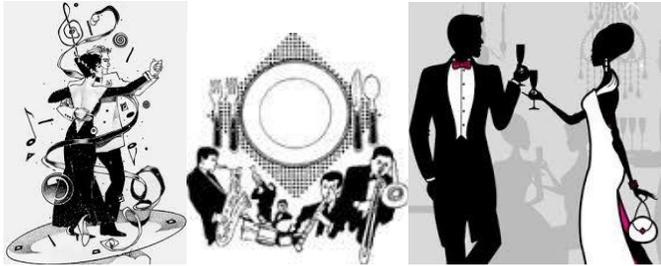




# Chattanooga Area Veterans Council

Serving veterans and their organizations of East Tennessee, North Georgia and North Alabama

## Chattanooga Navy Ball



The U. S. NAVY BALL, celebrating the Navy's 241<sup>st</sup> birthday, will be held Saturday, October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016, 6:00 pm, at the Marriott Hotel downtown Chattanooga. This year the Navy Ball is being sponsored by the Chattanooga Navy League. LCDR Tim White, CO of the Navy Operations Support Center, will be the guest speaker. A DJ will spin up tunes from the past and present. Dinner, music, dancing and camaraderie will provide an unforgettable evening that you won't want to miss. Attire is U. S. Navy Service Dress Blues or coat and tie for men and evening gowns for ladies. Tickets are \$45 per person for Officers and Civilians, Chief Petty Officers (E-7 to E-9) and Sea Cadet Leadership and Parents are \$35 per person, E-1 to E-6 are \$25 per person. Mail your reservations to Mark Parks, 6920 Sawtooth Drive, Ooltewah, TN 37363-6894 (Checks should be made out to "Navy League Chattanooga"). Join members of the NOSC, Navy League and Sea Cadet Families for a wonderful evening to celebrate 241 years of Honor, Courage and Commitment.

## VFW 4848 Grand Opening!!

VFW Post 4848 will hold its Grand Opening Saturday, August 27, 2016, 11:00 am to 4:00 pm. Their new location is 2402 Amnicola Highway.

Free Coke and Hot Dogs!

## Free Information for Military and Veterans



Free information about education, travel, finance, employment and benefits for Reserve, National Guard, Veterans and Military Families. You can visit the website and sign up for a free subscription. Click on the link below to access the site:

[http://ameriforce.net/category/reserve-national-guard/?utm\\_source=+digi+rdr+0916+RnG&utm\\_campaign=Sept+RnG+Rdr&utm\\_medium=email#038;utm\\_campaign=Sept+RnG+Rdr&utm\\_medium=email/page/2/](http://ameriforce.net/category/reserve-national-guard/?utm_source=+digi+rdr+0916+RnG&utm_campaign=Sept+RnG+Rdr&utm_medium=email#038;utm_campaign=Sept+RnG+Rdr&utm_medium=email/page/2/)

Sponsored by AMERIFORCE MEDIA

## 2016 Benefits for Veterans Dependents and Survivors Handbook

KNOW YOUR BENEFITS



Federal Benefits for Veterans Dependents and Survivors



[https://issuu.com/deptvetaffairs/docs/2016\\_benefits\\_for\\_veterans\\_depende](https://issuu.com/deptvetaffairs/docs/2016_benefits_for_veterans_depende)

## Sea Cadet Leadership Looking For Help With Fundraiser Event

Every year, the Hurricane and Signal Mountain Sea Cadets spend approximately \$3,000 per budget year providing uniforms and sponsorships, among other things, to the Sea Cadets and League Cadets. In 2017 Sea Cadet Leaders would like to take the cadets, "money free" on a weekend camping trip. They are looking for 53 volunteers on September 17th, from 0800 to 2000 (8:00 am to 8:00 pm for you civilian types). 15 of the 53 volunteers must be adults (age 18 and older).

For additional information and to volunteer contact Stacy Kehoe, NSCC Commanding Officer, USNSCC Hurricane Division at slk40ax@gmail.com.

