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FRA *today*

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AS THIS ISSUE OF *FRA Today* goes to press, we learned of the passing of PRPEC Ed Huylebroeck, a shipmate who left his mark on the Association at the local, regional and national level. Shipmate Huylebroeck worked at NHQ for many years and continued to write all National President's obituaries for *FRA Today* (and previously *Naval Affairs*) until his death on 5 July 2007. It seems only fitting that we use the publication to share some of his life.



PRPEC ED HUYLEBROECK

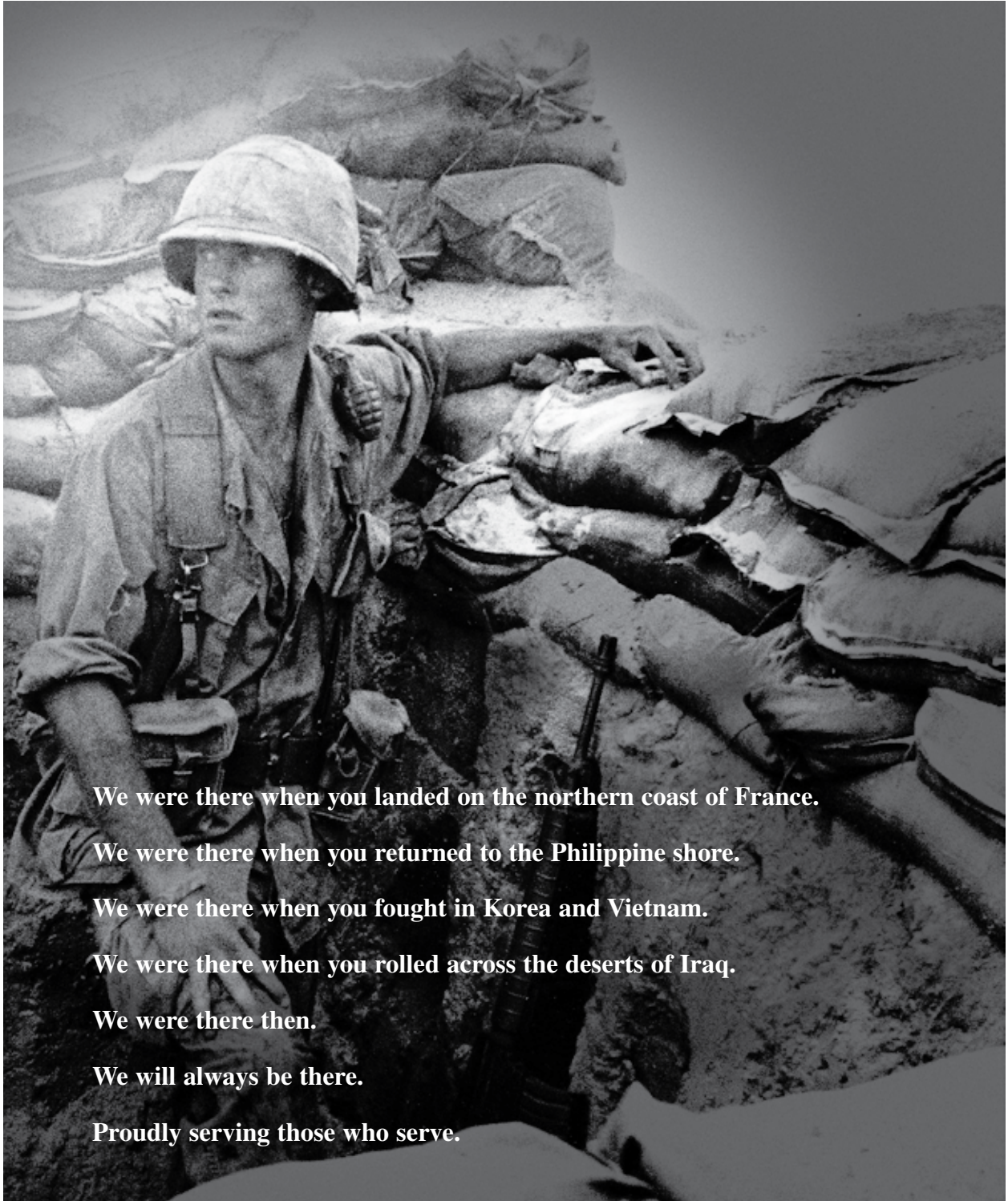
Shipmate Huylebroeck joined the FRA in 1966, maintaining continuous membership for more than 40 years. In addition to his tenure as East Coast Regional President (1983-1984), He also served as the region's vice president and chaired a variety of regional and national committees. As a member of Branch 181 (Arlington, Va.), he served as branch president, secretary and editor of the branch newsletter. Additionally, he served on the branch's Board of Directors and chaired every branch committee at least once. In 1979, the shipmates of the Northern Area elected him to chair the Central Liaison Committee.

Following his retirement from the Navy in December of 1969, Huylebroeck joined the FRA National Headquarters staff, serving as the director of Member Services and later as a special assistant to the National Executive Secretary. He was employed as a full-time staff member for 28 years and then worked part time for another four years. He was FRA's resident historian and contributed countless hours writing summaries of past national presidents' terms in office.

Shipmate Huylebroeck was the quintessential shipmate and embodied the tenants of the FRA, contributing to numerous branch, regional and national projects. His efforts were recently recognized by National President Jerry Sweeney when Branch 181 declared May 12, 2007, as Ed Huylebroeck Appreciation Day.

Certainly everyone at Headquarters has come to know, love and appreciate Ed's assistance, and he will be deeply missed. His visits to HQ with his granddaughter "Suzye Q" were always a highlight.

PRPEC Ed Huylebroeck is survived by his wife LA FRA PNP Doreen; their five children, Rick, Brian, Tracey, Kym, and Kevin (his son Mike predeceased him in November 2000); eight grandchildren; and one great-grandchild. Condolences may be sent to the Huylebroeck family at 4903 Heversham Court, Fairfax, VA 22032-2323.



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- 18 GUARDIANS OF THE GREAT LAKES**
As the U. S. Coast Guard celebrates its 217th birthday, *FRA Today* recognizes the unsung heroes who are the guardians of the Great Lakes.

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ON THE COVER

Coast Guard Seaman Brandon Hudson looks on as a fifth class ice buoy is hung over the side of the Coast Guard Cutter Acacia. The buoy is being placed back in the water after it was painted and had its mooring chain replaced. Acacia was in the Chicago area to check and replace buoys for the 2004 Great Lakes shipping season. Acacia is a 180-foot sea going buoy tender built in 1944 home ported in Charlevoix, Mich.

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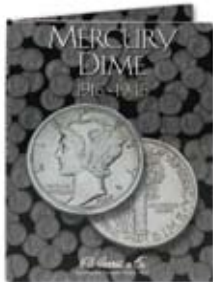
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Missing Pay

I retired in 1980 and drew retired pay on the last day of the month. However, sometime in the early 1990's it was decided to move the payday to the first of the month. We drew our retirement pay at the end of the month and since the next day was the first of the month we did not receive a check. Of course on the last of the month we did not draw anything. We missed one months pay. If I die my wife should draw that one months pay even if the current month she only gets part of it. I saw in the paper how much money was saved by making us go a month without pay. My retired Airforce friend here and I talked about being cheated out of a months pay. He also went a month without pay. Why not bring that up on the Hill.

ICC Edward L. Brown

Combat-Related Special Compensation

I, and many other shipmates, are concerned about the lack of information/activity relative to the hot-button issues such as CRSC (other than Chap. 62) vets which is of major importance as well. The activity regarding legislation that would benefit the vast majority our retirees and widows is contained in the below letter to the Majority Leader for your information. We wish you well and hopefully we will see FRA activity on these issues.

Larry Hart

From FRA: *The Senate Committee version of the Defense Authorization Act (S. 1547) expands Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC) to include medical retirees with less than 20 years of service. Currently CRSC is provided only for service members with 20 or more years of service. We have been informed that a floor amendment will be offered in the Senate to change the SBP paid up date from 1 October 2008 to 1 October 2007 and also may eliminate the SBP/DIC offset.*

The House passed version of the Defense Authorization (H.R. 1585) also includes Expands Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC) for personnel with fewer than 20 but more than 15 years of service with 60% or greater disability rating beginning 1 Oct. 2008, and authorizes indemnity allowance up to \$40 per month to spouses that have DIC offset that will be phased in 1 Oct. 2008.

