

Simmons, Ellen

From: Craig Quigley <cquigley@hrmffa.org>
Sent: Friday, December 21, 2018 10:43 AM
To: Craig Quigley
Subject: EXECUTIVE INSIGHT BRIEF | DECEMBER 21, 2018

Ladies & Gentlemen, below please find this week's edition of *Executive Insight Brief* from The Roosevelt Group. Have a great holiday!

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EXECUTIVE INSIGHT BRIEF | DECEMBER 21, 2018
TOP STORIES

Gary Sinise's Contributions

Over 1,000 Gold Star kids who have lost parents in the military traveled to Disney World this week for a special holiday trip provided by the Gary Sinise

Foundation, according to the actor. In total, [Sinise's foundation](#) flew 1,750 people to Orlando, Florida, for a holiday trip to remember.

The Gary Sinise Foundation, created in 2011, posted photos of the children having fun at the "most magical place on Earth" with their families. [Read more here.](#)

The foundation launched the program last year which helps serve the "children of fallen military heroes," according to the [website](#). Sinise began supporting veterans who served in the Vietnam War but devoted much of his support following the September 11, 2001 terror attacks. Earlier this week, "Everybody Loves Raymond" star Patricia Heaton called for TIME Magazine to put Sinise on the "Person of the Year" list for his charity work.

Steps Toward a New Light Tank

The U.S. Army just moved one step closer to a [new light tank](#) intended to boost the firepower of airborne and other light infantry units.

The Army is currently looking for a new tracked armored vehicle able to protect and support infantrymen as they "destroy the enemy in some of the worst places in the world," Brig. Gen. Ross Coffman, the director of the Army's Next Generation Combat Vehicle Cross Functional Team, said Monday.

The U.S. Army will evaluate light tanks built by [General Dynamics and BAE Systems](#) as it moves ahead with plans to field some 500 of the armored vehicles.

While the Army is not yet buying large quantities of these tanks, the Mobile Protected Firepower project is another sign of how the Pentagon is preparing for wars against near-peer competitors — like Russia and China — after nearly

two decades of counterinsurgency fights in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The Army plans to choose a winner in fiscal 2022 and have battle-ready tanks by 2025. In all, the service is planning to buy 504 of these light-tanks. [Read full story here.](#)

More Military Updates

After months of delays, the U.S. Air Force is about to launch the first of a new generation of GPS satellites, designed to be more accurate, secure and versatile. The satellite is scheduled to lift off Tuesday from Cape Canaveral, Florida, aboard a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket. It's the first of 32 planned GPS III satellites that will replace older ones now in orbit. Lockheed Martin is building the new satellites outside Denver. [Read more about its capabilities and the launch here.](#)

In other news, it has been reported that the plane that would replace both the F-22 Raptor and F-15 Eagle could reach a staggering cost of \$300 million per plane. That figure comes from a new study called "The Cost of Replacing Today's Air Force Fleet," which was published by the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO) and first reported by Defense News. The report attempted to calculate the future cost of [Penetrating Counter Air \(PCA\)](#), which is the current name of the U.S. Air Force's next air superiority fighter jet.

PCA is meant to replace the current fleet of F-22s and F-15s, taking its place as the service's dedicated air-to-air fighter when it enters service in 2030. Unlike the Air Force's F-35A, which is meant to carry out both air-to-air and air-to-ground missions, PCA will be focused solely on the skies, optimized to fight and win against current and future aerial threats including the Russian Sukhoi Su-57 and China's J-20 fighter.

“The PCA aircraft would probably have a greater range and payload, as well as improved stealth and sensor capabilities, than today’s F-22; those characteristics would help it operate in the presence of the high-end air defenses that DoD believes China, Russia and other potential adversaries may have in the future,” the CBO states. [Read more here.](#)

Modernization a Priority for FY2020

As the Trump administration and Congress deliberate the Defense Department’s top-line budget for fiscal 2020, safeguarding the military’s weapons programs and funding technology development is taking precedence over growing the force, the Pentagon’s No. 2 official said Thursday.

