

APRIL 2009

# UPDATE

Business Executives For National Security

## “Worthy of Trust and Confidence”

### *BENS Helps Secret Service Retain Experienced Agents*

From protecting the president to safeguarding our currency and cyber security, United States Secret Service agents have one of the toughest and most unique jobs in the world. Now, the long hours and constant, unpredictable travel they endure have produced a troubling statistic among agents who pledge to remain “worthy of trust and confidence”—while the service’s attrition rate remains low, it has doubled over the past 10 years.

In an effort to reverse the trend, the Secret Service invited BENS to brainstorm about ways to improve retention and morale among its most experienced special agents. Led by board member Paul Stern, a BENS team will conduct a review of the service’s proposed revisions to its retirement plan and offer recommendations on other retention issues, such as improving employee quality of life. Comprised of 19 BENS members with experience in management consulting, financial planning and recruiting, the team met with senior Secret Service leaders at their headquarters on March 18 to launch the project.

In thanking BENS for offering its expertise, Secret Service Director Mark Sullivan noted that the agency’s work force is its most valuable asset and stressed the need to retain highly skilled leaders to meet a growing number of challenges.

The team aims to issue its final report and recommendations this summer.

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### **BENS Works: Business Sense for National Security**

**Worth the Wait: BENS Achieves WMD Milestone** — It may have taken eight years of construction delays and funding freezes, but it was worth the wait. In the latest achievement of BENS’ efforts to strengthen non-proliferation programs, a new chemical weapons disposal facility is now up and running in Russia. BENS worked closely with Sen. Richard Lugar—cosponsor of the U.S. Cooperative Threat Reduction program—to build the facility in Shchuchye, 1,000 miles southeast of Moscow and home to nearly 2 million deadly chemical shells. Every shell destroyed means one less weapon at risk of falling into the wrong hands.

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### **Event Highlights and BENS Developments**

**Jones, Levin & Warner to Headline May 13 Events** — If it’s May, it’s time (May 13 to be exact) for the BENS Eisenhower Award Dinner and Annual Forum in Washington, D.C. This year’s forum, to be held at the Ronald Reagan Building, turns to a new area of focus for BENS—energy security—and will feature as keynote speaker current National Security Adviser retired Gen. Jim Jones. In the evening, our black-tie Eisenhower Award gala will be held at the Ritz-Carlton to honor Sen. Carl Levin and former Sen. John Warner for their bipartisan leadership on national security. For more information, contact Jennie Moonis at 202-296-2125 or [jmoonis@bens.org](mailto:jmoonis@bens.org)

**Marine's Conway: Praise for BENS** — Helping soldiers returning from battle—it's a major initiative at BENS this year with the American Heroes Project. It's also the best way to support the armed forces, Marine Corps Commandant General James T. Conway told a small group of BENS members in Dallas on Feb. 11. On March 27, Gen. Conway addressed a BENS audience in New York City about the Corps' challenging deployment schedule. After noting in Dallas that the Corps will meet its recruiting targets two years ahead of schedule and discussing new deployments to Afghanistan, Gen. Conway was excited to hear about the Heroes project—which will assist wounded veterans reentering civilian life—and thanked BENS for supporting our men and women in uniform.

**Training Days** — With more U.S. forces headed to Afghanistan and operations ongoing in Iraq, the National Training Center at Ft. Irwin in Southern California is vital in preparing soldiers for both missions—and BENS members got an up-close look at the facility March 16-17. Hosted by Brigadier General Robert B. Abrams, who thanked BENS for its support of the armed forces, a group of 11 members viewed new technologies for combating improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and explored a mock Iraqi village.

**The Way of The Spy** — For most Americans, the life of a spy is a mystery. For many BENS Southeast members, there's now a little more clarity. Milt Bearden, a 30-year veteran of the CIA, captivated 80 BENS members and guests in Atlanta on March 6 with anecdotes and insights from his service in Europe, Africa and Central Asia. An acclaimed author and film consultant ("Meet the Parents"; "The Good Shepherd"), Bearden also drew upon his covert operations experience in Afghanistan and Pakistan to call for a US-NATO strategy in those countries that extends beyond military power.

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## Upcoming Events

- **Atlanta** – Cocktails and Hors d'oeuvres with David M. Walker, former Comptroller General of the U.S., April 20, 6:30–8:00 p.m., Buckhead Club. Contact Allison Cheatham at [acheatham@bens.org](mailto:acheatham@bens.org)
- **Dallas** – Joint Strike Fighter (JSF/F-35) Aircraft Briefing and Facilities Tour, May 8, Lockheed Aeronautical Corporation, Fort Worth. Contact Matthew Elias at 214-315-2576 or [melias@bens.org](mailto:melias@bens.org)
- **Dallas** – Lunch with Dallas native and former Marine Captain Donovan Campbell, author of *Joker One, a Marine Platoon's Story of Courage, Leadership and Brotherhood*, April 28. Contact Matthew Elias at 214-315-2576 or [melias@bens.org](mailto:melias@bens.org)
- **Kansas City** – National Security Award Dinner with Congressman Ike Skelton, April 14, Westin Crown Center. Contact Bill Lawson at 816-842-1778 or [wlawson@bens.org](mailto:wlawson@bens.org)
- **San Francisco** – Presentation on energy security with Jim Woolsey, former CIA Director and current partner of VantagePoint Venture Partners, April 3, 12:00-2:00 p.m. Contact Kathy Denzer at [kdenzer@bens.org](mailto:kdenzer@bens.org) for more information.