**Spirithorses FOR VETERANS**

**R & R at the Ranch**

**SPIRITHORSES FOR VETERANS**

**SUNDAY, AUGUST 28TH**  
2 PM-5 PM AT EAGLES REST RANCH

**Meet and Enjoy the Horses at ERR!**  
All military members and their families are invited:  

- Meet and Greet with Tinker Bell & Sarah
- Walking Trails
- Fishing on the Lake (bring your own gear)
- Hiking through the Foothills
- Beautiful Scenery for a Picnic (bring your own picnic)

**Covered Arena—Come Rain or Shine!**  
\*If interested in horseback riding, we can schedule another time.

**Enjoy the Natural Beauty of our Ranch!**  
Located in Flintstone, GA, just 15 minutes from downtown Chattanooga

**FOR DIRECTIONS, CONTACT:**  
Ginger Brown 423-421-3205  
or email [ginger@eaglesrestranch.com](mailto:ginger@eaglesrestranch.com)



Submarines patrolling our inland waterways? Hmmm...

## Ft Campbell holds Soldiers and Families Appreciation Week

Fort Campbell KY will hold a Soldiers and Families for Life Appreciation Week from 21-24 September 2016. On Friday, 23 September at 1600, there will be a ceremony for the Survivor Outreach Services "Boots on the Ground" display at the 101st Airborne Division (AASLT) Headquarters at 1600. On 24 September there will be two events back-to-back: In the morning there will be a Veteran Benefits Fair from 0800-1200 that will include an opening ceremony with SMA (Ret) Kenneth Preston as guest speaker. This event will include information and seminars on Veteran benefits and also a Health Fair for Veterans (Sponsored by the VA Tennessee Valley Healthcare System. VA ID Card or DD Form 214 with a characterization of service of other than dishonorable required for Health Fair).

Retiree Appreciation will be held Saturday, September 24, 2016, in the afternoon from 1230-1700. Retiree Appreciation will include information on benefits and a Health Fair sponsored by BACH. There will also be several areas to visit using buses including rappelling demonstrations at the Air Assault School, Engagement Skills Trainer, Pratt Museum, Unit Memorials and the 101 CAB Dining Facility for Brunch from 1030-1300. Tell a friend and come out as Fort Campbell honors Veterans, Families and Retirees.

Military Retiree from all Branches of the US Armed Forces are welcome to attend any Retirees Appreciation Day, at any Military Installation. Fort Campbell, KY, Located near Clarksville, TN Saturday, September 24, 2016. Redstone Arsenal, AL, Located near Huntsville, AL, Thursday, September 22 thru Saturday, September 24, 2016.

For more information you may email [usarmy.campbell.imcom-atlantic.mbx.dhr-mpsd-retire@mail.mil](mailto:usarmy.campbell.imcom-atlantic.mbx.dhr-mpsd-retire@mail.mil) Theodore W. Faulkner, Chief, Transition Center/Retirement Services Officer, Fort Campbell, KY, 270-798-5280.

Chattanooga Area Veterans Council  
PO Box 24984, Chattanooga, TN 37422  
Check out our website at [www.chattareaveterans.com](http://www.chattareaveterans.com)

Mickey McCamish, Chairman	423-394-0024
Alan Syler, Chairman-Elect	423-855-6876
Chris Dooley, Vice-Chairman	702-701-2858
Billy Hewitt, Immed. Past Chair.	423-894-3568
Mark Parks, Treasurer	423-326-0839
Carol Laing, Secretary	423-309-1457

CAVC is a 501(c)19 non-profit veteran organization.

## BRAC - Another Round Coming?

Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus said submarines have become more important to the national defense and the Navy has less excess capacity than the other armed services, but he also said all Navy facilities would be on the table — even sub bases — if there is a new base-closing round. “It’s very clear (the Defense Department) as a whole has excess capacity, you need something to shrink that,” Mabus said in an interview with the Connecticut Mirror. “I’m sure we’d have something (on the base-closure list), but I don’t know what that would be.”

Once hot in military communities like Groton, the base-closing issue has subsided because of a years-long standoff between the Pentagon and Congress. But attempts to hold another base-shuttering round are expected to continue, even as President Barack Obama leaves office and a new president takes his place. The Pentagon, projecting escalating costs for national defense because of the price and sophistication of new weapon systems, the rise of new threats such as cybersecurity attacks, and growing retiree expenses, is anxious to cut costs wherever it can. For these reasons, Mabus says he supports another Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) round.