Please let the other shipmates know about the FRA Action Center on the website www.fra.org that can make it easier to communicate with their elected officials.

Submissions Send *Shipmate Forum* letters to: Editor, *FRA Today*, 125 N. West St. Alexandria, VA 22314. E-mail submissions may be sent to fratoday@fra.org. Please include "Shipmate Forum" in the subject line. FRA reserves the right to select and edit letters for publication. Letters published in *Shipmate Forum* reflect the opinions and views of FRA members. They do not necessarily reflect the official position of FRA as a whole. FRA is not responsible for the accuracy of letter content.

Cool Navy

Shipmates, I just read the June issue. Your article on returning to Civilian-ization had an interesting reference to an Army website. It was www.cool.army.mil.

Of note is that a Sailor's magazine doesn't reference the www.cool.navy.mil website. The Navy started this effort and actually went to Congress to change the law to allow the services to pay for enlisted certificates and qualifications. The Navy lead for this is the Center for Information Dominance at www.npdc.navy.mil/ceninfodom. Thanks for a good magazine.

CMDCM(SCW) Michael J. Mrsny



From FRA: *Thank you Shipmate for the reference! We've passed along your link to the people who gave us the Army link. As always, we appreciate the feedback.*

Tools for the Toolbox

I enjoyed reading your article "Return to Civilian-ization!" in the June 2007 edition of *FRA Today*. I recommend our transitioning service members, Veterans, and their families consider adding one more "tool" to their career search toolbox.

Using grant funding provided annually by the U.S. Department of Labor and allocated through the Veterans Employment and Training Service (USDOL/VETS), each State has developed specific employment and labor programs that focus on veterans, their families, and transitioning service members. Nationwide, in States' public labor exchanges, One-Stop Career Centers, and employment offices are a wide range of employment and job training services which are available *at no cost* to our military service members.

I encourage all veterans and transitioning service members to visit these offices and speak with their Veteran employment specialists — the Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER) and the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialist. These dedicated experts are responsible for providing career transitioning, work training, and job placement services specifically to our veterans and their families.

To learn more about the USDOL/VETS and all their Programs and services, I suggest visiting their website at: www.dol.gov/vets. In addition, contact the local State employment office and arrange to speak with their veteran representatives and take advantage of this hard-earned and well-deserved benefit.

David Pafford



Defense Authorization Delayed in Senate

UNFORTUNATELY AT PRESS TIME the Senate Defense Authorization bill is stalled, awaiting action on the Senate floor.

As the House and Senate FY 2008 Defense Authorization bills (S. 1547, and H.R. 1585) move through the legislative process towards a final conference agreement that will be approved by both chambers and hopefully signed into law by the President, I am reminded of famous quote from 19th century German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck who said “there are two things you don’t want to see being made – sausage and legislation.” Law making is much more uncertain than sausage making. The Senate planned to finish its version of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) before the Independence Day recess but was distracted by an exhausting floor debate on immigration policy. The new majorities in the House and Senate are eager to keep on schedule to have



JOHN DAVIS
*FRA's Director of
Legislative Programs*

this completed no later than the start of the new fiscal year on 1 October as they promised at the beginning the session. Conference committee members are appointed from both bodies and are limited to matters in disagree-

ment between the House and Senate and may not insert a subject not dealt with in either the House or the Senate bill. When the conference completes action on a measure it sends its recommendation to both the House and Senate to be approved and then passed onto the President to sign into law. Floor amendments to a conference committee report are prohibited. The House and Senate can only accept or reject the measure in total. The following table compares the two bills (The Committee markup of S. 1547 and the version of H.R. 1585 that passed the House on 17 May.) as they relate to key issues of importance to FRA members.

John Davis is a member of Navy Department Branch 181.

SASC Completes Markup on for Wounded Warriors Bill

The Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) has approved “The Dignified Treatment of Wounded Warriors Act” (S.1606) and sent the bill to the full Senate for consideration. The legislation is sponsored by SASC Chairman Senator Carl Levin (Mich.) and supported by Senate Veterans Affairs Committee Chairman Daniel Akaka (Hawaii), SASC Ranking Member John McCain (Ariz.), and former SASC Chairman John Warner (Va.). The Senate Committee worked closely with the Administration on its version of the bill, although a formal policy statement on the bill has not been issued by the White House.

A series of articles in The Washington Post published in February highlighted chronic transition problems. This legislation addresses many of these and would bring consistency to the complex disability rating system administered by Departments of Defense (DoD) and Veterans Affairs (VA).

The House passed similar legislation, “The Wounded Warriors Assistance Act” (H.R. 1538) on 29 March, 2007. “The Wounded Warriors Assistance Act,” was also included in the House passed version of the FY 2008 National Defense Authorization Act (H.R. 1585). The Bush Administration opposes the House bill, saying that while it supported the goals, it did not want to make sweeping changes without careful thought. The House and Senate plans have some similarities but also many differences, which may complicate conference committee deliberations to iron out differences between the two bills.

Study Cites Low Benefits for Some Wounded Warriors

A Center for Naval Analysis (CNA) report to the Veterans Disability Benefits Commission at its June meeting indicated that VA disability compensation amounts are too low for younger severely disabled vets, but may be too high for those disabled later in life. The study examined how VA disability benefits succeeded in replacing lost earnings for disabled veterans compared to non-disabled veterans. The analysis indicated that those who become severely disabled at younger ages face an additional financial penalty because their earning careers are cut short, whereas those afflicted by severe disabilities later in life have had an opportunity to accumulate larger savings from military and post-service earnings. Additional information on the study is included in Tom Philpott's 14 June military update column posted www.fra.org.

COMPARISON OF THE TWO NDAA BILLS

ISSUE	HOUSE	SENATE	COMMENTS
PAY INCREASE	Mandates a 3.5 percent pay raise for FY 2008, which is 0.5 percent above Administration's request and requires pay increases in FY 2009-FY2012 to be at least 0.5 percent above the Employment Compensation Index (ECI). Also increases maximum monthly hardship pay from \$750 to \$1,000.	Provides for a 3.5 percent pay increase in FY 2008.	<i>FRA supports additional annual active duty pay increases that are at least .05% above the Employment Cost Index (ECI) and is supporting anticipated Senate floor amendment that requires pay increases in FY 2009-2012 to be at least 0.5 percent above the ECI. FRA also supports increases in maximum monthly hardship pay.</i>
SPECIAL PAY CONSOLIDATION	Combines more than 60 bonus and incentive pay programs into 8 categories excluding career and proficiency bonuses.	Has no similar provision.	<i>FRA supports the consolidation of pay programs.</i>
TRICARE FEES	Extends last years prohibition of TRICARE fee increases until 9/30/08.	Will not consider TRICARE fee increase until Task Force report on military health care in December.	<i>FRA opposes TRICARE fee increases until other cost-savings procedures are fully implemented.</i>
PHARMACY CO-PAYS	Prohibits pharmacy co-pay increases for one year.	Prohibits pharmacy co-pay increases.	<i>FRA opposes increases in pharmacy co-pays until other cost-saving options are implemented.</i>
ACCESS TO TRICARE	Has no similar provision.	Requires annual survey of participation of providers and beneficiaries access to providers.	<i>FRA supports Senate provision to assist in determining TRICARE beneficiary access to health care providers.</i>
SBP	Authorizes indemnity allowance up to \$40 per month to spouses that have DIC offset that will be phased-in 1 Oct. 2008.	Modifies the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) to allow guardians of dependent children to receive SBP benefits.	<i>FRA supports shifting the effective date for paid up coverage from 1 October 2008 to 1 October 2007. FRA anticipates a Senate floor amendment to include date change for paid up coverage.</i>
CONCURRENT RECEIPT	Expands Combat-Related Special Compensation for personnel with fewer than 20 but more than 15 years of service with 60% or greater disability rating beginning 1 Oct. 2008.	Expands Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC) to include medical retirees with less than 20 years of service, who are disabled due to combat related activities or combat training.	<i>Currently CRSC is provided only for service members with 20 or more years of service. FRA supports legislation authorizing the immediate payment of concurrent receipt of full military retired pay and veterans' disability compensation for all disabled retirees.</i>
RESERVE RETIREMENT	No provisions.	Reduces minimum Reservists retirement age (age 60) by 3 months for every 90 days of mobilization after the effective date.	<i>FRA supports reducing the age when Reservists are eligible for retirement pay, particularly those who have experienced extended mobilizations and supports anticipated Senate floor amendment to make the effective date retroactive to September 11, 2001.</i>

