

ACTIVE DUTY NOTES

SFC Bill Fedderly shared the following informative articles from the Army News Service. Bill adds the note that what we don't see is the upcoming draw down of troops. This action will be sending more veterans out to the already struggling job market. We will need to continue to be proactive in assisting these troops.

WASHINGTON (Jan. 5, 2012) -- President Barack Obama today announced a defense strategy he said will allow the military to defend the United States and its national interests while cutting military spending in a responsible, balanced manner.

The president spoke about the conclusions of the defense strategy review at the Pentagon briefing room today.

The strategy review's bottom line is that the United States armed forces will remain the pre-eminent military force in the world, the president said in a letter attached to the review.

White House and Pentagon planners will use the strategy to fund the budget Obama will submit to Congress in February. The strategy will lead to more than \$450 billion in defense cuts over the next 10 years.

"As commander in chief, I am determined that we meet the challenges of this moment responsibly and that we emerge even stronger in a manner that preserves American global leadership, maintains our military superiority and keeps faith with our troops, military families and veterans," Obama said.

The president stressed that this is a moment of transition for the military; after 10 years of war, he said, now is the time to make these changes. He pointed to successes against al-Qaida, including killing Osama bin Laden, as well as the withdrawal from Iraq and the beginning of the turnover of areas in Afghanistan to Afghan control as signs that the sacrifices American Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, Coast Guardsmen and civilians are having an effect.

As the conflicts end, the U.S. military will regroup and focus on broader challenges, especially as they pertain to the Asia-Pacific region, the president said. Obama had vowed to shift the focus during a trip to the region last year.

The United States also will work to maintain progress in the Middle East, Central Asia and North Africa. "We are supporting political and economic reform and deepening partnership as to ensure regional security," he said.

The strategy is not limited to the Defense Department, Obama said. All aspects of the U.S. government must work together, he explained, including diplomacy, development, homeland security and intelligence.

The president vowed to avoid mistakes made in downsizing the military after past wars, such as the "hollow force" of the late 1970s and early 1980s that followed the Vietnam War. "We will ensure that our military is agile, flexible and ready for the full range of contingencies," Obama said.

The United States will continue to invest in capabilities to combat the full-range of threats, the president said. He specifically mentioned investing in intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance programs and counter-terrorism capabilities, combating anti-access technologies, countering weapons of mass destruction and prevailing in all domains, including the cyber world.

"Most importantly, we will keep faith with our troops, military families and veterans who have borne the burden of a decade of war and who make our military the best in the world," the president said. While the military must make tough fiscal choices, Obama said, funding will continue to focus on wounded warriors, mental health programs and families.

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WASHINGTON (Army News Service, Aug. 19, 2011) -- Active-duty and reserve-component Soldiers, as well as veterans, who were denied Purple Heart awards for concussive or mild traumatic brain injuries, are encouraged to resubmit documentation for reconsideration of the medal.

Since the Vietnam War, concussions or mild traumatic brain injuries, or MTBIs, as a direct result of an enemy action has always been an injury that warranted the award of the Purple Heart -- according to Defense Department guidelines. Nevertheless, field commanders have sometimes been unclear on what constituted concussion.

With medical advances in the treatment and knowledge of concussion and MTBI injuries, the Army has been able to further identify the characteristics of the unseen wound and clarify guidance for entitlement to the Purple Heart, said Col. Tom Quinn, chief of Soldiers Programs and Services Division at Army Human Resources Command.

"In the past, concussion or MTBI injuries were very hard to diagnose," Quinn said. "Treatments varied and were not the same across the board and medical officers weren't always documenting that information in the Soldier's records."

To receive a Purple Heart, a wound has to be the result of enemy or hostile action and the treatment for that injury must be documented in a Soldier's official medical records by a medical officer, Quinn said.

For Purple Heart award reconsideration, the injury must have occurred on or after Sept. 11, 2001. Active-duty and reserve-component Soldiers must work with their chains of command, through the first general officer, by submitting a copy of their deployment orders, various Department of Army forms, a one-page narrative describing the incident and the conditions under which the Soldier was wounded.

"Two eyewitness statements, some type of incident report of the action or the cause of the wound that was the result of enemy action, and documented treatment by a medical officer in the Soldier's official medical records are needed," said Quinn. While treatment may have been performed by personnel other than a physician, documentation of the prescribed treatment must be solely by a medical officer.

Veterans should submit packages directly to Army Human Resources Command. It is the responsibility of the individual service member to obtain a copy of their deployment orders.

Veterans will also need to submit their DD Form 214 (Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty). More information on how submission requirements is available at: <https://www.hrc.army.mil/awards>.

Submission for reconsideration is not a guarantee of approval. Quinn said the Awards and Decorations Branch at HRC will make the final determination, then notify the Soldier or veteran in about 30 days on the board's decision.