He said all Navy facilities, including sub bases like the one in Groton, would be scrutinized in a new BRAC round, but he indicated the impact on the Navy and Marine Corps would be less severe than on the Army or Air Force. “We have far less excess capacity; the Navy and the Marine Corps have less excess capacity than anybody else,” Mabus said. He also said the importance of submarines has grown in U.S. defense strategy. “The role of submarines, the importance of submarine warfare is rising, and it’s recognized not just by us but just about everybody,” Mabus said. “The Russians and Chinese are the most visible, but there are not many seagoing countries that don’t have submarines.” One other indication of the increased importance of submarines to the Navy is the appointment of the last two chiefs of naval operations, Jonathan Greenert and John M. Richardson. Both have been submariners, Mabus said.

“From the Secretary of Defense’s visit to the base in May to the addition of the Undersea Warfare Development Center and a flag officer being stationed in Groton, it’s clear that the U.S. Navy recognizes what a vital strategic asset the ... submarine base continues to be,” said Rep. Joe Courtney, D-2nd District, who represents the sub base in Congress and has been a staunch opponent of another BRAC round. Despite the base’s long history, it has been targeted in previous base-closing rounds. Every year, the Pentagon asks Congress for a new round of base closings, but those requests mostly have been greeted with hostility on Capitol Hill, where lawmakers insert language in defense bills banning a new BRAC every year, including this one. In spring, the Pentagon sent a report to Congress that said the military’s current network of installations has about 22 percent more capacity than is needed. It found that the Army has 33 percent excess capacity, the Air Force has 32 percent excess capacity and the Navy and Marine Corps are over by 7 percent. “One of the reasons is, the Navy, long before I got here, took BRAC very seriously ... in the first three rounds,” Mabus said of the Navy’s lower percentage of excess capacity.

In the last base-closing round, conducted in 2004-05, the Pentagon put Naval Submarine Base New London on the list of closures. It suggested moving the Groton base’s missions to Naval Station Norfolk in Virginia and Submarine Base Kings Bay in Georgia. “The existing berthing capacity at surface/subsurface installations exceeds the capacity required to support the Force Structure Plan,” the DOD said. “The closure of Submarine Base New London materially contributes to the maximum reduction of excess capacity while increasing the average military value of the remaining bases in this functional area. Sufficient capacity and fleet dispersal is maintained with the East Coast submarine fleet homeports of Naval Station Norfolk and Submarine Base Kings Bay, without affecting operational capability.”

The base was pulled off the hit list by the independent base-closing commissioners at the last minute. Some say it was the lobbying clout of Connecticut’s congressional delegation that did the trick. Others say the continuing conflict in Iraq was responsible. The state, local community and base supporters had argued that closing the base would hurt the U.S. military strategic presence in the Atlantic and disrupt synergies among the submarine school and submarine squadron at the base, Electric Boat and the Naval Undersea Warfare Center in nearby Newport, R.I. In any case, the force structure plan and the Pentagon’s focus has shifted since 2005.

The Navy has doubled the number of ships assigned to overseas homeports since 2006 and put submarines near the center of national defense strategy. Mabus has set a Navy goal of 308 battle force ships, consisting of aircraft carriers, submarines, surface combatants, amphibious ships, combat logistics ships, and support ships. That plan includes an increase of 10 Virginia-class attack submarines built by Electric Boat. The fleet today numbers 273 ships and subs. “When I got here the fleet was declining, declining precipitously,” said Mabus, who took the reins of the Navy in 2009. Also, since the last round of base closings, the need to replace aging Ohio-class nuclear ballistic submarines with a new class of boat has increased.

The Navy has given Electric Boat the lead in building the new class, which Mabus disclosed will be called the “Columbia class.” Those subs may join other ballistic-missile boats at Kings Bay, but there also will be an increase in the construction of Virginia-class attack submarines that are docked at Naval Submarine Base New London. “As the ranking member of the seapower subcommittee (of the House Armed Services Committee), I can tell you that nearly every Navy official who has appeared before our committee this year has made it clear that we need additional submarine capability — not less,” Courtney said. [Source: The Connecticut Mirror | Ana Radelat | August 9, 2016 ++]

## VA Disability Claim Myths - 12 Facts You Need to Know:

Many veterans don't want to file a VA disability claim when they leave the military. There are many misconceptions about what it means to file for VA disability compensation, what happens when the VA reviews your claim, and how it will affect veterans going forward. This article discusses some myths surrounding VA benefits claims, and some of the reasons it's a good idea to file a VA disability claim when you leave the military.