ISSUE	HOUSE	SENATE	COMMENTS
MGIB	Puts Reserve and active duty programs under VA, except for “kickers” for critical MOS categories.	Has no similar provision.	<i>FRA believes that the integration of active and Reserve force MGIB programs under Title 38 (VA) will improve administration for the MGIB and is a major step toward a “total force MGIB”</i>
FAMILY LEAVE	Family members of mobilized personnel who are employees of businesses with 50 or more employees can use family medical leave to deal with issues arising from mobilization.	Has no similar provision.	<i>FRA supports programs to meet the growing needs of families dealing with extended deployments.</i>
COMMUNICATION	Provides military families free mail privileges to send letters and care packages to active duty service men and women in Iraq and Afghanistan and those hospitalized due to injury or disease by providing a voucher every two months to the family of any service member on the ground and participating in either Operation Enduring Freedom or Operation Iraqi Freedom to cover the full cost of mailing one package up to 10 pounds or one letter up to 13 ounces.	Has no similar provision.	<i>FRA supports the House provision to help reduce the stress on deployed military personnel and their families.</i>
END STRENGTH	Increases FY 2008 end strength for the Marines 9,000 above Administration’s request (189,000) and prohibits additional military to civilian conversion for Navy medical service restoring 700 personnel but reduces overall Navy end strength by 11,000.	Increases Marine Corps end strength 9,000 but reduces Navy end strength by more than 11,000.	<i>FRA supports manpower levels to ensure the availability of adequate personnel to meet the demands of OIF, OEF and other operational requirements. FRA welcomes the added end strength for the Marine Corps but is particularly concerned by the continuing Navy draw down during a time of war.</i>
PCS PROCESS	Allows 2 POVs for moves to Alaska, Hawaii and US territories.	Has no similar provision.	<i>The House provision was in the House 2007 NDAA but was dropped from the final Conference Report. FRA supports this provision and is working to keep it in the final FY 2008 NDAA.</i>
CARE FOR WOUNDED WARRIORS	Includes provisions of “The Wounded Warrior Assistance Act” (H.R. 1538) to improve the management of medical care for wounded service members.	Committee report recommends a stand alone bill and the committee approved “The Dignified Treatment of Wounded Warriors Act” (S.1606) and sent the bill to the full Senate for consideration.	<i>FRA supports both the House and Senate bills intended to improve the management of medical care for wounded service members get the expedited top-notch medical treatment and respect they deserve.</i>
FAMILY & DEPLOYMENT	Prevents deployment of both military parents who have a dependent under age 18.	Prohibits permanent loss of child custody due to deployment.	<i>FRA supports both the House and Senate provisions to help meet the growing needs of families dealing with extended deployments.</i>

ISSUE	HOUSE	SENATE	COMMENTS
NAVY NAME CHANGE	Authorizes changing the title of Secretary of the Navy to Secretary of the Navy and Marine Corps.	Has no name change provision.	<i>FRA strongly supports the Department name change.</i>
IMPACT AID FOR SCHOOLS	Authorizes \$50 million for schools that serve the children of service members and \$15 million to schools that are expected to grow or decline as a result of BRAC or force structure changes.	Authorizes \$50 million in supplemental aid to schools that are affected by the assignment of military families, including \$5 million for educational services to severely disabled children, and \$10 million for districts with rapid increases in number of students due to BRAC.	<i>Supplemental DoD impact Aid Funding enhances program funding under the Dept. of Education.</i>

HEALTH CARE ISSUES

The DoD Mental Health Task Force Reports to Secretary of Defense

The 14-member Mental Health Task Force established by the FY 2006 National Defense Authorization Act submitted its report to Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, that includes assessments and recommendations for improving the mental health services provided to service members by DoD. The Task Force recommends four interconnected goals that include:

- Creating a culture of support for psychological health in the military;
- Providing a full range of excellent (psychological) care in both peacetime and wartime;
- Authorizing sufficient resources for prevention, early intervention, and treatment;
- Empowering leaders on all levels to monitor, plan, coordinate, and integrate prevention, early intervention and treatment.

The panel found that current efforts fall significantly short of achieving the goals listed above and that “the Military Health System lacks the fiscal resources and the fully-trained personnel to fulfill its mission to support psychological health... The mission of caring for psychological health has fundamentally changed and the current system must be restructured to reflect these changes.”

FRA staff testified before the DoD Mental Health Task Force in December stressing the urgent need for adequate funding and improved oversight of the Department of Defense (DoD) and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) treatment programs for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and other mental health conditions.

FRA Meets with ASD Health Affairs

Dr. S. Ward Casscells, the new Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs, recently hosted the quarterly leadership meeting with FRA and other beneficiary groups and discussed his perspectives on military health care. He stressed that he’s here to serve and eager to partner with various organizations and to learn the concerns of their members. He believes that quality care must be foremost and envisions cost-savings as a by-product of this focus. On current benefits, he said that the quality of military health care is very good and “getting better” but is “not perfect.” Read in Tom Philpot’s Military 7 June Update column (posted on www.fra.org) for more introductory information on Dr. Casscells.

GAO Report — TRICARE Fee Increase Savings Overestimated

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) issued a report on 31 May, 2007 indicating that the Pentagon’s claims of savings of nearly \$10 billion over 5 years as a result of increasing enrollment fees and \$1.5 billion in savings for increasing pharmacy co-pays were an exaggeration. The GAO questioned the assumption that 500,000 retirees under age 65 would switch from TRICARE to other insurance options. FRA has also questioned the Pentagon estimates in its Congressional testimony and in its statement to the Task Force on the Future of Military Health Care earlier this year.

FRA strongly opposes TRICARE fee increases and believes there are other costs saving options as alternatives to shifting costs to younger military retirees. In addition, there is strong opposition within the senior enlisted and retiree communities. An FRA web survey in March 2006 generated more than 1,100 responses that indicated over 90 percent of FRA members opposed the Administration’s TRICARE fee increases.



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In the early 1930's watch manufacturers took a clue from Henry Ford's favorite quote concerning his automobiles, "You can have any color as long as it is black." Black dialed watches became the rage especially with pilots and race drivers. Of course, since the black dial went well with a black tuxedo, the adventurer's black dial watch easily moved from the airplane hangar to dancing at the nightclub. Now, Stauer brings back the "Noire", a design based on an elegant timepiece built in 1936. Black dialed, complex automatics from the 1930's have recently hit new heights at auction. One was sold for in excess of \$600,000. We thought that you might like to have an affordable version that will be much more accurate than the original.

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TWO RECENTLY RELEASED HEALTH care reports by special study groups are significant to FRA, our legislative agenda and associated advocacy work on Capitol Hill. They were mandated by Congress last year and detail findings from research, testimony and site visits and offer various recommendations related to our work to halt drastic future health care fee hikes proposed by the Department of Defense.

The Association's efforts included testimony by then National President Ed Zerr before the Senate Personnel Subcommittee, numerous Hill visits by our National Boards of Directors, legislative team meetings with members and staffs, meetings with DoD health care officials and of course thousands of calls, messages and letters from Shipmates opposing the increases.

The result of these initiatives was to put the onerous DoD plan on hold until studies of other health care cost saving options were completed. The FY 2007 National Defense Authorization Act also required the establishment of the 14-member Task Force on the Future of Military Health Care to assess and recommend changes in order to sustain the military health care system. And to no one's surprise, its interim report includes an endorsement for "increasing the share of costs borne by beneficiaries." (Note that this is misleading since the only beneficiaries referenced are younger military retirees.)

According to the Task Force, "the portion of costs borne by beneficiaries should be increased to a level below that of the current FEHBP (Federal Employees Health Benefit Plan) or that of generous private-sector plans and should be set at or below the level in effect in 1996" when the TRICARE program was launched.

The panel also endorses the concept of indexing premiums and deductibles "paid by under-65 military retirees" with specifics deferred until the final report due by the end of the year. In addition, the report indicates that this plan "will cause out-of-pocket costs for individual military retirees to rise more rapidly than their retired pay."

These are not surprising recommendations given the current funding challenges and a DoD's resolute effort to include TRICARE for Life (TFL) funding within the DoD budget despite Congressional intent that this be a Treasury obligation similar to other federal entitlement programs.