Pentagon budget makers had been planning for a \$733 billion budget request — a modest increase over the \$716 billion budget for FY19 — when Trump announced in October that the Defense Department’s budget would instead be cut to \$700 billion. The move surprised many, as Trump had frequently touted his administration’s efforts to grow the size of the military and invest in new defense technology.

The announcement raised questions about what the Pentagon would have to cut in order to meet the lower number, but it appears that those concerns may have been premature. Earlier this week, Politico and other outlets reported that congressional Republicans and Defense Secretary Jim Mattis had convinced Trump to raise the top line to \$750 billion. [Click here for more.](#)

Government Shutdown Looming

Lawmakers edged closer Wednesday toward [a temporary measure](#) that would fund the government a few more weeks but would deny President Trump

money for a border wall.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., said he would file a bill on Wednesday that would fund the government through Feb. 8. The measure would avert a [government shutdown](#) but would put off key funding decisions until early next year.

Last week, Trump said he would "proudly" shut down the government unless he got an additional \$5 billion for a border wall. But Democrats in the House and Senate balked at that, with Democrats taking the House majority as of January.

[Read more here.](#)

Quick Hits

The Trump administration will [soon withdraw](#) all of the approximately 2,000 American troops from Syria, a U.S. official said Wednesday as President Trump declared victory in the mission to defeat [Islamic State militants](#) there. A decision to pull out completely, if confirmed, would raise doubts about how to prevent a resurgence of the militant group, undercut U.S. leverage in the region and undermine diplomatic efforts to end the Syrian civil war now in its eighth year. Many top officials are rebuking this new development, stating it is a premature action. [Read more.](#)

The U.S. Senate has passed a sweeping [criminal justice reform bill](#) seeking to address concerns that the U.S. locks up too many of its citizens. The First Step Act, which has been championed by President Trump, [passed by a vote of 87-12](#). The bipartisan measure found unlikely support from hardline conservatives and progressive liberals alike. The U.S. leads the world in number of jailed citizens. Around 2.2M Americans were in jail in 2016, figures show. The bill, which is expected to be debated in the House of Representatives on Wednesday, would only affect federal prisoners, accounting for about 10% of

the total U.S. prison population.

Mick Mulvaney will become the acting White House chief of staff at the end of the year, President Donald Trump announced in a tweet last Friday. Mulvaney will not resign as director of the Office of Management and Budget while he is acting White House chief of staff, White House press secretary Sarah Sanders said Friday evening. OMB Deputy Director Russ Vought will handle day-to-day operations for the office, Sanders said in a statement. [Read more here.](#)

This Day in History

68: [Vespian](#), a gruff-spoken general of humble origins, enters Rome and is named emperor by the Senate.

1620: The Pilgrims land at [Plymouth Rock](#).

1862: The U.S. Congress authorizes the Medal of Honor to be awarded to [Navy personnel](#) who have distinguished themselves by their gallantry in action.

1944: During the [Battle of the Bulge](#), German troops surround the 101st Airborne Division at Bastogne in Belgium.

1945: [General George S. Patton](#) dies at the age of 60 after being injured in a jeep crash.

1988: [Pan Am Flight 103](#) from London to New York explodes in midair over Lockerbie, Scotland, an hour after departure. All 259 passengers were killed in the explosion caused by a bomb— hidden inside an audio cassette player — that detonated inside the cargo area when the plane was at an altitude of 31,000 feet. A shower of airplane parts falling from the sky also killed 11 Lockerbie residents.

2004: A suicide bomber attacks the forward operating base next to the U.S. military airfield at Mosul, Iraq, killing 22 people; it is the deadliest suicide attack on U.S. soldiers during the Iraq War.

See more at History.net

Look Ahead

Saturday, December 22

4:30 PM EST

Event: Friends of the National WWII Memorial
hrotondi@wwiimemorialfriends.org | 202-675-2017

Topic: Defense

World War II Memorial, 1750 Independence Avenue SW

Happy holidays everybody!