



WASHINGTON UPDATE



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CONGRESS, BUSH SEEK TO EASE DRAW-DOWN PAIN for service personnel, DoD civilian employees and defense contract workers affected by the military cutbacks. The White House has announced a \$1.2 billion assistance plan which includes a \$216 million proposal to give GI Bill benefits to otherwise ineligible military personnel with more than six years' service who voluntarily separate. The administration's package also includes \$86 million to finance second careers in teaching, \$459 million to encourage early civilian retirements, \$30 million for DoD civilian relocation costs, \$50 million for communities affected by base closures and realignments, \$250 million to promote civilian use of defense energy technology, and \$12 million to allow civilian employees at closing bases to accrue unlimited annual leave.

The House has set aside \$1 billion of DoD's FY93 budget for retraining separating military members and displaced workers. Also, the House Veterans' Affairs Committee has approved a \$75 million bill that would provide on-the-job training through private-sector companies for veterans out of work 10 weeks after separation; however, funding is a problem.

SEPARATION INCENTIVES HELP to ease the pain of the drawdown, says Lt. Gen. Thomas P. Carney, the Army's new deputy chief of staff for personnel. By early May, 20,900 Army enlisted troops had applied for the lump-sum Special Separation Benefit (SSB), while 1,500 opted for the Voluntary Separation Incentive (VSI) annuity. In the officer corps there have been 2,800 applications for SSB, 2,000 for VSI. These figures represent 86 percent of projected takers among enlisted soldiers and 85 percent of the total number of officers expected to opt for the early-out bonuses. No separation bonus applications have been disapproved. Gen. Carney says the incentive programs will likely continue through 1995, as part of the military and congressional commitment to maintaining readiness "while taking care of our people."

DRAWDOWN GOAL NEAR, the services having achieved almost 80 percent of the force reductions required by the 1992 budget. In the six months ending March 31, Army active duty strength dropped by 45,178 soldiers, from 710,821 to an estimated 665,643. Although the pace of the drawdown is expected to decline somewhat over the summer, the Army should have no trouble reducing the active force by another 5,443 to meet its goal of 660,200 by the end of FY92 and, in fact, may go even lower as more soldiers accept separation bonuses for leaving the service.

HOUSE VOTES \$270 BILLION DEFENSE BILL which sets the practical floor for future conference action. Because the bill is some \$11 billion short of the administration request, it has been labeled "unacceptable" by the White House. Senate action on the FY93 DoD Authorization Bill probably won't begin until late June and probably won't be completed until well after the July 4 recess. Add in delays to the House-Senate joint conference that will be caused by the two major party political conventions as well as a Labor Day recess, and the possibility of a delayed defense budget looms ever larger.

MAJORS' RIF BOARD RESULTS approved. The reduction-in-force board considered about 2,000 majors and selected 244 for involuntary separation. Selected officers were to be notified in person by mid-June and must leave active duty by Sep. 29. The number of officers who opted to leave the service with either the Voluntary Separation Incentive (VSI) or the Special Separation Benefit (SSB) reduced by nearly 600 the number of majors the board was required to select for separation. Most majors selected were commissioned in FY78. Their 14 years of service qualifies them for regular separation pay of \$58,559. Had they opted earlier for the VSI they would have received an annuity of \$14,640 for 28 years; with the SSB option they would have received a lump sum of \$87,840.

FY93 BUDGET RESOLUTION ADOPTED on May 21, clearing the way for committees to prepare a detailed defense budget. The resolution was passed 52-41 in the Senate after squeaking through the House by a 209-207 vote. The House had been seeking cuts of \$14 billion in spending authority and \$9 billion in outlays below the defense spending caps set in the 1990 budget agreement. The Senate figures closely matched those of the White House, which called for cutting below previously negotiated caps by approximately \$8 billion in spending authority and \$5.3 billion in outlays. The compromise resolution cut roughly \$11 billion and \$7 billion, respectively, below the previous caps. Congressional analysts say that this level, combined with cuts of \$8.15 billion in previously approved defense programs, will lead to military spending reductions of more than \$60 billion over the next five years.

GUARD RIF WOULD BE A FIRST and may be unavoidable if Congress fails to offer separation incentives similar to those being successfully utilized in the active force. The chief of the National Guard Bureau, Lt. Gen. John B. Conaway, told a Senate Armed Services subcommittee recently that the Army National Guard, hit hardest by the proposed cuts, "will probably have to freeze recruiting" in mid-1993 and begin the first reductions in force in its history unless thousands of Guard personnel leave the service voluntarily. Plans call for Army Guard strength to decrease from today's 431,000 soldiers to 338,000 by 1995. Meanwhile, Congress continues to resist reserve component cuts. A number of proposals that would mitigate the need for a Guard RIF or would avoid Guard and Reserve reductions altogether have been offered up by lawmakers concerned about the impact back home.

