry battalions. In the event of a large-scale contingency, he said, "your Marine Corps would be fully manned, fully equipped, but all in. We'd come home when the war was over."

If another contingency occurred at that time, Amos said, it would require the president to call up the Reserves. There would be a "slower combat power buildup, the forces back home would be less ready and it would take longer to get there."

In a major war, he said, Marine recruits "would go from boot camp to the battlefield."

"The additional risk is lives (lost)," McKeon responded. "That's a big concern. It invites aggression." Committee members repeatedly questioned the Navy's ability to maintain the 11 aircraft carriers required by law and demanded by the regional combatant commanders when the future year budget projections do not include funds to put George Washington through the expensive midlife overhaul and nuclear refueling.

Mabus and Greenert said the Navy was committed to maintaining 11 active carriers, but conceded that doing that would require more money than would be available under sequestration.

Mabus said loss of George Washington would impact the Navy's ability to meet the demand for carrier presence and the shipbuilding industrial base, and impose greater stress on the remaining carriers from extended duration or increased numbers of deployments.

He said the budget action defers the decision on whether to refuel or retire George Washington to 2016. "That is a \$7 billion decision," the secretary said. "If we go back to sequestration limits that would be one of the factors we have to put back on the table."

Greenert noted the stated requirement by ADM Samuel J. Locklear III, the U.S. Pacific Fleet commander, for more than two carriers in theater, which already is hard to meet.

"If we don't have 11 carriers, you exacerbate the problem we already have," he said.

Rep. Randy Forbes, R-Va., chairman of the seapower and projection forces subcommittee, said by not putting the money in the future budgets to refuel George Washington, “you made the decision to go back to 10, you’re just waiting to announce it.”

Even if Congress put the money in next year, he said, “is there any possible way you can meet the time line” to put George Washington in for refueling?

Mabus said waiting until 2016 to make the decision “was to give us additional decision space. ... If we get the money, we have the exact amount of time we need to get the Washington in and out and the next carrier in” to the Newport News, Va., Shipyard.

“We’ve been given guidance to prepare future plans to keep that carrier in” service, he added. Talking to reporters after the hearing, Greenert said George Washington does not come back from Japan until mid-2016.

Forbes also attacked the proposed change in how the Navy counts its combat fleet, noting that the moment that goes into effect, the fleet goes from 280 to 290 ships.

“They are paper ships. Not a one that would meet the requirements of the combatant commanders,” he said. Neither Mabus nor Greenert responded.

There also were repeated questions about the future of the Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) program, which Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel has ordered reduced to 32 ships, instead of 52, while studying how to meet the need for a more survivable combatant, such as a frigate.

Mabus explained several times that the study could produce a different form of LCS, or a completely different ship. He said going from “a blank sheet of paper” to produce an entirely new ship would take 10 years.

“I have no idea what the cost would be,” he said.

Members also asked about building a 12th LPD 17 San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock ship or using the that hull form as the basis for the proposed replacement for the aging dock landing ships.

Amos said he “would love to have” a 12th LPD 17, but, added, “there is little to no money in the budget to do that.”

Mabus said using the LPD hull form was one of the possibilities for the LX(R), but the study was still ongoing.

Although most committee members took time to praise Amos, who is set to retire in October, Rep. Walter Jones, R-N.C., elevated his persistent attack on Amos for allegedly ordering his subordinates to “crush” the Marine snipers shown in a video urinating on dead Taliban and directing punitive action against Maj James Weirick when he raised that accusation, demanding Amos answer in writing a series of tough questions on his actions in that case.

Jones said he has “heard from too many Marines, active and retired. They are concerned about the integrity of the Marine Corps.”

But speaking to reporters after the hearing, Mabus made a point of praising Amos, calling him “a man of absolute integrity... He has my absolute, 100 percent support.”