

From: [Al Bunting](#)
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Top:

[Did The Pentagon Cry Wolf Over Sequestration?](#)

(McClatchy Newspapers (mcclatchydc.com)) - A funny thing happened on the way to a predicted disaster: The Pentagon is learning to live with the automatic budget cuts its leaders had warned would threaten national security if they took effect.

[Sexual assault prevention workers will not be furloughed](#)

[Army prepares ad campaign to boost recruitment](#)

The Army next month plans to begin airing 30-minute commercials on Fox Broadcasting stations in cities where it has had trouble recruiting. The commercials, meant to resemble reality-TV series, follow 10 men and women as they visit various military bases. [The New York Times \(tiered subscription model\)](#) (5/21)

[McCconnell, Pease and Altus chosen to host KC-46A tanker](#)

The two bases will be the first of 10 main operating bases for the new tanker [[Read More](#)]

[Wittman-Led Panel Taking Stand Against BRAC](#)

(Newport News Daily Press (dailypress.com)) - Rep. Rob Wittman was against another round of military base closures before the Obama administration formally requested one. Now the House panel he chairs is poised to endorse that view.

[Guardsmen Defend Hope For Thousands Feeling Lost](#)

(Oklahoma City Oklahoman) - The landscape Sgt. Justin Taylor saw Wednesday was reminiscent of the worst areas he saw while on a combat tour last year in Afghanistan. But this was home.

[Lawmakers: Keep flying Global Hawk Block 30 through 2016](#)

Lawmakers want the Air Force to keep flying the unmanned RQ-4 Global Hawk Block 30 for another three years, despite the service's contention that the manned U-2 is better suited for intelligence gathering. [[Read More](#)]

[HASC Strategic Forces Mark](#)

The House Armed Services Committee's strategic forces panel, in its mark-up of the Pentagon's Fiscal

2014 budget request, provides funding for the missile defense strategy [announced](#) by Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel in March to bolster US defenses against ballistic missile attack, according to a summary of the mark. The panel's May 22 mark also directs the National Nuclear Security Administration to "annually certify" the security of the nuclear weapons stockpile. In the space domain, the mark reforms "DOD's business process with commercial satellite companies, ensuring that strategic competitors do not gain inadvertent access to vital systems or information." It requires "improved information sharing" on "adversary counterspace actions against US national security space systems," states the summary. It protects "certain missile defense technology and continues congressional oversight of US-Russia missile defense cooperation," and it supports missile defense cooperation with Israel. (Strategic forces [mark](#); caution; large-sized file.)

HASC Emerging Threats Mark

The Defense Department needs more analysis to determine the most appropriate mix of cyber operators across its ranks, stated the House Armed Services Committee's intelligence, emerging threats, and capabilities panel in its mark-up of the President's Fiscal 2014 defense spending proposal. "The committee is aware that there is interest from [DOD] as well as Congress on how best to leverage the reserve component, including the National Guard, in the department's organizing construct for cyber operations," reads the mark. "While the committee supports these considerations, it is also concerned that current legislative proposals to dictate National Guard units for each of the states and territories is premature and may be detrimental to the overall national effort." The panel held its mark-up on May 22. The mark also notes the "hefty price tag" of such proposals—roughly \$400 million per year. The mark also directs the Defense Secretary to prepare a report outlining the department's plan for drawing down forces in Afghanistan. In addition, it directs the Defense Secretary to "review the future role of special operations forces." (IETC [mark](#); caution; large-sized file.)

In Need of More Resources

Budget sequestration will have a "devastating" impact on US efforts to combat the illicit drug trade in Latin America, particularly cocaine trafficking, said [Rear Adm. Charles Michel](#), director of the Joint Interagency Task Force South, on Wednesday. Prior to the sequester, US resources for this mission were already on a downward trend, and there's been a decline in the number of aircraft and sea vessels available for this role, Michel told reporters in Washington, D.C., on May 22. "It's been a prioritization issue on where we want to put our national resources," he said. Just the sequestration cuts alone will result in 38 metric tons of additional cocaine—with a wholesale value of more than \$1 billion—reaching the United States, said Michel. The street value of that cocaine would be even greater. "We've been a nation at war here since Sept. 11, and we have national priorities that drive ourselves in other directions," he said. The task force is charged with reducing the illegal drug threat to the United States through cooperation with partner nations in Central and South America.