BILL FOR SEPARATION BENEFITS CONTESTED, with OSD and the Army each looking to the other to pick up the \$450 million tab for the FY 1992 Special Separation Benefit (SSB) program. The Army, assuming that OSD would pay since the service was directed by Congress and OSD to implement SSB, submitted its FY92 omnibus reprogramming package minus any billpaying provision for the plan, only to be sent back to the drawing board. The issue is now being negotiated, with the expectation that Army and OSD each will fund a portion of the program.

BUSH SIGNS REVISED RESCISSIONS PACKAGE cutting \$8.2 billion from the FY 1992 budget authority, with more than \$7 billion of the total coming from the defense budget. This was roughly the same figure proposed by the president, but the congressional package saved one of the two Seawolf submarines on Bush's hit list while cutting deeper into defense operations and maintenance.

Congress reduced Army O&M by \$263.9 million, a significantly greater cut than the president's proposed \$92.9 million. Conversely, the administration's proposal to cut Army procurement by \$682.9 million was knocked down to \$296.2 million by Congress, which put \$225 million for the M1 tank upgrade back into the procurement account. The Army research and development account was cut by \$200.9 million, almost double the administration's proposed reduction of \$106.2 million.

President Bush signed the compromise package on June 4, with Defense Secretary Dick Cheney indicating that at least one more rescission list can be expected.

63 MORE OVERSEAS SITES TO BE AXED, bringing to 559 the total number of installations at which U.S. military operations will be ended, reduced or placed on standby as part of the continuing reduction of U.S. military presence overseas. DoD announced last month that 61 locations in Europe and two in Korea are included in this latest realignment, which will affect more than 6,000 military, 800 U.S. civilian and 2,500 local national positions.

The largest European sites affected (all in Germany) include Peden Barracks in Wertheim, which is ending operations, and Pond Barracks in Amberg and Robinson Barracks in Stuttgart, which are reducing operations. U.S. Forces, Korea, will end or reduce operations at Songso and Camp Ames.

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MORE TRANSITION BENEFITS SOUGHT by lawmakers looking to make separation incentives more attractive. The House Armed Services Committee proposes offering Montgomery GI Bill enrollment to anyone not already enrolled who accepts either the lump-sum Special Separation Benefit (SSB) or the Voluntary Separation Incentive (VSI) annuity. In addition, the committee recommends upgrading the benefits currently offered by VSI (enrollment in a health insurance plan, six months of free furniture storage) to the level now available to those who opt for the SSB (120 days of medical care, two years of commissary/exchange privileges, one year of free furniture storage).

The House also voted to enhance the VSI benefit by eliminating the dollar-for-dollar pay reduction required of those who take the bonus and then attend reserve drills or work as federal civilian employees.

Sen. John McCain (R-AZ) has introduced a bill to establish separation benefits for Guard and Reserve personnel forced out by the drawdown. Defense Secretary Dick Cheney has come out against that proposal, declaring to a Senate committee that such a package would be "extraordinarily expensive."

TEN DAYS' LODGING EXPENSES POSSIBLE for permanent-change-of-station moves for soldiers with dependents. The current temporary lodging authorization is \$110 daily for up to four days — seldom long enough to arrange permanent housing at a new assignment. Both the House and Senate Armed Services Committees have included the increased period in their markups of the FY93 DoD budget.

COMPUTER BULLETIN BOARD has been developed by DoD to make it easier for employers to reach military personnel and civilian employees facing separation. The Transition Bulletin Board allows prospective employers to announce job vacancies free of charge, via computer modem, mail or fax. Ads are posted by job type and location at 355 military transition offices the next business day. The electronic bulletin board has already generated positive feedback from industry recruiters, as has its companion program, the Defense Outplacement Referral System (DORS), a resume registry and referral service established in December 1991. Employers wishing to utilize either DORS or the new Transition Bulletin Board should call 1-800-727-3677.

GI BILL INCREASE CONSIDERED yet again, but with a difference — this time Senators Robert Dole (R-KS) and Alan Simpson (R-WY) are leading the way with legislation aimed at helping separating military personnel make the transition to civilian life. Meanwhile, the House Veterans' Affairs Committee has approved a bill to increase Montgomery GI Bill education benefits to \$350 a month. Supporters of the Dole-Simpson proposal are hoping the two influential senators' involvement will counter administration opposition to it. Highlights of their proposal include:

- raising the maximum monthly benefit to \$500;
- increasing funding for a job counseling program (from \$9 million to \$15 million in 1993);
- waiving the origination fee for veterans' home loans;
- giving veterans top priority for job training programs.