The second report is from the Government Accountability Office (GAO) which issued a report on 31 May, 2007 indicating that the Pentagon's claims of savings of nearly \$10 billion over five years as a result of increasing enrollment fees and \$1.5 billion in savings for increasing pharmacy copays were an exaggeration. GAO questioned the Pentagon assumption that 500,000 retirees under age 65 would switch

from TRICARE to other insurance options. FRA has also questioned the Pentagon estimates in its Congressional testimony and in its statement to the Task Force on the Future of Military Health Care earlier this year.

These findings point to future higher out of pocket health care costs for younger military retirees perhaps as early as next year. That said, it's noteworthy to restate the positive effects of our strong advocacy work both as an individual organization and in conjunction with our TMC partner organizations which resulted in serious DoD cost saving initiatives, greater awareness of these issues and holding the line on the imposition of higher fees for at least two years. In addition, pending legislation in the Senate (S.604) would if enacted, minimize future adjustments to no more than annual COLA levels. And similar House legislation (H.R.579) would authorize higher fees with congressional approval.

Finally, continuing dialog with senior DoD leaders continues and along with representatives of other beneficiary group organizations, DMD and FRA Health Care Advisor Bob Washington and I met recently with Dr. S. Ward Casscells, the new Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs. On current benefits, he said that the quality of military health care is very good and "getting better" but is "not perfect." And as reported in Tom Philpott's *Military Update* column 7 June 2007 he foresees "gradual TRICARE fee hikes" after the Task Force completes its final report later this year.

Stay informed and keep those messages going to Capitol Hill.

Joe Barnes is FRA's National Executive Secretary and Chairman of the National Committee on Legislative Service. A member of Navy Department Branch 181, he is also an advisor to the National Committees on Budget and Finance and Membership and Retention.



JOE BARNES
FRA's National Executive Secretary

ACTION ALERT

Contact your elected officials and ask for their support for H.R.579 and S.604.

If you have Internet access, letters to your elected officials can conveniently be sent via the Action Center on www.fra.org.

To obtain a copy of *Communicate With Your Elected Officials*, containing the contact information for both houses of Congress, please call 800-FRA-1924.

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ONWATCH

Without question, knowledge of the legislative process is important to the professional development of every Coast Guardsmen. It is critical for military personnel to understand how the system works. Our people need to know and understand that what goes on in Congress has a huge impact on how we operate as a military service *and* is important to our own quality of life. The U.S. military is receiving a lot of attention in the media, on the campaign trail, and in Congress; and is the subject of many contentious issues being resolved on Capitol Hill. It's a good time to examine just how much we know.

Regrettably, many military personnel are not familiar with what is happening in Congress — it can be overwhelming and confusing. Military members are very busy and therefore tend to worry only about what they see as directly affecting their day-to-day lives. We should take a longer (broader) view of the process, because without our participation, lawmakers may not get both sides of the story. It is especially important for senior Coast Guard personnel, both officer and enlisted, to understand the workings of Congress. I encourage my staff to become educated on the various issues. One thing that I feel is very important is knowledge of the Federal Budget and exactly how it works. Last year I made sure that the senior personnel in my office became educated regarding the process, because how organizations acquire, track and disburse money has a direct impact on how well we are able to do business and take care of our people.

It's important to seek out opportunities to be heard by the legislature — your voice does matter. There are many different types of meetings, activities, receptions and dinners where enlisted people can meet their elected officials. It's worthwhile for members of Congress to meet people who have recently been out in the field. In fact, at Coast Guard Headquarters, if there's a chance we can get some senior enlisted personnel in the room with the decision makers, we jump at the chance! It's an invaluable opportunity for the members to chat directly with the men



MCPOCG Charles "Skip" Bowen

and women who wear the uniform everyday, and I push it every chance I get. It is crucial that while doing this, you know your limitations. DoD Directive 1334.10 (which provides similar guidance to what federal employees receive under the Hatch Act) encourages military members to proceed with caution when it comes to engaging in certain political activities.

I too, have to be conscientious about how I conduct myself regarding political matters. I try to keep the limitations in mind when I represent my enlisted service members. I really value the opportunities for myself and other senior enlisted leaders to testify before Congress. It's having a voice heard by people

that don't normally get to hear it. Senior officers are typically invited to testify because of their decision-making responsibilities. However, it is also important for senior enlisted leaders to be afforded similar opportunities to testify because they function as a "field reality check." Senior enlisted advisors have been there in the trenches, and they are out there talking to their people. For instance, in the last 9 months, I have had a really extensive travel schedule. I have had an amazing jaunt around the Coast Guard. I have been in front of thousands and thousands of people and I think this travel has given me an important perspective on the activities and challenges that face all of our Coast Guardsmen. It is that perspective that I pass on to our elected representatives every chance I get.

When military associations like FRA represent us in testimony before Congress, they don't have the strict restrictions that are imposed on us. All of the military associations and coalition groups raise awareness with elected officials regarding critical issues that are important to our personnel. In addition to the help of these associations, please do your part, and carefully participate in the democratic process. Organizations like FRA are constantly seeking ways to get our message across to lawmakers. One simple way you can help is by responding to FRA's regular online surveys that are posted at www.fra.org. Without FRA and the support we can provide them, elected officials may not have all the information they need to support our individual services or our people.



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ONE OF THE BENEFITS of FRA membership is the opportunity to be a sponsor of a young student entering the annual FRA Americanism Essay Contest. This is a wonderful chance to get to know some really special children who want to share their patriotic spirit with others. Promotion of this contest is also a fantastic way to spread the word about FRA in your community. If your branch does not currently have an Americanism Chairman, please volunteer today. If you are a member-at-large, you are also encouraged to sponsor a student.

The National Committee on Americanism-Patriotism has chosen “Why I Am Proud to Be An American” as its theme for the FRA 2007-2008 Americanism Essay Contest. The grand national prize is \$15,000 with prizes of \$5,000, \$3,000, and \$2,000 to each first, second, and third place winners in grades seven through twelve. Prizes are U.S. Savings Bonds. All winners will receive an attractive plaque citing their achievement. Every entrant judged at the national level receives a “Certificate of Recognition.” Additional prizes may be awarded to students winning at local branch and regional levels of competition.

Any student (including home schooled) grades seven through twelve, may enter the contest. The contest is not restricted to children of the FRA or its Ladies Auxiliary, however, each entrant must be sponsored by an FRA member in good standing or a current chartered branch.

FRA members are encouraged to publicize the essay contest and to distribute posters and rules to schools as they promote the contest. Additional posters, rules and cover sheets are available through FRA Headquarters at 800-FRA-1924 or for download at www.fra.org/essay.

Students need to submit their essays to the respective Branch Americanism Chairman by 1 December 2007. Branches need to forward branch winners to their regional chairman by 1 February 2008, and regional winners need to be submitted to FRA's National Headquarters by 1 March.

All judging of essays is anonymous. Students should include their name on the cover sheet only — NOT on the essay.

RULES

- All entrants shall be students in grades seven through twelve (or equivalent).
- Entrants must be sponsored by a branch of the Fleet Reserve Association or a unit of the Ladies Auxiliary.
- The essay shall be on the theme designated and shall not exceed 350 words.
- The essay shall be legibly written or typed on one side of the paper.
- A student may submit only one entry each year.
- Each entry must be accompanied by a separate sheet stating: the entrant's name; address; zip code; telephone number; school grade (or equivalent); name of school or the words “home schooled;” student's Social Security Number (optional); number of words in essay; and the sponsoring branch/unit or sponsor's name.
- If selected a “contest winner,” the student's Social Security Number shall be provided for the sole purpose of complying with the rules of issuance of a U.S. Savings Bond.
- Entries submitted to branches shall be submitted to the Branch Americanism-Patriotism Committee and postmarked not later than 1 December for judging at the branch level.
- Entries sponsored by members-at-large (MAL) members shall be submitted to the national chairman and forwarded to an appropriate branch for judging in their respective grade group. All entries shall be postmarked no later than 1 December.
- All entries become the property of the Fleet Reserve Association.

Richard A. Ruiz

Chairman, Americanism-Patriotism Committee

REGIONAL ELECTION INFORMATION UPDATE

The regional convention and election information is published in the June issue of *FRA Today* each year in compliance with the Constitution and Bylaws. Due to printing schedules, information on the candidates needs to be to the National Headquarters by the end of April for inclusion in that issue. The West Coast region has asked that we announce that Nathan “Joe” Nash, Branch 192, is a candidate for Vice President.

For other information on this and other Regional Conventions, please see page 23 of the June *FRA Today*.



