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Locked on Quality of Life

As someone serving in the military, you don't need to play a computer game or watch a rerun of *Top Gun* to understand the meaning of "locked on" to your target. In this case, the target is Congress's impact on your quality of life. REA is here to help you navigate the legislative landscape and provide the guided precision you need to stay focused on the target and to accomplish the mission.

Call for Action

Paid IDT/UTA Travel—Legislation is being considered for Fiscal Year (FY) 2008 to pay travel costs for Inactive Duty Training or Unit Training Assemblies (IDT/UTA). You have absorbed these costs in the past, so why is this legislation being considered now?

Base closures the past two decades have lessened or eliminated the military presence in many communities, resulting in larger recruiting areas per installation. This is coupled with recruiting challenges in each service. Finally, transformation has taken each service to smaller, more flexible systems by reducing ships, aircraft, and ground equipment. To get the right person for the right job, services are reaching farther afield for recruits. It is more economical to recruit prior-service individuals or someone with needed skill sets living in a city. The trade-off for paid travel cost is savings in training dollars. Allowing Reservists to "bundle" IDTs/UTAs—i.e., complete several at a time rather than having a monthly requirement—could save even more costs.

Ask your representative and senator to request that their respective armed services committees add this provision in FY 08.

MGIB for the Selected Reserve—Last year, Rep. Vic Snyder (D-Ark.) filed a Total Force GI Bill (H.R.6250) to get educational benefits for Reserve and Guard members called to serve on active duty on par with those of their Active counterparts. Rep. Bob Filner (D-Calif.) and Rep. Stephanie Herseth (D-S.D.), both members of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, served as co-sponsors. The Total Force GI Bill would consolidate the Active Duty and Selected Reserve Montgomery GI Bill programs under one authority; create a rule of proportionality so that any increase to the MGIB for Active Duty would be matched by an

increase to the Selected Reserve benefit (equal to 35 percent of that amount); and make the current Reserve Educational Assistance Program available even if a Citizen Warrior leaves the Reserve. It would also establish a 10-year limit on eligibility and authorized use.

Ask your representative to co-sponsor Rep. Snyder's education bill.

Future of military health care—A task force has been established, at the direction of Congress to examine the future of military health care and make recommendations in numerous areas to ensure the stability of military medicine over the long term. If you have insight or concerns that should be presented to the task force, send them to me at lburnett@reaus.org.

E-news Suspended

REA's latest e-newsletter was emailed to 1,643 addresses; 335 of those bounced back due to firewalls or invalid addresses. Only 456 were opened. This has been typical the past several months. Rather than continue spending money on an ineffective mode of communication, we will suspend the e-newsletter until further notice. Between the valuable content in *THE OFFICER* magazine and resources available through the REA website, you will be able to stay informed.

Please keep in mind that REA does not have paid part-time or full-time staff. The association's work is being accomplished by a handful of volunteers, but we're committed to serving you. Your patience and understanding are appreciated, and your time and talent are always welcomed. Speaking of which ...

Board Vacancy

CMSgt Troy McIntosh, REA's member relations director, was recently selected to serve as the new command chief master sergeant, Air Force Reserve Command. He will move into this role March 8. As a result, REA has a vacancy on the REA Interim Board of Directors. If you are interested in learning more about this opportunity, give me a call at 202-646-7758.

Lani's Bottom Line

You are the focus! We're locked on to our target and we will hit the bull's eye on IDT travel costs, MGIB, and more this year! ▲