McConnell, Altus, Pease Preferred Sites for KC-46A

McConnell AFB, Kan., is the preferred location for the first Active Duty-led KC-46A main operating base, [announced](#) Air Force officials on Wednesday. Further, Altus AFB, Okla., is the preferred place to host the KC-46A formal training unit, while Pease AGS, N.H., is the preferred site for the first Air National Guard KC-46A main operating base, they said. "The Air Force chose these locations using operational analysis, results of site surveys, and military judgment factors," said [Timothy Bridges](#), the service's deputy assistant secretary for installations, in a May 22 release. Before the Air Force can render final decisions, it must complete the environmental impact studies launched in April at all of [the candidate locations](#), he said. McConnell prevailed as top choice for MOB 1 over Fairchild AFB, Wash., and Grand Forks AFB, N.D. Pease emerged as the MOB 2 top candidate over Forbes AGS, Kan.; JB McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J.; Pittsburgh IAP AGS, Pa., and Rickenbacker AGS, Ohio. Among the reasons cited, McConnell "has the lowest military construction costs," Altus requires "less Active Duty manpower" to stand up the training operation, and Pease has a "highly successful existing Active Duty association," states the release.

[House bill would keep Tricare fees steady, give troops 1.8% pay increase](#)

A bill set to be taken up today in a House Armed Services subcommittee calls for a

1.8% pay raise for service members and rejects proposed increases to Tricare fees. The panel said in a statement that the bill is designed to support troops and their families "with the care and benefits they need, deserve, and have earned." [Stars and Stripes](#) (5/21), [Navy Times](#) (5/21)

- [Pentagon budget request includes \\$450 million for Guantanamo prison](#)
USA Today/The Associated Press (5/22)

New chapter begins for 79th Medical Wing

The surgeon general of the Air Force is no stranger to the Malcolm Grow Medical Clinic and Surgery Center at Joint Base Andrews, Md. It's the first stop for ill and injured troops returning from Europe and Afghanistan. [[Read More](#)]

First wounded warrior to graduate CCAF

It may have taken Staff Sgt. Jason Ellis about nine years to receive his degree from the Community College of the Air Force, but he had good reason. Ten years ago, combat injuries severely wounded Ellis while he was on deployment in Iraq. [[Read More](#)]

Float driver: Train seemed still before deadly crash

The driver of a parade float struck last year by a train, killing four military veterans and injuring others, has told federal investigators that the oncoming train appeared stationary to him. [[Read More](#)]

Special victims counsel 'a huge step forward'

The judge advocate gave one victim of sexual assault the courage to take the stand at trial, to remain professional when it would have been easier not to, to get through one more day. [[Read More](#)]

VA clears 34,000 old claims under new initiative

A Veterans Affairs Department effort to spend six months concentrating on its oldest benefits claims is having some success, but lawmakers are concerned that the improvements might be temporary. [[Read More](#)]

DoD's request for 1% military pay raise, Tricare fee hikes rejected by House panel

A key House panel rejected the idea that budget cuts must mean pain for service members, retirees and their families. [[Read More](#)]

House panel approves changes to military's sexual assault laws

A House panel passed sweeping changes in sexual assault prevention programs on Wednesday, with less command flexibility in reducing or dismissing rape and assault charges and wider support for victims. [[Read More](#)]

GAO: VA should warn vets that GI Bill benefits may be delayed

Student veterans applying to use GI Bill benefits would be better served by the Veterans Affairs Department if they were warned of how long it might take to receive those benefits, according to a new congressional report. [[Read More](#)]

- [GOP lawmakers seek limits on missile defense cooperation with Russia](#)

[House passes bill giving disabled vets expedited airport screenings](#)

Tinker's Aircraft Return

After relocating to Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz., to avoid severe storms, six E-3 AWACs airplanes and two Navy E-6Bs returned home to Tinker AFB, Okla. The aircraft, carrying crew members from the 552nd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron and the 72nd Security Forces Squadron, arrived back at Tinker on May 21, according to a Davis-Monthan release. Their return came one day after a devastating tornado [wreaked havoc](#) near the base. One E-3 and the E-6Bs flew to Arizona on May 17, while the five other E-3s departed Tinker on May 20, just hours before the tornado touched down in Moore, several miles south of the base. Tinker officials chose Davis-Monthan because of its location, around-the-clock operations, and ramp space that can support heavy aircraft, said A1C Barbie Kramer, airfield operations coordinator of Davis-Monthan's 355th Operations Support Squadron. "Tinker didn't have anywhere closer that they could go to quickly," said Kramer. "With a tornado warning or any other evacuation, they can come to us, and they know we have the space or will coordinate for the space to be made," she said. (Davis-Monthan [report](#) by A1C Betty R. Chevalier)