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U.S. Coast Guard

The Great Lakes are national treasures. Besides breathtaking scenery and natural beauty, the Lakes provide drinking water to millions, offer a recreational paradise for boaters and fishermen, and are an integral part of a transportation network that is vital to our nation's economic well-being. Although many take this natural wonder for granted, safeguarding the Great Lakes region is the top priority for the men and women of the 9th Coast Guard District.

Great Lakes

As the U. S. Coast Guard celebrates its 217th birthday, FRA Today recognizes the unsung heroes who are the guardians of the Great Lakes.

GRANDEUR ON A GRAND SCALE

Protecting and preserving the Great Lakes region is no small task, particularly given the area's vast size. "To understand the job we do, it's important to understand the context in which we work," says Capt. Mike Parks, Chief of Response for the Coast Guard's 9th District. "Our district stretches from Minnesota to New York and covers an enormous geographic area of responsibility. The Great Lakes Basin is governed by two countries, eight states and three provinces, several tribal nations and hundreds of local communities. The 9th District encompasses eight U.S. states, 86 coastal counties, and 70 congressional districts – 40 of which adjoin the water. We serve a diverse population of approximately 30 million people and are also responsible for protecting 1,500 miles of international border, 5,400 miles of U.S. shoreline, and a staggering volume of water." To put it in perspective, Parks adds, "If you drained the Great Lakes and distributed the water over the 48 contiguous states, the water would cover them to a depth of more than nine feet."

As part of the Department of Homeland Security, one of the Coast Guard's primary missions is to prevent the intrusion of illegal aliens and substances into our country. Besides monitoring these more obvious threats to national security, the 9th District works closely with Canadian law enforcement agencies to prevent all cross-border crime, including those related to the war on terror.

“After the Middle East, the U.S. and Canada are two of the top locations for terrorist cells,” says Parks. “There’s a real threat on both sides of the border — people who wish harm to both our countries. And criminals don’t recognize jurisdictional boundaries. Their goal is to cross borders with impunity. We are in lock-step with our Canadian counterparts to ensure that criminal elements do not cross the border in either direction.”

The area’s geography contributes significantly to the challenge of protecting our northern border. “Lake Michigan alone has more shoreline than the entire state of Florida,” explains Parks, and patrolling such a vast expanse of shoreline requires significant resources, both in dollars and manpower.

The climate also presents a challenge in preventing unauthorized border crossings. “During the winter, when the lakes and rivers freeze, ice bridges are formed, allowing folks to walk or drive snowmobiles across,” says Parks. “There are no check points, no passport checks, at these locations. It’s critical that the public understands its role in identifying things that seem out of place. Homeland security should be — *must be* — everyone’s concern.”

ECONOMIC HIGHWAY

The Great Lakes are also part of a vast maritime transportation network the links the American heartland with the Atlantic Ocean and beyond. Protecting this economic asset is yet another facet of the 9th District’s homeland security mission.

“Keeping these shipping and transportation lanes open is an important part of our mission,” explains Parks, “and includes protecting bridges and supervising traffic through the lock systems. Maritime mobility is critical to the economic stability of the nation and is important to the ‘homeland.’ Should this transportation infrastructure be damaged or destroyed, it would have a devastating impact on our country.”

As the nation’s maritime law enforcers, the Coast Guard is responsible for inspecting large U.S. or Canadian transport ships, called “lakers,” and ocean-going vessels (many of which are from foreign countries), called “salties,” that transport materials to and from Great Lakes ports. The Coast Guard checks the name of each foreign vessel that enters the Great Lakes Waterway, and also verifies the credentials of the 20 to 30 crew members aboard each ship, conducting background checks on all of them.

In addition to checking incoming vessels for illegal immigrants and contraband, 9th District personnel also inspect ships as a means to protect the environmental safety of the region. Millions of people rely on the Lakes as a source of fresh water and the Coast Guard works diligently to fight water pollution. Besides oil spills and other toxic substances, the Coast Guard also develops and enforces regulations that protect the Lakes’ waters from invasive plant and animal species carried in the ballast water of incoming vessels.

Because of its geographic structure, protecting the ports along the Great Lakes coastline is really like protecting one gigantic port. “The ‘port of the Great Lakes’ isn’t like other U.S. ports,” explains Parks. “Unlike New York or Miami, we can’t shut down the flow of maritime traffic to a single port or harbor. In order to shut down Chicago, for example, we’d have to stop the flow along the entire Great Lakes system. The challenge is to identify the threat and employ the necessary resources to stop it before it gets into the system.”



Top: The deck crew waits at the buoy pocket as the Coast Guard Cutter Acacia approaches the next buoy. Acacia was in the Chicago area to check and replace buoys for the 2004 Great Lakes shipping season. Acacia is a 180-foot sea going buoy tender built in 1944 home ported in Charlevoix, Mich.

Above: Coast Guard Cutter Katmai Bay (WTGB 101) breaks ice in the Straits of Mackinaw on the Great Lakes.
USCG photo by PA1 Carolyn Cihelka

The DEMSI 250 skimmers, outriggers and oil-collection booms are deployed in Western Lake Erie from the Coast Guard Cutter Bristol Bay — all a part of Reserve Group Detroit's 12-days of active-duty training. USCG photo LCDR John S. Stewart



A lesser known, but equally important, aspect of maintaining maritime mobility is the 9th District's year-round responsibility to maintain buoys and other aids to navigation. Because winter ice can damage or drag floating buoys hundreds of buoys are retrieved from the water each autumn and ferried ashore, where they are repaired and refurbished. Some are replaced for the winter with fixed beacons that are anchored to the bottom in such a way as to prevent shifting in the ice. In addition to the navigational buoys and beacons, the 9th District also works closely with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to remove and restabilize weather buoys, some of which are equipped to measure wave height, air and water temperature, and wind speed. In the spring, the buoys are replaced in precise locations using GPS (Global Positioning System) technology, and are monitored throughout the boating season to ensure vessels can safely navigate the Great Lakes.

According to Lt. Jerall Lawrence, Domestic Icebreaking and Cutter Operations Manager, the Coast Guard is leveraging GPS technology to work more efficiently and, most importantly, improve safety. "The buoys are still extremely important, but all the larger ships that travel through the Great Lakes are equipped with very sophisticated GPS systems," says Lawrence, who is working with ships' captains to determine how to maximize safety while optimizing the Coast Guard's resources and manpower. "If we can eliminate some of the buoys and still maintain a high level of safety, that reduces the financial, manpower and time costs of maintaining, retrieving and replacing those markers."

RAISING AWARENESS

As Congress considers how to address the challenges of illegal immigration and threats to national security,

securing our borders has gained more attention. But while most citizens are aware of the illegal immigrant and drug traffic occurring along our national border with Mexico, many are less aware of the challenges associated with protecting our northern border. The bridegroom infected with a rare strain of tuberculosis who recently crossed international borders brought needed attention to the other-than-southern borders. Parks is encouraged by the Secure Border Initiative (SBI), Homeland Security's multi-year plan to increase and upgrade the resources needed to patrol and secure our borders. "The good news is that the needs related to protecting our northern border are getting some attention," adds Parks.

Because of the surrounding natural serenity, many of the local inhabitants see the Lakes as their safe haven, a place for recreation and rejuvenation. As a result, many don't like to think of their home as a potential target for violence or crime.

"When people in New York City see armed Coast Guard personnel patrolling the harbor, it makes them feel secure," says Parks. "They feel good about seeing that presence, particularly after the events of 9/11. That's not necessarily the case here."

Recent plans to conduct live fire training exercises on the Great Lakes became a highly contentious issue in the region. Although the Coast Guard still conducts armed patrols of the area, the live-fire training has been tabled for the time being. As a result, 9th District personnel must continue to travel out of the area to conduct these training exercises, which cre-

ates a readiness challenge and has a significant impact on the district's financial and personnel resources.

"Training is essential to our ability to respond and maintain a high level of readiness," says Parks. Identifying threats to this national treasure and formulating an appropriate plan to combat them is a daunting task. "We certainly understand citizens' concerns, and we'll continue to explore ways to ensure the safety of the region's residents and the security of the area's infrastructure."

"WE DO IT ALL."

As one of our nation's five armed forces, the Coast Guard is known for its multi-mission role. And the 7,700 active duty, reserve, auxiliary and civilian members of the 9th District are involved in every mission area. In addition to protecting the natural resources of the region and ensuring maritime security and national defense, the 9th District also shoulders a substantial responsibility as it ensures the safety of those who spend time on the Great Lakes.

