

President's Budget and QDR Released



This month, we celebrate the 95th birthday of the Navy Reserve. We are pleased to have an interview feature with FORCE Master Chief Ronney Wright beginning on page 13. MCPON Rick West is our guest columnist this month and we have a birthday message from VADM Debbink on page 12.

You will notice that our list of life benefactors has grown considerably since our last issue. Again, we thank those of you who have made that special additional contribution to the future of AUSN. This month's list was closed out on the 1st of Feb to meet publication deadlines.

As we began to put this issue together, the devastating earthquake in Haiti occurred. Our Navy once again was able to respond very quickly to bring substantial men/women and equipment to bear. As we write this, the *Carl Vinson* and other ships have been released from that assignment while others like the *USNS Comfort* remain on station treating the seriously injured and helping to repair port facilities. No other Navy in the world can do what one of our Amphibious Ready Groups can to bring 2,000 embarked Marines and their equipment quickly to the fight or, in this case, to the rescue. We have a short piece on the Haiti mission beginning on page 18. It should make all of us proud.

The President's Budget for 2011, the Defense Budget, and the QDR have all been released. We will have more on this in April, but the basic talk about town in Washington is that there were no big surprises in either the QDR or the Defense Budget. Two Medium Regional Conflicts have returned as the basis for the QDR planning; but aside from that, there isn't much new. Within the Navy's budget, the CGX has been cancelled while emphasis has shifted to more *Arleigh Burkes* with BMD capability. That too is not a surprise as the *Burke* is affordable and there is great interest in expanding the afloat BMD capability. The Marine Expeditionary Fighting Vehicle (EFV) will be delayed yet another year! (Can that story get any worse?) There are nine new construction ships in the 2011 budget request; and if our recollection is correct, that is below the number (11 or 12) necessary to build to the 313 ship Navy that the CNO has identified as a "floor" capacity number. In other defense news released at about the same time (1 February), the F-35 program is in trouble due to cost

overruns. The Navy is scheduled to buy 13 of the F-35B Marine variant in 2011 and 7 of the F-35C Navy models. The Corps will see 30 MV22B Ospreys; and, overall, the Navy will buy 206 aircraft or just about an identical number to 2010. In other aviation budget news, the Air Force once again is scheduled to cease production of the C-17 airlifter and the tanker battle is looming large.

We should add here that the President's Budget, which includes the Defense budget, is just the opening round. Congress will begin hearings this month and taking testimony as the annual budget process accelerates from here to the end of the fiscal year. There will be contentious battles over favorite Congressional programs and those not so favorite. We will supply testimony and have meetings on the Hill in support of both people and equipment programs.

Next month is our last spring conference before moving to a one conference a year format. Events around the 22nd, 23rd, and 24th of April are shaping up nicely so if you haven't made your plans yet, check out the information on pages 22-23 and sign up. It promises to be a good time starting with our Jimmy Buffet-themed President's Reception on Thursday.

Dave Bradley has another column for retirees this month. Dave has researched a number of great columns and we thank him for that effort. Whether a Reservist or a member of the Active Component, when one reaches retirement, everything except RSBP becomes the same. Although some members choose to leave an association when they retire from the service, most realize that it is those retirement benefits that most need protecting. That is when your Association really counts. When we say that "we are with you all the way," that is what we mean. You would be surprised to know how many phone calls we handle from the spouses of deceased members. Perhaps an associate membership for your spouse is something worth considering.

As always, enjoy the read.

Casey W. Coane