Minuteman Missile Soars over Pacific in Operational Test

Airmen on Wednesday launched an unarmed Minuteman III ICBM from Vandenberg AFB, Calif., over the Pacific Ocean in one of the periodic operational flight tests meant to ensure the performance and reliability of the Minuteman fleet. "The operational test launch mission is vital in ensuring a safe, secure, and effective ICBM force," said Col. Richard Pagliuco, 576th Flight Test Squadron commander, in Vandy's May 22 [release](#). The missile lifted off at 6:27 a.m. local Pacific time, according to the release. The unarmed missile's single re-entry vehicle [was expected](#) to travel more than 4,000 miles until splashdown in the Kwajalein Atoll in the Marshall Islands. Members of the 576th FTS worked with airmen of the 91st Missile Wing at Minot AFB, N.D., in executing this mission. The Defense Department and Energy Department "will use the data collected from the flight to ensure a safe, secure, and effective nuclear deterrent," states the release.

—*Merri Shaffer*

Low Digits

A declining number of assets available for interdiction will likely mean less cocaine shipments intercepted this year in Central and South America, said [Rear Adm. Charles Michel](#), Joint Interagency Task Force South director, on Wednesday. Briefing reporters in Washington, D.C., Michel said in 2012 the task force disrupted about 20 percent of the known cocaine flow toward the United States. "This year, we are going to interdict a little less" primarily due to a lack of surface vessels to do the mission, he said. "There is actually more intelligence out there available on the movement of cocaine than there are surface vessels to actually go interdict this particular product," he said. Although the task force's operating area is 12 times the size of the continental United States, the number of US ships and aircraft available for the mission by year's end may be in the "low single digits," he said. Law enforcement partners cannot replicate many of the capabilities that the Defense Department provides for the counter-narcotics mission, he said. This makes the mission especially challenging now that nonstate actors can utilize equipment, such as semi-submersible vessels, that traditionally only nation states had access to, he said during the May 22 press roundtable.

—*Merri Shaffer*

Vietnam War POWs Reunite for 40th Anniversary Homecoming Reunion

Nearly 200 former Vietnam War POWs and their families are scheduled to arrive on Thursday at the Richard Nixon Presidential Library in Yorba Linda, Calif., to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the POWs' homecoming and the historic White House dinner that celebrated their return. Thursday's events include a tour of the library's galleries with Ed Nixon, President Nixon's brother; Christopher Nixon Cox, President Nixon's grandson; and retired Navy Cmdr. Everett Alvarez, one of the longest held US POWs in Vietnam. There will also be a wreath-laying ceremony in honor of President Nixon, a "missing man" flyover; and POW celebration family BBQ, according to the Richard Nixon Foundation's [release](#). Events on May 24—the actual anniversary of the White House dinner—include a black-tie

reception, banquet, and official portrait. On Saturday, there will be a panel discussion with former POWs on their experiences. The commemorative events in Yorba Linda, known as POW Week, began on May 20 with the opening of a special exhibit highlighting the POWs' historic homecoming and White House dinner. It was "the largest dinner ever held at the White House," states the release.

AFA and AFSA Host Memorial Day Ceremony at Air Force Memorial

The Air Force Association and the Air Force Sergeants Association invite the public—military members, veterans, and civilians—to join their commemorative Memorial Day wreath laying ceremony at 9 a.m., May 27, 2013, at the Air Force Memorial in Arlington, Va. This annual event serves as an opportunity to demonstrate gratitude to the nation's millions of veterans who have paid the ultimate price to ensure the freedom of all Americans. The Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force James A. Cody is the keynote speaker. Air Force, AFA, and AFSA officials will place several wreaths at the Air Force Memorial, and Memorial Day cards honoring USAF's fallen heroes will be on display. Additionally, joining in this year will be representatives from the "Keep the Spirit of 45' Alive" program, including their national spokesman retired Capt. Jerry Yellin. Directions to the Air Force Memorial can be found online at www.airforcememorial.org.