More than one third of all recreational vessels in the United States are registered in the eight Great Lakes states, and more than a million boats are registered in the counties that border the Lakes. Because of the climate, the vast majority of these boaters are on the water during the five-month period from May to September. This

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Coast Guard Station Ashtabula Ohio's 30-foot rigid hull inflatable boat conducts a security patrol in the Great Lakes.
USCG photo by PA1 Harry C. Craft III

foot, multi-purpose cutter replaced the original Mackinaw (WAGB-83) that had been breaking ice in the area since 1944. The new Mackinaw is a year-round asset, equipped to function as a buoy tender and also capable of deploying a skimming system used to contain oil spills.

“Mackinaw is one of three vessels we have that is equipped to respond to oil spills in the Great Lakes,” says LtCmdr Brian J. Donahue, Aids to Navigation and Domestic Icebreaking Section Chief. “They take in the water and oil, and separate the oil, which is collected in a large bladder. The bladder can be removed and taken ashore for disposal. This system allows these cutters – Mackinaw, Hollyhock and Alder – to work on oil spills for days at a time if necessary.” “The new Mackinaw is truly a multi-mission cutter,” according to Parks. “In addition to its icebreaking responsibilities, its crew is trained to conduct boardings in support of our law enforcement mission, and crewmembers are also trained

in shipboard firefighting and damage control. This summer, she'll participate in an exercise that simulates an oil spill of national significance. It's also a highly visible platform for community relations, hosting school children for a variety of educational programs.”

UNSUNG HEROES

As the Coast Guard celebrates its 217th birthday, it's only fitting to recognize the unsung heroes who are the guardians of the Great Lakes. “While the drug seizures and illegal migrant arrests in the south get a lot of media attention, our folks in the 9th District are doing the Coast Guard's work with professionalism and without a lot of fanfare,” says Parks. “They do a great job of keeping the Great Lakes safe, which is no small task. They don't look for headlines or a lot of accolades; they are committed to doing their job as safely and professionally as possible. They're truly dedicated to protecting the Lakes and the people who live, work and recreate on them.”

compressed boating season creates a concentrated workload for the 9th District during this period. And while the vast majority of these boaters are law-abiding citizens, the Coast Guard's operational tempo is blistering during the summer months.

“Over Father's Day weekend alone, we had 125 search-and-rescue (SAR) cases and 20 boating-under-the-influence (BUI) arrests,” says Parks. “We saved 12 lives, but unfortunately lost two. This is a typical weekend workload for us during the boating season. We conduct between 4,000 and 5,000 SAR missions each year and board thousands of vessels annually.”

That's not to say the work stops when the weather turns colder. “The tempo slows a bit in the winter, but we're still extremely busy,” says Parks. “We regularly conduct ice rescues, saving 16 lives last winter.” And because the summer season is so demanding, training and maintenance are often conducted during the colder months. “We can't be partially trained. We've got to make sure our people are as prepared as possible for every situation.”

Breaking the ice that builds up during the winter is another significant responsibility for the 9th District. Federal law requires the Coast Guard to operate at least one heavy icebreaker on the Great Lakes, and the service commissioned USCGC Mackinaw (WLBB-30) in 2006. The new 240-

THE 9TH COAST GUARD DISTRICT:

- Consists of four sectors and 78 units.
- Employs 10 HH-65 helicopters to perform search and rescue, law enforcement, security and environmental response duties.
- Conducted more than 400 responses to people in distress on or through the ice, saving 116 lives (during winters of 2002-2007).
- Facilitates the transport of millions of tons of vital supplies through the ice each year.
- Conducts thousands of security patrols of critical infrastructure and key events annually.
- Maintains a unique relationship with its Canadian counterparts, working shared mission on a common border.
- Meets unique enforcement challenges as ships cross the U.S./Canadian border up to 22 times as they transit the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Seaway.
- Launches 187 boats from 47 stations in response to more than 5,000 rescue, enforcement and response missions each year.
- Maintains strong partnerships with FBI, EPA, DOE and other government agencies with seamless cooperation.
- Services thousands of Aids to Navigation twice (or more) annually to facilitate year-round maritime commerce.
- Meets challenge of protecting pristine fresh water environment.

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Thanks to an exclusive agreement with Australia's world-famous Perth Mint, New York Mint has secured the rights to the first 5,000 coins struck of this inaugural Silver Koala issue. Plus, each legal-tender coin is struck in a full ounce of .999 pure silver and has been certified in Mint State 69 Gem Brilliant Uncirculated condition by the Numismatic Guaranty Corporation (NGC).

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Featuring an engaging vignette of a lovable baby koala bear nestled in a gum tree, each coin has also been certified by the Mint Master at the Perth Mint to be 1 of the first 5,000 coins struck. This first-year-issue's silver purity, pristine condition and desirable “First Strike” status has pre-issue interest running sky high. Like its Panda counterpart, the Silver Koala coins will feature a new design each year, starting with this stunning 2007 design. Will these first-ever Silver Koalas reach the \$400 to \$600+ levels for which the first Silver Panda coins currently command? Who knows, but with today's

soaring silver prices and an ever-exploding collector market, it's an excellent opportunity.

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MILCON/VA Appropriations Increases Strongly Supported by FRA

FRA staff participated in a press conference announcing the committee markup of the FY 2008 Military Construction/VA appropriations bill (H.R. 2642) sponsored by Subcommittee Chairman Rep. Chet Edwards (Texas) that includes a significantly increased VA budget totaling \$6.7 billion above the FY 2007 level, the largest annual increase in the Department of Veterans Affairs 77 year history, and \$3.8 billion above the Administration's request. The bill includes additional health care funding with emphasis on research and treatment for Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). The bill also provides money for more than 1,100 new VA case workers to reduce the major backlog of claims impacting more than 400,000 veterans. The White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) issued a statement that if the additional spending above the Administration's request is not offset by spending reductions in other programs, other spending bills would be vetoed. The legislation passed the Appropriations Committee and the full House on a bi-partisan, roll call vote.

The Senate also approved its version of the legislation (S. 1645) sponsored by Senator Jack Reed (R.I.) which also includes major increases in health care and treatment for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). The final appropriations bill reconciling the differences between the Senate and House bills will be resolved in a conference committee made up of members from both chambers.

Coalition Responds to DoD Predatory Lending Regulation

The Military Coalition (TMC), a group of 35 military/veterans organizations which is co-chaired by FRA, responded to the draft DoD regulation regarding implementation of provisions of the FY 2007 National Defense Authorization Act to authorize predatory lending protections for service members and their dependents. FRA was a leading supporter of the Talent/Nelson provision in the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) FY 2007 which is the basis of the policy draft. The letter offers the following recommendations:

- The draft regulation needs to cover all creditors that target military members. As written, the regulation fails to include military installment and rent-to-own loans.
- The narrow definition of payday lending may permit lenders to continue operations with very minor changes in business practices.
- The regulation should require an annual examination of emerging financial predators that target military members and their families.

There is strong opposition to the regulations within the banking and finance communities.

Two New Programs Help Military to Civilian Transition

The Department of Defense recently announced a new online transition assistance program (TAP) resource has launched to help retirees, Reservists, and veterans find jobs and can be found at www.TurboTAP.org. The site is run in conjunction with Military.com.

The Small Business Administration has also recently launched a new effort called "Patriot Express" which helps veterans and those close to them open their own businesses. It is available to retirees, veterans, and Reservists, current spouses of eligible personnel, the surviving spouses of service members who die on active duty, and spouses of veterans who die from a service-connected disability. More about that business development program is available at: <http://www.sba.gov/patriotexpress/index.html>.

FRA's June teleconference coincided with the issue of FRA Today and focused on transitioning from military life to the civilian work world. The Association appreciates the participation of Margarito Perez ("Tito") from the Corpus Christi Fleet and Family Support Center and FRA National Chaplain and former MCPOCG Vince Patton, now with Military.com, who discussed transition programs and recent developments including Turbotap.com.

Dislocation Allowance at Retirement Legislation Introduced

Representative Thelma Drake (VA) has informed FRA that she will introduce legislation that would authorize the payment of a dislocation allowance to members of the armed forces who are executing their final orders to retire or transfer to an inactive duty status. The bill applies to those with 20 or more years in the military moving their households to a location in excess of 50 miles from their final duty station. According to an online survey FRA conducted in 2003, ninety-seven percent of the participants believe there is a need for a dislocation allowance for retiring members of the Armed Forces.