### **Myth: I don't have a disability.**

This is probably the most common reason veterans don't file a disability claim. It's unfortunate that there is a stigma around the term "disability." A better way to look at a VA disability claim is to say, "I have a medical condition that occurred during, or was caused by, my military service." Likewise, you can think about "disability compensation" as an insurance policy against those same medical conditions. An approved disability claim will give you access to VA medical care and a monthly disability compensation payment (for ratings 10% or higher). Filing a VA disability claim isn't milking the system – it is a way to insure your future self from potentially worse medical conditions, get the medical treatment you need, and receive monetary compensation from lost earnings potential.

### **Myth: Having a VA disability rating will affect my future employment options.**

Many jobs require members to be in top physical condition (police, firefighters, first responders, federal agents, etc.). Some of these careers may even require the member to pass a physical fitness test or other medical screening. In almost all of these cases, the underlying medical condition and your health and fitness will determine your ability to qualify for the job. The fact you have a VA disability rating generally won't impact your ability to land the job. To counter this myth, a VA disability rating may actually give you additional Veterans Preference Points for federal employment (some states may have a similar program for state job applications).

### **Myth: I won't be able to join the Guard or Reserves with a VA disability rating.**

This may or may not be true. The truth is it is possible to join the Guard or Reserves if you have a VA disability rating, provided you are otherwise healthy enough to serve. In many cases, it's possible to transfer directly from active duty to the Guard or Reserves without having to go through additional medical screening. If you have a break in service, you may need to go through MEPS again, and possibly even request a medical waiver to join. But just having a disability rating doesn't always prevent you from serving again. Again, it's the underlying medical condition that will determine your ability to serve, whether there is a VA disability rating or not.

### **Myth: Getting VA Disability benefits will take them from someone who deserves them.**

This is a noble line of thinking, but it's not true. There is no quota or maximum number of veterans who can receive VA disability benefits. The VA also places veterans into Priority Groups based on the severity of their disability ratings, economic need, and other factors. The VA is there for all veterans, not just those who have the "greatest" need. You owe it to yourself and your family to receive the care and benefits you have earned.

### **Myth: I'm already receiving military retirement pay. VA Disability compensation will only reduce my retirement pay.**

This is another statement that is based on a partial truth, then slightly twisted. Retirees with a VA disability rating of 40% or lower will have their military retirement pay reduced by the amount of disability compensation they receive from the VA. However, VA disability compensation is tax-free. So the net gain works in the veteran's favor. Retirees with a VA disability rating of 50% or higher are eligible to receive Concurrent Retirement and Disability Payments (CRDP) <http://themilitarywallet.com/concurrent-receipt-military-retirement-pay>. CRDP awards veterans their full military retirement pay along with their full disability compensation payment. Military retirees with a disability rating may have their pay affected in other ways. The following article will give you more information regarding how VA disability compensation affects military retirement pay - <http://themilitarywallet.com/va-disability-compensation-affects-military-retirement-pay>.

### **Myth: VA Disability Compensation benefits aren't worth that much.**

I wouldn't say that. A 10% disability rating brings in \$133.17 per month in disability compensation (FY16 rates). That may not seem like a huge amount on the surface. But this is a monthly payment that is also indexed to inflation, meaning it can increase over time. The higher your rating, the larger the monthly compensation payment. Veterans with a disability rating of 30% or greater can add dependents to their disability claim. This will increase the monthly payment for each qualified dependent. Finally, you may be able to file a new claim for an increased rating if your condition worsens. See the VA Disability Compensation Rates Table for More Information at <http://themilitarywallet.com/va-disability-pay-rates-rise>.

### **Myth: My illness / injury isn't bad. There is no need to file a disability claim.**

Everything is fine—until it isn't. Injuries and illnesses can get worse as we age. This is likely to be the healthiest period of your life. File a disability claim if you have an illness or injury that occurred while in the military. Even if the condition is minor, establishing a service-connection is the first step in having your disability claim approved. The sooner you make your claim, the easier it is to establish a connection to your military service.

*Note about 0% disability ratings:* it is possible to receive a 0% disability rating. This occurs when the VA acknowledges there is an illness or injury connected to your military service. This is still considered a valid disability rating and if the condition worsens, you can file a new claim requesting the rating be increased.