SPOUSES MAY GET TUITION HELP as early as next spring as a result of the Army Family Action Plan. Through the AFAP process, the Army leadership is now aware of the desire of many spouses for assistance in furthering their education. Army Personnel Command is seeking a sponsor for a plan for Army spouses similar to an Air Force program that grants up to \$1,100 annually to eligible students.

Education benefits now available to Army spouses include:

- Army Emergency Relief-sponsored educational loans;
- computerized estimation of grant and loan eligibility by Army education centers;
- installation women's club scholarships and school grants;
- testing and guidance service at Army education centers worldwide;
- work-study, free classes and scholarship programs at some schools.

To obtain DA Pamphlet 352-2, "Educational Assistance and Opportunities Information for Army Family Members," which outlines procedures and programs for obtaining financial assistance, write to Family Action Management Division, ATTN: CFSC-FSM, Hoffman I, Room 1408, 2461 Eisenhower Ave., Alexandria, VA 22331-0521. For more information, contact the nearest Army education center.

2LT TOVEN TAKES HUGHES-LAMBERT trophy as the nation's outstanding Reserve Officer Training Corps cadet for 1991. On May 15, 2Lt Lisa A. Toven — formerly *Sgt. Toven* — was recognized at the Pentagon for her high grade point average, superior performance at ROTC summer camp, strong leadership, community service, achievement awards, military skills, rank and positions as a cadet during her tenure as a nursing student at Seton Hall University in New Jersey. While at Seton Hall, Toven took 21-23 college credits every semester to meet a two-year limit on earning a nursing degree through the Army's "Green-to-Gold" program, the scholarship program for soldiers seeking to become officers.

FLOATING TANK BRIGADE PLANNED to avoid deployment delays such as the Army encountered in Operation Desert Shield. The plan calls for 100 M1A1 Abrams tanks and 58 Bradley fighting vehicles to be stored aboard Navy cargo ships in the Indian Ocean. In a crisis, the force could be delivered to the scene in about two weeks — roughly one-third the time it would take to load and transport such equipment from stateside.

RECRUITING TARGETS MET, BUDGET QUESTIONED. On May 11, the Pentagon announced that all services had met their recruiting objectives for the first half of FY92, with an overall recruit quality increase over the same period in FY91. On May 12, the House Armed Services Committee voted to trim the FY93 \$1.9 billion recruiting budget request by \$60.2 million. The lawmakers say that as the military's manpower needs decrease, so should the recruiting budget.

TWO POSTS ADOPT AMERICA 2000. Fort Hood, TX, and Fort Irwin, CA, are the first military communities to adopt America 2000, an administration effort to improve the quality of education in the United States by the turn of the century. "America2000 is a strategy ... to evolutionize schools [and achieve] world-class standards in the core subjects of math, science, history, English and geography," said Secretary of Education Lamar Alexander.

Defense Secretary Dick Cheney challenged other military communities to follow the lead. "It is only fitting that [the posts], long noted for ... innovative training, have been the first to step forward and accept the president's challenge to improve our schools." (ARNEWS)

AUSA TELEVISION SERIES "Why An Army?" features Gen. Frederick M. Franks, Jr., CG, TRADOC, as its third guest. Gen. Franks, who commanded VII Corps during Operation Desert Storm, will discuss the Army's training system (from teaching soldier skills and developing leaders to molding unit excellence) and its payoff — victory on the battlefield.

Joining moderator Peter Hackes for the 30-minute program will be panelists Col. Harry Summers (USA Ret.), author, military analyst and syndicated columnist for the *Los Angeles Times*, and Peter Copeland, Pentagon correspondent for the Scripps Howard News Service. The show will air in the Washington area on Thursday, July 16, at 7:00 p.m. on Northern Virginia Public Television station WNVTV-53.

"Why An Army?" is available via satellite to public television stations across the country. Check local listings or contact your local station for broadcast schedules outside the Washington area. For more information about the series, call Sandra Daugherty at 1-800-336-4570, extension 317.

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- *A New Strategy for Defense Acquisition*, a briefing on a proposed industrial base strategy based on the findings of a series of joint AUSA/ADPA seminars, currently being briefed to industry and government leaders;
- *Critique of the "Report to the Congress on the Industrial Base"* (Landpower Essay No. 92-2), a summary of the views of Mr. William W. Mogan, an AUSA sustaining member, on the November 1991 DoD report.

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