ADVERTISEMENT

Obama Restarts Bid To Close Guantanamo

(Wall Street Journal) - The Obama administration is set to restart transfers of detainees from Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, U.S. officials said, kick-starting a long-stalled drive to close the prison.

. Obama, In A Shift, To Limit Targets Of Drone Strikes

(New York Times) - President Obama plans to open a new phase in the nations long struggle with terrorism on Thursday by restricting the use of unmanned drone strikes that have been at the heart of his national security strategy and shifting control of them away from the C.I.A. to the military.

GI Sex-Assault Outrage Grows

(San Antonio Express-News) - In response to the Express-News series, Carl Woog, assistant press secretary for the Defense Department, said Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel expects that victims of sexual assault will be treated with the utmost dignity and respect. The department is increasing its funding and training for 'special victims unit' capabilities in which trained investigators independently pursue allegations of sexual assault.

. Women Were Secretly Filmed At West Point, The Army Says

(New York Times) - A sergeant first class on the staff of the United States Military Academy at West Point has been accused of videotaping female cadets without their consent, sometimes when they were undressed in the bathroom or the shower, according to Army officials.

. Hagel: Defense, VA Need Better System For Health Records

(Washington Post) - Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel on Wednesday directed the Pentagon to find new health-care management software that would better integrate military health-care records with the Veterans Affairs

Department.

No Furloughs For Pentagon's Rape Prevention Workers

(Agence France-Presse) - The Pentagon, facing a crisis over sexual assaults, will avoid imposing furloughs on hundreds of civilian employees who work in rape prevention programs, officials said Wednesday.

Wittman-Led Panel Taking Stand Against BRAC

(Newport News Daily Press (dailypress.com)) - Rep. Rob Wittman was against another round of military base closures before the Obama administration formally requested one. Now the House panel he chairs is poised to endorse that view.

Guardsmen Defend Hope For Thousands Feeling Lost

(Oklahoma City Oklahoman) - The landscape Sgt. Justin Taylor saw Wednesday was reminiscent of the worst areas he saw while on a combat tour last year in Afghanistan. But this was home.

Lackland Trainer Accused Of Having Sex With Four Women

(San Antonio Express-News) - An Air Force boot camp instructor faced an evidentiary hearing Wednesday on charges he had sex with four women, one in a local nightclub restroom.

McConnell, Pease And Altus Chosen To Host KC-46A Tanker

(irForceTimes.com) - The Air Force has selected the first three bases that will host the KC-46A tanker.

Intercontinental Missile Test-Launched In California

(Yahoo.com) - The U.S. Air Force launched an unarmed intercontinental ballistic missile from a California base on Wednesday, a month after the test flight was postponed because of tensions with North Korea.

Navy's Unmanned Ocean Recon Craft Makes First Flight

(Yahoo.com) - An unmanned jet built for U.S. Navy high-altitude maritime surveillance missions has made its first flight

'Barbaric Attack' In London Prompts Meeting On Terror

(New York Times) - In an attack that raised new fears of terrorism in Britain, a man walking near a military barracks in south London on Wednesday was rammed by a car and then hacked to death by two knife-wielding assailants, according to witness accounts carried by British news media.

Economic Woes Threaten Military-Spending Plans

(Wall Street Journal) - Russia could postpone its ambitious military-spending program as an economic slowdown forces the government to review its spending plans, the country's finance minister indicated Wednesday.

North Korean Envoy Visits Beijing Amid Concerns About U.S.-Chinese Relations

(New York Times) - A senior North Korean military official's visit here Wednesday appears to have been organized on short notice, and was probably prompted by North Korea's concerns about a planned meeting between President Xi Jinping of China and President Obama, analysts said.

U.S. Fears The Fighting In Syria Might Spill Over Into Lebanon, Kerry Says

(New York Times) - Secretary of State John Kerry said Wednesday that the United States was increasingly concerned that the escalating fighting in Syria might slip across the border with Lebanon and destabilize that country.