**VA Disability Claim Myths continued:****Myth: I'm not eligible for VA disability benefits.**

There are several reasons why some veterans don't believe they are eligible for disability benefits. Some common misconceptions include their discharge rating (<http://themilitarywallet.com/types-of-military-discharges>), length of service, not having served during a period of war, not having been wounded in battle, or other concerns. We can address each of these topics:

- Discharge Status: Veterans benefits are generally open to veterans with a discharge rating under other-than-dishonorable conditions (in other words, everything except a dishonorable discharge). This means veterans may still be eligible for disability benefits even if they have a Bad Conduct Discharge (BCD) or an Other Than Honorable (OTH) discharge (learn more about discharge upgrades).
- Length of Service: Active duty veterans generally need to have active duty service beyond basic training to be eligible for disability benefits, unless the illness or injury occurred during basic training. This generally covers most veterans who served on active duty. Members of the Guard or Reserves who were only activated for training purposes should contact the VA for a records review to determine eligibility.
- Period of Service: Veterans may be eligible for disability benefits regardless of the period in which they served. Disability benefits are not limited to those who served in battle or during a time of war. (note: Some other VA benefits programs, such as the Veterans Pension Benefit may require war time service (<http://themilitarywallet.com/understanding-veterans-pension-aid-attendance-benefit>). Disability benefits do not.)
- I wasn't wounded in battle: As noted above, no service during war is required to be eligible for disability compensation benefits.

**Myth: It's too late to file a disability claim—I left active duty years ago!**

There is no timeline to file a disability claim for a service-connected disability. However, it's generally much easier to file a claim shortly after leaving the military. This is because you need to establish a connection to your illness or injury and your military service. This is generally easier when done shortly after leaving the military. However, some illnesses and injuries don't occur until years after leaving military service. This is something that has received national attention in recent years as many veterans from the Korean and Vietnam War eras have been diagnosed with cancers and other medical conditions associated with

- Agent Orange exposure ([http://www.benefits.va.gov/compensation/claims-postservice-agent\\_orange.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/compensation/claims-postservice-agent_orange.asp)) or related chemicals.
- Exposure to contaminated water at Camp Lejeune ([http://benefits.va.gov/compensation/claims-postservice-exposures-camp\\_lejeune\\_water.asp](http://benefits.va.gov/compensation/claims-postservice-exposures-camp_lejeune_water.asp)).
- Other exposure hazards such as mustard gas, asbestos, ionizing radiation, Project 112/SHAD (chemical tests to defend against biological and chemical weapons threats), and Radiogenic Risk Activities. You can learn more about these chemical exposures at <http://benefits.va.gov/COMPENSATION/claims-postservice-exposures-index.asp>

In these cases, it can take years or even decades before symptoms occur. Remember, there is no time limit to file a claim! Here is an article from a veteran who filed VA disability claims several years after separating from active duty. "How NOT to do it: Applying for VA disability years after military separation. <http://the-military-guide.com/how-not-to-do-it-applying-for-va-disability-years-after-military-separation>".

**Myth: If I'm awarded a VA disability rating I will have to use the VA medical system for health care.**

The VA doesn't require veterans to enroll in the VA health care system if they are eligible for health care. You also aren't required to use the VA medical system if you do enroll. Many veterans choose to continue using their current health care plan. But it's nice to know the benefit if there for you if you ever need it.

**Myth: The VA is so backed up, they will never process my claim anyway.**

It's true that VA disability claims can take a long time to be processed. But that doesn't mean you shouldn't make a claim. Your claim will be processed more quickly if you double check your claim for completion and accuracy before submitting it for review. It's also a good idea to seek the assistance of a veterans benefits counselor before filing your claim. Many organizations offer free benefits claims counseling and assistance. (Refer to <http://themilitarywallet.com/veterans-service-organizations-benefits-claims>). Take advantage of their expertise before filing – it will save you a lot of time and stress!

**Myth: I'm not eligible for VA Disability Compensation because I'm already receiving Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) (or disability through another program).**

You should verify this information before assuming you are ineligible to receive both forms of compensation. For example, it is possible to receive both VA disability compensation and Social Security Disability Benefits. (Refer to <http://themilitarywallet.com/when-should-you-take-social-security-benefits>). There is even a program called Social Security Disability Benefits for Wounded Warriors. (Refer to <http://themilitarywallet.com/social-security-disability-benefits-for-wounded-warriors>). There is no rule that states you cannot receive compensation from both sources. In fact, having a 100% Permanent and Total VA rating can make you eligible for expedited processing for your Social Security Disability claim.

