

# OTES...

started that allowed Guard and Reserve members to qualify for the benefit by drilling for six years without any extended active duty.

The home loan program, administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs, allows eligible people to buy a home with little or no down payment.

The VA says that since 1994, about 10,000 Reservists have qualified for the home loan guarantee.

Officials say it is very likely that Congress will review the program before it expires and decide whether or not it should be extended.

**NEW RULES ESTABLISHED ON AUGMENTATION:** Naval Reserve officers on active duty who were commissioned after Sept. 30, 1996, may not apply for transfer to the Regular Navy until they have four years of commissioned service, under a new augmentation policy announced by the Navy.

The new rules also mandate that such officers who reach six years of commissioned service be automatically considered for augmentation into the Regular Navy. In addition, officers selected for lieutenant commander must accept a Regular Navy commission or turn down the promotion.

The new policy was announced recently in Navywide administration message 305/97.

**SOME RESERVISTS FACE LOSS OF HOME LOAN BENEFIT:** People who joined the Naval Reserve after November 1993 and who have not served on extended active duty may not have the chance to qualify for a Veterans Administration home loan.

The program that provides the VA home loan benefit for Reservists and National guardsmen who haven't served on extended active duty expires Oct. 28, 1999.

Many Reservists qualify for the program by serving on active duty — at least 90 days during Desert Shield/Desert Storm, or more than 181 days during peacetime. In 1992, a test program was

**NAVAL RESERVE ASTRONAUTS RECEIVE MEDALS:** Two Naval Reserve captains have been awarded Distinguished Flying Crosses for their achievements with NASA during 1996.

Secretary of the Navy John H. Dalton presented the medals to CAPTs William Readdy and Kenneth Cockrell for their roles as astronauts and shuttle commanders.

CAPT Cockrell, a former A-7 Corsair and F/A-18 Hornet pilot, was cited for his command of STS-80, which in late 1996 retrieved the Wake Shield Facility and two satellites, and set a record for longest space shuttle mission so far — 17 days, 15 hours and 53 minutes.

CAPT Readdy, a 1974 graduate of the Naval Academy, commanded NASA space shuttle mission STS-79, which docked with the Russian space station Mir and transferred more than 3 tons of supplies and exchanged two astronauts.

"We only send our nation's best and brightest into space, and CAPT Ken Cockrell and CAPT Bill Readdy not only represent the best of America, but they also represent the best of our Naval Reserve force," Secretary Dalton said during the ceremony. Both officers serve in non-pay billets with Naval Reserve Voluntary Training Units.

**MARINE GENERAL MAY HEAD NAVAL ACADEMY:** There is a chance that the next Superintendent of the Naval Academy will be a Marine which, will make Academy history.

According to published reports, at least three Marine Corps generals are among the candidates to replace ADM Charles Larson, USN, who retires in early June. His successor is expected to be named in March.

An Academy-appointed review panel suggested considering a Marine for the top Academy job.

"This is an ideal opportunity to bring together a true melding of the Navy and Marine Corps, and I hope we don't blow it," BGEN Tom Draude, USMC (Ret), a panel member, is quoted as saying.

GEN Charles Krulak, USMC, the Marine Commandant, has also called for a Marine to have the billet.

Published reports say that one of the finalists is MGEN Charles Bolden, Jr., Deputy Commanding General of 1 Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Pendleton, Calif.

"I'd love to see a Marine in that position, but I'm not sure the Navy is ready for that," he is quoted as saying.

**FORE AND AFT:** U.S. Navy warships, including nuclear-powered aircraft carriers and submarines, will be allowed free use of Singapore's new Changi naval base when it opens in 2000. . . The Department of Defense plans to vaccinate all 2.4 million service members — active-duty and Selected Reserve — against the deadly biological agent anthrax. . . The Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, GEN Joseph W. Ralston, USAF, has been nominated to serve in the post for a second two-year term. . . ADM Elmo Zumwalt, USN (Ret), Chief of Naval Operations from 1970 to 1974, was among 15 people to receive the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest honor for civilians, at a ceremony in the White House. He was honored for his efforts to end racial and sexual discrimination in the Navy during his term of office. . . As of January 20, Selected Naval Reserve strength was 94,000, down 593 from the previous month. Individual Ready Reserve strength was 125,531, up 2,161. Active-duty Navy strength was 386,415, down 2,345 from December 22. ↓