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This F-117 Nighthawk, commonly known as the "stealth fighter". It would actually be more accurate to say that this is a YF-117A Nighthawk, since this is the third prototype aircraft. This same aircraft was painted up in this US flag scheme in 1983, but since the Nighthawk was still a top secret project at that time, very few people ever saw it

### U.S. Air Force's Goal To Make Every Airman Deployable

The U.S. Air Force is now on a mission to make every single member eligible to deploy, service leaders have said.

Air Force leaders have decided to focus on eliminating any Air Force specialty code that makes a member non-deployable, such as certain office jobs, Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. T. Michael Moseley said during an Air Force Association's Air and Space Conference in Washington, D.C.

The service is also planning to make sure that every airman "has their dog tags and their shots" and is on fully deployable status, Moseley said.

Today, only 85 percent of Air Force personnel are on the service's Air Expeditionary Force roster, which is the service's deployment schedule, Moseley said. And, since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, "We have only deployed about 55 percent of the Air Force," Moseley said.

The Air Force has to make maximum use of every single person on its personnel lists by making sure they are all eligible to deploy before leaders start talking about cutting more people from the force, Moseley said. "You have to get that part right before you even talk about additional [personnel] cuts," Moseley said.

The Air Force cut 16,500 airmen from its rosters in 2006 to meet congressional limits, and more cuts are in the works.

Air Force leaders announced that they are accelerating plans to cut another 40,000 jobs from the rosters, with the reductions now scheduled for fiscal 2009, instead of 2011. The personnel cuts are necessary in order to re-capitalize the force, pay for new planes and otherwise modernize the force, Air Force Secretary Michael Wynne said during the conference.

The cuts are necessary because people are the Air Force's "most expensive asset," Air Force Lt. Gen. Roger Brady, deputy chief of staff for personnel, told *Stars and Stripes* in July, when the plans for the 40,000 reduction were officially announced.

Air Force officials say personnel costs have risen 51 percent over the past decade, though the size of the force is roughly the same.

Health care increases are the number-one cost driver, according to Brady.

But "there comes a time when you cannot pay your bills with personnel," Wynne said Monday. "We can only cut so many times before we don't have an Air Force. And frankly, it's getting a little tight," he said.

Wynne remained mum on plans to accomplish the 40,000 cuts on the accelerated schedule.

Air Force officials said more details would be released in November or December.

### Medicare/TRICARE Payment Drag On

By Henry W. Ince

We'd been hoping that Congress would make it a priority to reverse the impending 5.1% cut in Medicare and TRICARE payments to doctors now scheduled for January. MOAA (Military Officers Association of America) has joined with the AMA at press conferences to make the case that failing to reverse the cut will hurt military beneficiaries' access to care by making more doctors refuse to see Medicare and TRICARE patients.

We're also concerned that a law change is needed to stop implementation of a \$1,740 annual cap on Medicare payments for outpatient physical, speech-language and occupational therapy for 2007.

House and Senate leaders continue to negotiate over various options to relieve these looming problems, and had hoped to get the issue resolved before going home next week. But it's now looking more like they'll kick this very important legislative can until after the election.

### Furor Over Slain New York City Vets

New York City Council members unloaded a barrage on the Bloomberg administration for not forgiving the financial debt of two city employees who were killed while serving in Iraq.

The lawmakers said it's outrageous that the city is considering trying to collect the pay of cop-turned-firefighter Christian Engeldrum, 39, an Army sergeant who was killed in 2004, and Sgt. Jimmy McNaughton, 27, a member of the first police academy class to graduate after 9/11, who was shot by a sniper in 2005. They participated in the city's Extended Military Benefits Package, where they got both military and city pay as a way to keep city benefits, seniority and more.



Members from CentCom at MacDill Air Force Base attended a dinner at Operation Helping Hand which supports Veterans with special needs and their families at James Haley VA Medical Center, Tampa. At left is MOAA President Capt. Bob Silah, USN (Ret) which meets monthly at MacDill AFB.

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