Always Verify with the VA or a Veterans Benefits Counselor. VA disability claims can be very complicated. But veterans have access to benefits counselors who will offer free claims assistance. Find a Veterans Service Organization (VSO) you trust and work with them on your claim. Your representative can help dispel any of the above myths, clear up any misconceptions, and answer your questions. They also have hands on experience with the claims process and can help you avoid problems that might add months or years to your claim. [Source: The Military Wallet | Ryan Guina | August 2, 2016 ++]

## Vet Jobs - Border Patrol

If you are a veteran looking for important and rewarding work and an opportunity to serve your country, you are encouraged to consider the career opportunities at U.S. Customs and Border Protection. A new posting has been posted until September 9, 2016 for job applicants. The U.S. Border Patrol is focused 24/7 on securing our borders and safeguarding the American people from terrorism, drug smuggling and illegal entry to our country. Border Patrol Agents honor their heritage by protecting America today. To learn more about CBP visit [www.cbp.gov/careers](http://www.cbp.gov/careers).

### KEY REQUIREMENTS

- Be under age 37 unless you are a qualified Veterans' Preference
- Eligible candidate or have previous federal law enforcement experience
- Be a U.S. citizen and a resident for the past three years
- Have a valid state driver's license
- Pass a thorough background investigation, medical examination, pre-employment fitness tests and drug test
- New hires must successfully complete 58 days of intensive instruction at the U.S. Border Patrol Academy in Artesia, NM. Coursework includes topics such as immigration and nationality laws, as well as physical training and marksmanship. An additional 40 days is necessary for those who require Spanish language instruction.

### FINANCIAL & JOB SECURITY

- Job Security - Salary/steady income. Starting salary \$39,400–\$50,016.
- Personal/Sick Leave/Holidays - Paid personal (annual) and sick leave and 10 paid holidays per year
- Paid job-related training
- VA benefits for approved on-the-job training programs
- Employee assistance program
- Transportation subsidy

### HEALTH Benefits

- Federal Employee Health Benefits Program - Federal government pays up to 75% of medical premiums
- Federal Dental & Vision Program
- Federal Flexible Spending Account Program
- Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program **RETIREMENT & INSURANCE BENEFITS >**

### RETIREMENT & INSURANCE BENEFITS

- Thrift Savings Plan
- Federal retirement plan > Credit for military service
- Law enforcement retirement benefits
- Federal Employees Group Life Insurance

**UNSUITABILITY** - You may be rated unsuitable for the Border Patrol Agent position if your background includes:

- Past or present arrests
- Convictions (including misdemeanor domestic violence charges)
- Dismissals from previous jobs
- Debts and financial issues
- Excessive use of alcohol
- Use of illegal drugs, and/or the sale and distribution of illegal drugs

**VETERANS PREFERENCE:** If you are claiming Veterans Preference, you must submit the following proof of eligibility:

- Five Point Preference: DD 214 (Member Copy 4)
- Ten Point Preference: DD 214 (Member Copy 4) and supporting documentation as listed on the Standard Form 15, Application for 10-Point Veterans Preference. Click this link for a copy of the SF 15: [www.opm.gov/forms/pdf\\_fill/SF15.pdf](http://www.opm.gov/forms/pdf_fill/SF15.pdf).

Veterans with a service-connected disability must also submit a VA Disability Award letter dated 1991 or later.

- If you are currently serving on active duty: A statement of service from your unit identifying the branch of service, period(s) of service, campaign badges or expeditionary medals earned, and the date you will be separated or be on approved terminal leave. If you submit a statement of service at this stage, your preference will be verified by a DD 214 (Member Copy 4) upon separation from the military.
- For more information on Veterans' Preference visit: <http://www.fedshirevets.gov/job/vetpref/index.aspx>.
- If you are not sure of your preference eligibility, visit the Department of Labor's Veterans' Preference Advisor at: <http://www.dol.gov/elaws/vets/vetpref/mservice.htm>.

