

### **NAVY CORPSMAN WHO EARNED MEDAL OF HONOR IN OKINAWA BATTLE PASSES**

Robert E. Bush, whose heroic actions as an 18-year-old Navy medical corpsman in May 1945 at the Battle of Okinawa saved the life of a badly wounded Marine officer, cost Bush his right eye, and made him the youngest Sailor to receive the Medal of Honor during World War II, has died. He was 79. His life was written about in the book, *The Greatest Generation*, by Tom Brokaw. The Naval Hospital at Twenty-nine Palms, CA, is named in his honor.

### **NAVY THINKING ABOUT 313-SHIP FLEET**

Navy officials are considering a new proposal for a 313-ship fleet, which would require greater investments in shipbuilding accounts and an accelerated pace of ship construction. ADM Robert Willard, Vice Chief of Naval Operations, is spearheading a project to craft an “alternative shipbuilding

plan” requested this summer by Chief of Naval Operations ADM Michael Mullen. The new Navy chief has stated that he wants to advance a vision of a specific fleet size in order to provide predictable funding for new ship construction, which is at near-historic lows. Details of the composition of the 313-ship fleet are being closely held, but sources familiar with the plan said it does not call for a drastic reduction in aircraft carriers and includes a fleet of eight amphibious strike groups as well as a fleet of new DD(X) destroyers. The total fleet size is buoyed by scores of planned Littoral Combat Ships. Today’s fleet size is 281 ships.

### **NAVY HELICOPTERS WILL HELP RELIEVE OPERATIONAL LOAD FACED BY U.S. ARMY GROUND FORCES IN IRAQ**

The Navy is taking additional steps to shoulder a portion of the warfighting burden

carried in large part by U.S. ground forces in Iraq. Several Navy helicopter units are preparing for duty in Iraq as troop transporters or medical evacuation units and will transition to Iraq over the next year. The Navy units are assigned now to antisubmarine duties and as onboard delivery support helicopters for the U.S. Sixth Fleet. The transition to Iraq will require training for the crews and refurbishment of their helicopters. The commitment of helicopters is one way the Navy is making good on the initiatives of ADM Mike Mullen, Chief of Naval Operations – and his predecessor, ADM Vern Clark – to find ways the service can help lighten the load on the Army and Marine Corps.

### **MEDICARE PART D**

Don’t get confused! For TRICARE For Life eligible beneficiaries, there is ***no coverage or cost benefit*** to enroll in the Medicare drug program (commonly called Part D). ↴