

Panorama

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Serving the NATO, Naples and Gaeta military communities in Italy

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SPEDIZIONE IN A.P. - 45% - ART. 2 COMMA 20/B LEGGE 662/96 - FILIALE DI NAPOLI

Pay, medical, family issues highlight budget request

By Donna Miles
American Forces Press Service

Recognizing the nation's responsibility to support its men and women in uniform and their families, President Barack Obama will request increased funding for military pay, housing allowances, family support programs and care for wounded warriors, White House officials said Tuesday.

The budget request, expected to be released Monday, will include a 1.4 percent basic pay raise officials say is designed to keep military pay increases in line with those in the private sector. The request also will include an average housing allowance increase of 4.2 percent, as well as a variety of enlistment and reenlistment bonuses and monthly payments for specialty skills.

Family support programs will grow three percent if Congress approves the request – to \$8.8 billion – to support the family members who officials credit with providing the strength and stability on which the uniformed force relies.

The request will include \$1.3 billion to make affordable, high-quality child care services more available at 800 military child development centers stateside and overseas. This represents an \$87 million increase over fiscal 2010 funding levels, officials noted.

Expanded counseling and assistance services to be funded in the new budget will help families meet the challenges of repeated deployments and family separations, officials noted. The president will request \$1.9 billion for these services, which range from financial counseling to transition and relocation assistance, up \$37 million from fiscal 2010 funding.

In addition, the request will include \$84 million for enhanced career and educational opportunities for military spouses through tuition assistance and federal internship programs. This represents a \$12 million increase over current funding.

Another provision in the request will provide \$439 million to build 10 new Department of Defense Education Activity schools. This is the first step in a Defense Department plan to replace or renovate 103 of the schools by 2015, providing military children what officials called "the world-class education they deserve," offered in "world-class facilities."

Providing high-quality medical care for more than 9.5 million service members and their families and military retirees — but especially wounded, ill and injured troops — remains a top administration priority, officials said. Toward that end, the fiscal 2011 budget request includes support for wounded warrior transition units and centers of excellence in vision, hearing, traumatic brain injury and other areas.

Specifically, it includes: \$30.9 billion overall for medical care, up 5.8 percent from current levels; \$669 million to provide TBI and psychological health care; and \$250 million for continued mental health and TVI research.

The budget request also will fund more employment and job training for military spouses and veterans, officials noted. It provides \$262 million for the Labor Department's Veterans Employment and Training Service, up \$6 million from fiscal 2010 levels. This includes \$5 million for a new initiative to help homeless women veterans and homeless families.

Another effort, to provide more employment workshops for spouses of separating service members, will receive \$1 million in the president's budget request.

The budget request also seeks to expand veterans' access to medical care, officials noted. Obama will request \$50.6 billion in advance appropriations for the VA medical care program to ensure veterans' care isn't interrupted due to budget delays. The goal, officials explained, is to ensure VA has timely, predictable funding from year to year, so veterans can rely on the quality and accessibility of the care they receive through VA.

For the first time, highly disabled veterans who are medically retired from the military will be eligible to receive both VA disability benefits and military retirement benefits. By 2015, all medically retired service members will be eligible to receive concurrent benefits, officials said.

The fiscal 2011 budget request also provides funds to continue enrolling more than 500,000 veterans with moderate income into the VA health care system by 2011.

Another measure in the request funds technology to improve the timely, high-quality delivery of health care and benefits, officials said. The Defense Department and VA are implementing the Joint Virtual Lifetime Electronic Record — essentially an electronic medical record that will follow a service member from initial enlistment through retirement or separation and transition to the VA system.

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Scout Master Brian Gearheart holds his compass as he teaches basic Orienteering skills to Cub Scouts from the Naples area during a winter camping trip in the Abruzzo National Park. The Scouts got together Jan. 23 for a day of learning camping skills and having fun.

Naples Scouts survive the cold

Story and photos by MCI (NAO) John Parker,
NSA Naples assistant PAO

Winter camping is a great time to enjoy the beauty of the outdoors while also earning important advancement on the trail to Eagle Scout. Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts from Naples, Italy got together Jan. 23 for some fun and skills training during a campout at Abruzzo National Park.

Winter camping out in the cold weather is a much different experience from summer camping. But as with most things in life, the most rewarding experience is the one that takes the most effort.

Petty Officer 2nd Class Brian Gearhart, scout master for Troop 007 said "The purpose of our campout was to gain experience by exposure. Cold weather camping is rarity for most people. Boy Scouts on the other hand teaches you skills to be able to enjoy not only summer months camping but also the colder months and how to 'be prepared' for what you're going up against. This campout was particularly special this time because we had the Cub Scouts out for the day with us learning some of our skills."

During the day, the Boy Scouts from Troop 007 spent time teaching the Cub Scouts basic camping skills such as fire making, tent setup, how to wear their packs, what to put in those packs and lastly, how to use a compass. With temperatures in the 30's and dropping below freezing at night, the scouts were put to the test.

Alex Doyle, a life scout in Boy Scout Troop 007, was in charge of teaching the youngsters how to make a fire.

"One of the most important skills every Boy Scout should know is how to start a fire," said Doyle. "We taught them three types of fires and what fire fuel was. Knowing how to make a Teepee fire, Log Cabin fire, Lean-To fire is very important and could save their life."

Nat Rabuse, one of the Boy Scouts from troop 007, explained the importance of having the Cub Scouts on this camping trip.

"Starting a fire at high altitude can often be more difficult; we wanted them to see this, so having them here with us was very important." Rabuse said.