US Supreme Court Rejects Petition to Review USFSPA

The US Supreme Court denied an FRA supported petition for a Writ of Certiorari to review the constitutionality of the Uniform Services Former Spouse Protection Act (USFSPA). FRA is one of only a few associations supporting the petition. The Association continues to advocate for the introduction of legislation and hearings addressing the inequities of this law. FRA believes that USFSPA is a one-sided law and that Congress needs to review and amend so the federal government is required to protect its service members against state courts that ignore its provisions.

On & Off Capitol Hill is written by Joe Barnes, National Executive Secretary and John Davis, Director of Legislative Programs with input from Bob Washington, Health Care Advisor and Director of Membership Development, Chris Slawinski, National Veterans Service Officer and Ed Dockery, Assistant Director of Legislative Programs.



BRANCH 22 PENSACOLA, FLA.

PRPSE Mark Kilgore, Branch 22 Americanism Chairman, (far left), and Branch 22 President Bob Hall (far right), present David Herrera, 10th Grade, (left) and Mary-Grace Reeves, 7th Grade, (right) their National 1st Place Americanism Essays Awards during Branch and Unit 22's Joint Installation.

BRANCH 77 GREEN VALLEY, ARIZ.

Pictured is PNP Tom Heaney, Branch 77, being presented with his 50-year membership award by National President Jerry Sweeney at a branch meeting.



BRANCH 101 SANTA CLARA, CALIF.

San Francisco Marine's Memorial Association President and CEO Major General J. Mitchell Myatt, USMC (Ret.) is seen holding a donation of \$1,000 from the branch for the "Tribute Memorial Wall" fund which honors lives lost in Iraq and Afghanistan. With Myatt is (L to R) Master at Arms Robert Hughes (USN Ret.), 2nd Vice Pres. Larry Webster (USMC Ret.), Secretary/Treasurer Rene Estes (USN Ret.), 1st Vice Pres. Armand Petri (USCG Vet & Ret USAF).



BRANCH 89 ATLANTA, GA.

Shipmate Roy E. Gallinger, of Atlanta Branch 89 received his 40-year pin and framed certificate, June 09, 2007. He is pictured to the left of Branch President B. Charles Blair who presented the certificate and pin.

BRANCH 115 ALLENTOWN, PENN.

Paul Geissinger presents Alex Ritter of Lehighon, PA. an award and a \$75.00 savings bond for being selected the outstanding Delayed Entry Program candidate by the Allentown Navy Recruiters.

**BRANCH 226 STATEN ISLAND, N.Y.**

Robert Prindle of St. Charles school on Staten Island won first place in the Americanism Essay Contest for the seventh grade at the Branch Level as well as the NE Region. Presenting his certificate are from left to right Branch President Jim Brown Student Robert Prindle and Essay Chairman Pete Dolan.

**BRANCH 269 GOOSE CREEK, S.C.**

Pictured, CMDM (SS) Robert Shannon Jr., Command Master Chief of the Naval Weapons Station Charleston SC, Guest Speaker during Memorial days Services at Plantation Memorial Gardens, as Branch President Chuck Hines stands to the right.

**BRANCH 281 REDDING, CALIF.**

RVPWC Lee M. Hollowell presents dictionaries to third grade students at Black Butte Elementary School, Shingletown, CA. This is the third year the branch has participated in the Dictionary Project.

To submit a photo for News From the Branches, please e-mail a photo as an attachment in jpeg format to FRAToday@fra.org or mail a high-quality photograph to *FRA Today*, 125 N. West Street, Alexandria, VA 22314. Please include a brief description of the photograph and include the names of those pictured. Laser prints and scanned copies of photographs cannot be accepted.

CASU-12

15–17 October 2007, Reno, NV.
Contact Ken Grimes, 33 Lion Lane,
North Babylon, NY 11703-2234,
631-667-8489.

USS Brown (DD-546)

21–24 September 2007, Portland, OR.
Contact Fred Korzekwa, 317-578-7736,
korzekwaf@sbcglobal.net.

USS Charles Berry (DE 1035)

24–27 October 2007, Virginia Beach,
VA. Contact Tony Sievers, 7505 River
Rd., Unit 4-A Newport News, VA
23607-1768 or 757-247-5769.

USS Cotten (DD-669)

13–16 September 2007, Colorado
Springs, CO. Contact Richard Myers,
404-373-0120, ramunlim@yahoo.com.

USS Dace (SS-247/SSN-607)

4–7 October 2007, Groton, CT. Contact
Dick Geiler, Mrgitch@comcast.net.

USS Enoree (AO/TAO-69)

24–28 September 2007, Lexington, KY.
Contact Floyd Carriker, 714-534-3025.

USS Floyd B. Parks (DD-884)

17–24 September 2007, San Diego,
CA. Contact James “Robby” Robbins,
P.O. Box 61, Twain, CA 95984, 530-
283-2165, sbirdsong@roadrunner.com.

USS Greenwich Bay (AVP-41)

18–20 October 2007, Wilmington, NC.
Contact Martin Brown, 424 Washington
Ave., Hamlet, NC 28345, 910-582-3791,
jmbnpb@bellsouth.net.

USS Independence (CVA-62)

3–7 October 2007, Memphis, TN.
Contact Dan Nachtsheim, dan@nni.com.

USS James Monroe (SSBN-622)

15–18 October 2007, Branson, MO.
Contact James Bayliss, P.O. Box 426,
Hazelwood, MO 63042, 314-428-6355.

USS Kawishiwi (AO-146)

20–23 September 2007, Branson, MO.
Contact Russell Reagin, 417-272-3755,
rdreagin@interlinc.net.

USS Kretchmer (DE/DER-329)

27–30 September 2007, Charlotte,
NC. Contact Peter Gamwell, 6626
Brookcrest Dr., Charlotte, NC 28210,
704-552-2170.

USS Leonard F. Mason (DD-852)

3–7 October 2007, Branson, MO.
Contact Robert Higgins, 636-566-0196,
retiredgunner75@yahoo.com.

USS Piedmont (AD-17)

10–13 October 2007, San Diego, CA.
Contact C. Ken Werth, P.O. Box 398,
Markesan, WI 53946, 920-398-2510,
werth@smkorth.com.

USS Rushmore (LSD-14/LSD-47)

19–23 September 2007, Seattle, WA.
Contact John Bonner, 12232C Paseo
Lucido, San Diego, CA 92128-6236,
858-485-7072, crbonz@att.net.

USS Strong (DD-758)

18–23 September 2007, Branson, MO.
Contact James Kelly, 345 Kathmere
Rd., Havertown, PA 19083,
610-789-2391, jimkelly@erols.com.

USS Towers (DDG-9)

19–23 September 2007, Tucson, AZ.
Contact Raymond Wong, 1634 – 38th
Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94122,
415-566-7285,
usstowersddg9@pacbell.net.

USS West Virginia (BB-48)

7–11 October 2007, Surfside Beach,
SC. Contact Joe Variot, 4564 Cedar
River Rd., Mancelona, MI 49659,
231-584-2280, margot@avci.net.

USS William F. Seiverling (DE-441)

26–28 September 2007, Mayport, FL.
Contact Daniel Suttelle, 1066 Alcalá
Drive, St. Augustine, FL 32086,
904-797-8932.

USS Woodrow Wilson (SSBN-624)

8–12 May 2008, San Diego, CA.
Contact Mel Cross, P.O. Box 868,
Seabeck, WA 98380, 360-830-4224,
mccross@telebyte.com.

**VS-931 & VS-20 Antisubmarine
Squadrons — U.S. Navy**

20–24 September 2007, Philadelphia,
PA. Contact J. Robert Wagner, 2996
Runnymede Drive, Plymouth Meeting,
PA 19462-7179, 610-277-4374,
bobwagner@msn.com.

Members can post reunions online at www.fra.org,
submit to reunions@fra.org or mail to: FRA Reunions,
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Candidate for National President

LAWRENCE "LARRY" BOUDREAU has been nominated by Hangtown Branch 275 in Placerville, CA for the office of FRA National President.

NVP Boudreaux has been an FRA member for more than forty years and has served as Regional Vice President (1995-1996) and Regional President (1996-1997).