[Source: Border Patrol Recruitment 16-10 | August 8, 2016 ++]

## LRSO Weapon System - Pentagon Solicits Nuclear Contracts

The U.S. Air Force took a first step toward buying controversial new nuclear weapons 29 JUL, asking defense companies to submit bids to design and build cruise missiles and ICBMs. The move comes amid the highest tension with Russia since the end of the Cold War and flies in the face of senators who have called on the Obama administration to cancel plans to build the new cruise missile, called the Long-Range Standoff Weapon, or LRSO. "The LRSO weapon system will be a cost-effective force multiplier for B-52, B-2, and B-21 aircraft to credibly deter adversaries and assure U.S. allies of our deterrent capabilities," the Air Force officials said in a statement, referring to the two existing and one planned nuclear-capable bombers.

In the statement, they said they would choose up to two contractors by the fourth quarter of 2017 to build the new cruise missiles. Those two contractors will then compete for 54 months "to complete a preliminary design with demonstrated reliability and manufacturability, which will be followed by a competitive down-select to a single contractor," the statement said. A group of 10 senators, all Democrats, have called on the Obama administration to scale back its plans for new nuclear weapons and the bombers and submarines that will carry them. The senators specifically called for canceling LRSO, saying it could save taxpayers \$20 billion. "Nuclear war poses the gravest risk to American national security," the senators wrote. The Air Force countered that argument 28 JUL, saying the new cruise missile is necessary to replace its current air-launched cruise missiles, which were designed in the 1970s and built in the 1980s. The Air Force wants the new missiles by 2030.



"LRSO is a critical element of the United States' nuclear deterrence strategy," said Maj. Gen. Scott Jansson, commander of the Air Force Nuclear Weapons Center and Air Force program executive officer for strategic systems. "Releasing this solicitation is a critical step toward affordably recapitalizing the aging air leg of the nuclear triad." The triad is a reference to the Pentagon's three nuclear arms, Air Force strategic bombers, intercontinental ballistic missiles and Navy submarines, which carry nuclear missiles.

The Air Force also issues a solicitation Friday to buy new ICBMs to replace the Minuteman, which date back to the 1960s, but have been upgraded over the years. The Air Force calls the replacement project the "Ground-Based Strategic Deterrent." "The new GBSD weapon system will meet existing national requirements, while having the adaptability and flexibility to affordably address changing technology and threat environments through 2075," the Air Force said. The Pentagon wants to deploy the new ICBMs in the late 2020s.

The Congressional Budget Office last year estimated it would cost about \$350 billion to buy new nuclear weapons, ICBMs, stealth bombers, submarines and cruise missiles, between 2015 and 2024 based on the Pentagon's current plans. The total cost of buying all of the new weapons over the next 25 years is estimated at more than \$700 billion. Last October, the Air Force announced it had selected Northrop Grumman to build new stealth bombers that will carry nuclear weapons. The B-2 and B-52 are the Air Force's two active strategic bombers that can carry both nuclear and conventional bombs. The Navy is in the early stages of buying new submarines, which will replace the Ohio-class subs. The announcement came as Congress is out of session until after the Labor Day holiday in September [Source: Defense One | Marcus Weisgerber | August 1, 2016 ++]

## TRICARE Medical Identity Theft - Watch for Signs

Did you know that health care is the number one target, nearly as much as retail, finance, and banking combined, for identity theft and fraud? Your health information is important to you and your health care provider. But in the wrong hands, it can be valuable to someone else. Would you know if someone stole your medical identity? Identity theft affects millions of people every year. The Federal Trade Commission offers several steps you can take to make sure your health care information remains secure.

- First, read your medical and insurance statements regularly and completely. They can show warning signs of identity theft. Look for services you did not receive or providers you did not see. This is like seeing charges on your credit card statement that were not yours.
- Next, read the Explanation of Benefits (EOB) statement or Medicare Summary Notice that your health plan sends after each treatment. Again, check the name of the provider, the date of service, and the service provided. Do the claims paid match the care you received? If you see a mistake, contact your health plan and report the problem.
- You should also watch for bills if you know part of your care was not covered. If a bill doesn't show up when you expect it, look into it.

Being cyber fit requires us to be mindful of your health information even when you're not using health IT. You are the center of your healthcare. Empower yourself to protect your information. For more information about cyber fitness, visit the TRICARE website at <http://www.tricare.mil/Privacy/Cyberfit>. [Source: TRICARE News Release | August 4, 2016 ++]