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NSA Naples prepares for tax season with VITA centers

By MC2 (SW) Michael Campbell, NPASE-East Det. Europe

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program volunteers from various commands within the Naval Support Activity Naples community are gearing up to open VITA centers at various locations throughout the Naples area.

"All active duty military, DoD civilians and their dependents are eligible to use the VITA tax centers here in the Naples area," said Lt. Jocelyn Loftus-Williams, region site coordinator. "We have sites at Joint Force Command's Navy Element, Capodichino's Naval Legal Service Office and the Naval Hospital in Gricignano as well as a small center in Gaeta."

According to Loftus-Williams, the tax centers are designed to be as convenient, quick and user-friendly as possible. Individuals are only asked to bring the paperwork they will need to complete returns and fill out a questionnaire when they arrive at the center. The volunteers at the tax center will take it from there.

Approximately 19 individuals have volunteered, but more volunteers will be needed to provide tax services for at least four hours every week. The VITA center is set to open Monday, so there is still time to volunteer.

For further information, or to sign up as a volunteer, contact Lt. Jocelyn Loftus-Williams at 081-568-4609.

Health Awareness update Page 6

USNH Naples Environmental Health
Info Center: 081-811-6321

Visit <https://www.cnic.navy.mil/Naples/CommandInformation/HealthAwareness/index.htm>





Above: Boy Scout Alex Doyle (left, holding the pack) and Scout Master Brian Gearheart (right) teach the young Cub Scouts what goes in their pack, how to put it on and how to adjust it.

Below: Boy Scouts from Troop 007 teach young Cub Scouts how to build a lean-to fire during a winter camping trip Jan. 23 in the Abruzzo National Park.



SCOUTS

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The Scouts didn't let the frigid temperatures keep them from enjoying the campout.

"The hardest part of this trip might have been for our gourmet cooks trying to boil water to use to cook with on Sunday morning. After it came to a roaring boil, it would freeze up right after the heat source was taken away," said Scout Master Gearhart.

"The best part, well for me it's almost always the peach cobbler. But this time, the best part was hearing the disappointment in our camp registrar's voice Sunday morning when he came over to our campsite and realized that we hadn't used that nice warm heated room he offered us that night to sleep in. I was very proud of each one of them; they camped through the bone chilling cold of 17 degrees (Fahrenheit)."

Many young children become Cub Scouts in the hopes that someday they will transition to Boy Scouts and ultimately become an Eagle Scout.



Cub Scouts enjoy a hike through the hills during their weekend with the Boy Scouts in Abruzzo National Park.

Checking first LES of the year a must

By George Markfelder,
Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy, (Civilian Human Resources)

For federal employees, reviewing their Leave and Earnings Statement (LES) each pay period is always a good idea, but if they made any changes during the Federal Benefits Open Season, checking their LES for the first full pay period of the year (Jan. 22) is also their responsibility according to Department of the Navy (DON) policy.

"Most people realize the importance of reading and understanding their LES," said Mary Foley, DON Civilian Benefits Center Manager. "All employees also need to understand that it is DON policy for each employee to review their own LES each pay date to ensure proper deductions have been withheld to avoid errors that could cause indebtedness."

According to Foley, it is especially important to review the LES received on Jan. 22, 2010 since it will reflect any changes that were made during the Federal Benefits Open Season. Benefits Bulletin 2009-10 provides additional information.

If an error is noticed, DON employees should immediately call the Benefits Line at 888-320-2917 and select menu option #4 to talk to a Customer Service Representative (CSR). CSRs are available from 7:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., Eastern Time, Monday through Friday, except on Federal holidays.

The TTY number for the deaf and hard of hearing is 866-328-9889.

For more news from Department of the Navy (Civilian Human Resources), visit <http://www.navy.mil/local/donchr>.

Aviation Career Continuation Pay 2010 program released

From Chief of Naval Personnel Public Affairs

Adjustments to the Aviation Career Continuation Pay (ACCP) program were announced in NAVADMINs 031/10 and 032/10 to provide selected bonuses as an incentive to eligible pilots and naval flight officers through department head, sea duty and command billets.

"We are committed to continuing our investment in the aviation community and our efforts to remain responsive to retention behavior and mission requirements," said Rear Adm. Dan Holloway, director of the personnel, plans and policy division.

Changes include reducing long-term annual bonuses for naval flight officers from \$25,000 per year to \$15,000 per year for five years; reducing at-sea bonuses for lieutenant commanders and commanders from \$15,000 per year to \$10,000 per year for two years; and reducing command bonuses from \$15,000 per year to \$12,000 per year for three years. In addition, captains and captain-selects are no longer eligible for new ACCP contracts.

In 2009, Chief of Naval Personnel, Vice Adm. Mark Ferguson testified before Congress that he intended to conduct a thorough review of all Navy bonus programs which included the ACCP program.

According to Ferguson, Navy leaders made the adjustments in response to observed retention behavior and market forces and following a complete review of the aviation community bonuses.

Under the full-time support (FTS) Aviation Career Continuation Pay program, FTS aviators are eligible for bonuses of \$15,000 per year for up to three years.

The Navy expects roughly 704 active duty and 86 FTS aviators to take advantage of the ACCP program this year.

Long-term applicants are eligible if their active duty service obligation expires in fiscal year 2010 or 2011. Payment will begin when the officer is within one year of completion of the active duty service obligation. ACCP applications must be received before Sept. 24, 2010.

For more details regarding eligibility, administrative procedures and the application letter format, go to the Aviation Officer Community Manager Web site: <http://www.npc.navy.mil/officer/aviation/ocm/accp/>.