Lawmakers Move To Curb Military Sex Assaults

(Philadelphia Inquirer) - Members of a House panel angry over the growing epidemic of sexual assaults in the military took a key step toward tackling the problem by passing legislation Wednesday that would strip commanding officers of their long-standing authority to unilaterally change or dismiss court-martial convictions in rape and assault cases.

[. **Rep. Sanchez: I'm Coming To End MEADS Program**](#)

(DefenseNews.com) - A feisty US House Armed Services Committee Democrat put supporters of a controversial missile defense program on notice Wednesday, saying bluntly she plans to finally kill it.

[**U.S. Military Lawyers Put More Pressure On Guantanamo**](#)

(Reuters.com) - Military and civilian lawyers for prisoners at the Guantanamo naval base urged U.S. Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel to improve conditions for detainees, putting more pressure on the Obama administration to make good its promise to close the camp.

[**Accused Fort Hood Shooter Asks To Fire Lawyers, Represent Self**](#)

(Reuters.com) - Accused Fort Hood shooting spree gunman Major Nidal Hasan asked a U.S. military judge on Wednesday for permission to fire his court-appointed lawyers and represent himself at his court martial, a Fort Hood spokesman said.

[**'Not Your Father's Coast Guard'**](#)

(New London (CT) Day) - Vice President Joe Biden told more than 200 new Coast Guard officers Wednesday they are now an integral, indispensable part of the most capable armed forces in history.

[**U.S. Industry Touts 'Drone' Promise As Public Debate Flares**](#)

(Reuters.com) - Public backlash against deadly overseas drone strikes may undermine promising uses of such technology for anything from disaster response to mail delivery, a top U.S. industry group said as it launched a lobbying effort to "demystify" unmanned planes.

[**A Strategy To Combat Military Sexual Assaults**](#)

(Politico.com) - When our best and brightest don a U.S. military uniform, they do so with the understanding that they will sacrifice much to defend our country from dangerous threats. But they shouldn't have to face a threat from within their own ranks.

[. **Our Military, Ourselves**](#)

(ForeignPolicy.com) - Scholars, retired officers, and others have longed warned of the creeping militarization of American society. However, as the Pentagon yet again renews its sexual assault prevention efforts, it must not discount the socialization of the American military.

[**32. Obama's Forgotten Victims**](#)

(New York Times) - The civilian victims of drone strikes have not been let down just by Mr. Obama. Their own government is equally culpable; Pakistan has been complicit in several strikes.

[. **Finally, Obama Breaks His Silence**](#)

(Los Angeles Times) - Over the last four years, there has been a strange irony. One of the greatest speakers of our era has largely kept silent about one of the signature aspects of his presidency.

[**How To Stop Assad's Slaughter**](#)

(Wall Street Journal) - Syria is not Libya. Bashar Assad's troops are well armed, and his ground forces are waging successful campaigns against rebel forces across the country. But eliminating Assad's ability to take to the air and tilting the balance of power in favor of anti-Assad rebels as the United States and its allies did with the fighters who eventually overthrew Moammar Gadhafi is both achievable and advisable.

[**Civil Wars And Syria: Lessons From History**](#)

(Reuters.com) - Not just the Iraq example, but broader scholarly studies on civil war onset and recurrence suggest that should the House of Assad fall, the likelihood of continued bloodshed in Syria will remain uncomfortably high.

[**Those Muscular Poles**](#)

(Wall Street Journal) - Britain plans to mothball its single aircraft carrier and shrink its standing army to a size last seen by Napoleon. France is cutting its rapid deployment forces almost in half. Then there's Poland, the exception to Europe's feverish disarmament.

The C.I.A.'s Part In Benghazi

(New York Times) - Throughout months of Republican investigation into the tragedy in Benghazi, Libya, on Sept. 11 last year, the Central Intelligence Agency has escaped the scrutiny and partisan bashing aimed at the State Department and the White House. But we now know that the C.I.A., and not the State Department or the White House, originated the talking points that Republicans (wrongly) insisted were proof of a scandal. It was more central to the American presence in Benghazi than the State Department, and more responsible for security there.

Support Those Who Answered The Call

(Miami Herald) - As Memorial Day nears, the plight of Americans who have borne the burden of fighting our wars should be uppermost in the minds of their countrymen. The growing frustration with the failure of the Veterans Administration to eliminate a huge and growing backlog of disability claims by members of the uniformed services is well justified and demands a timely response from the Obama administration.