Boudreaux was chairperson of the Mid-Year Convention West Coast Region thrice, and chairperson for the West Coast Regional Convention twice. On the national level, he has served on the Americanism-Patriotism Committee as Chairman (1998-1999), National Treasurer (2000-2003) and on the The Special National Committee to Review the Constitution, Bylaws, and Standing Rules (2003-2006), and Standing Rules Committee (2003-2006). Boudreaux is currently serving as an advisor to the Budget and Finance and the Constitution, Bylaws and Resolutions Committees.



Candidate for National Vice President

PRPSE F. DONALD MUCHECK has been nominated by L. Mendel Rivers Branch 50 in Charleston, SC for the office of FRA National Vice President.

Muccheck has been a continuous member of FRA for more than 30 years, and has served as Regional Vice President (1986-1987), and Regional President (1987-1988).

He has served in all elected offices on the branch level. On the national level, Muccheck has served as Chairman of the Future Planning Committee, Chairman of the Americanism-Patriotism Committee, advisor to the Constitution and Bylaws Committee, Membership and Retention Committee, Time and Place Committee, Public Relations Committee, the Special National Committee on Family Resource Advisors and Employees Pension Committee. On the regional level he has served as Bylaws and Standing Rules, Finance and Audit, Parliamentarian, Americanism-Patriotism, Public Relations, and Legislative Service.

Muccheck is responsible for numerous awards to his branch on the regional and national level. Muccheck himself has been recognized for several coveted organizational and civic awards.



Candidate for National Executive Secretary

NES JOSEPH L. BARNES was nominated by Navy Department Branch 181 in Arlington, VA for the office of FRA National Executive Secretary for Association years 2007-2010.

He has been a continuous member of FRA for 24 years and joined the Association's headquarters' staff in 1993 as the editor of *On Watch*. He became FRA's Director of Legislative Programs in 1994, serving in that capacity until he was appointed by the National Board of Directors to fulfill the unexpired term of his predecessor in 2002.

Over the past five years, he has gained continued recognition of FRA on Capitol Hill; revamped NHQ staffing; improved employee benefits and morale; earned the professional designation as a Certified Association Executive (CAE); was awarded the U.S. Coast Guard Meritorious Public Service Award Certificate with accompanying medal; and was twice elected co-chair of The Military Coalition.



Candidate for National President



GAIL DOLOWAY was nominated for the office of National President by Bonanza, Las Vegas, Unit 90, Ladies Auxiliary, Fleet Reserve Association. She is currently serving as the National Vice President 2006-2007.

Gail joined the Auxiliary in 1965 and has been an active and continuous member for 42 years. She has served at the unit level in all offices several times, including 21 years as President. At the regional level she served as Regional Vice President and then Regional President Southwest 2001-2002, and has served as Regional Convention Chairman two terms, Chairman of and member of the all Committees as well as President of the SW Regions PRP Club for two years. On the national level she has served as chairman of the Americanism, Youth Activities and National Arizona Memorial (Hawaii — three terms). She has also served as a committee member of the Constitution and By-Laws, Publicity, Honorary Membership, Budget & Finance Committee (five years), National Marshall, and National Treasurer 2003-2006. She has been an Organizing Chairman of three units. She has three Silver Stars, one FRA 50th Anniversary award and numerous individual member awards. She has attended 18 National Conventions and 32 Regional Conventions and mid-year conferences.

Gail is the widow of Jim Doloway and has one son, James. She has resided in Las Vegas for 33 years. In the local community she serves her church as a licensed lay minister and in the church choir. She has performed Voluntary Income Tax Assistance for 20 years. She has worked for the Federal Government for 37 years, and recently retired from the IRS as a Group Manager IR 13/14. Her educational background is in accounting, budgeting and management analysis.

Candidate for National Vice President



GEORGIA GALLAGHER was nominated for the office of National Vice President by South Shores, Unit 66, Ladies Auxiliary, of the Fleet Reserve Association. She is currently serving as the National Executive Secretary 2004-2007.

Georgia joined the Auxiliary in 1991 and has been active and continuous member for 16 years. She has served at the unit level in all offices. She is an active participant in all committee functions. On the Regional level she served as Regional Secretary for three years. She then served as Regional Vice President and then Regional President New England 1999 thru 2001, and has served a Regional Convention Chairman two terms, chairman of and member of all committees as well as secretary of the NEng Regions PRP Club for three terms. She has attended 16 Regional Conventions and 10 National Convention of the Ladies Auxiliary Fleet Reserve Association and has served as National Chairman for the Audit Committee.

Georgia is the wife of Past Regional President Robert Gallagher. They have five children, Patricia, Robert Jr., Christine, Kathleen and Sean, and are the proud grandparents of five grandsons and two granddaughters. She has recently retired from the Paralyzed Veterans of America, Boston Service Office, where she was a secretary for the past 15 years. PVA honored her in 2000 with the Victor S. McCoy Award for Excellence in providing quality assistance to America's disabled veterans. She is an active member in her local community and is active in other veteran organizations auxiliaries, holding many offices and appointed positions.

NAME	BRANCH	NAME	BRANCH
Abrahamsen, Gerald F., E-7 USN	192	Faulkner, George D., ATCS	093
Allman, Robert, YNC	MAL	Fitzgerald, Harry Z., PO1 USN	MAL
Anderson, Bobby G., AFCM	MAL	Flores, Felix E., AQ1	MAL
Anderson, Gary A., ISCS	276	Fogle, Bryce E., AMCS	364
Andresen, Charles J., LCDR USN	MAL	Foster, John H., SK1	234
Arnold, William E., BMC	008	Franklin, Benny E., AE1	094
		Frey, Lester C., YNC	163
Bailey, Charlie L., Jr., MMC	117		
Baker, John E., HMC	MAL	Garvin, James F., MMC(SS)	029
Bauer, Robert L., AOCS	MAL	George, William T., ENS USN	181
Beard, Marlin L., YNC	MAL	Gibbons, Clifford D., ACCS	MAL
Beasley, Thomas L., SK1	264	Giles, Daniel L., ENC	019
Bernard, Marion V., HMC	MAL	Gillaspie, Rex D., GYSGT	MAL
Bettencourt, Robert F., CSC	MAL	Gohde, Charles A., SSGT	047
Biederwolf, Mark, AG1	163	Gowen, George R., PRC	MAL
Billings, Robert M., YN1	085	Grubb, John E., TDC	009
Blocker, John W., DS1	047		
Bogema, Donald K., BTCS	057	Halstead, Harwell E., Jr., EOCS	120
Boutwell, Arthur, HTC	MAL	Hammer, Vernon A., ADC	091
Box, H. B., AMSC	261	Hardee, Ansell L., OS1	MAL
Boyle, Robert N., SMCS	MAL	Harrison, Ray Alvah, EMCS	MAL
Bradley, Norman G., YNC	226	Hernandez, Alfredo H., MS1	005
Brandes, Victor P., AVCM	126	Heron, Robert, EMC	175
Briand, Robert H., GMGC	031	Herrick, Ronald J., MSCM	MAL
Bridges, Benjamin D., SKC	003	Hicks, Clarence, SW1	319
Brienzi, Daniel E., AKC	042	Hilt, Roy A., ETCM(SS)	MAL
Broadwater, Wayne W., GMCM	181	Hodge, Byron, LCDR USN	MAL
Brooks, Chester F., EMC	MAL	Holberg, Robert L., MNC	052
Brown, Francis H., EN1	254	PRPEC Huylebroeck, Ed, PRPEC	181
Burns, James J., AKC	317	Horn, Joseph H., FTMC	219
Burt, George E., BM1	MAL	Humphries, Jimmy C., ADJ1	126
Cabrera, Simon, SD2	010	Katz, Leo P., PNC	001
Caudill, Chalmers L., CPO USN	MAL	Keegan, Joseph J., LT USN	317
Chapman, Frank, 1STSGT	281	Keltner, James L., CPO USN	282
Chandler, Robert, HTC	060	Kernechel, Robert D., BMCS	MAL
Coburn, James T., PO1 USN	105	Kirkwood, Billy M., ETC	200
Coleman, John C., ICC	MAL	Klaes, Gilbert K., HMC	043
Coralde, Herbert T., PO1 USN	MAL	Knapp, Milton J., GMCS	099
Cox, Ralph E., CTC	374	Korenkiewicz, Stanley, EMCM	027
Cravens, William J., Jr., RMC	MAL		
Crawford, Frank, SSGT	MAL	Lang, Robert, E-6 USN	MAL
Criswell, Lynne, ENC	089	Latas, Robert, GMGC	075
		Lauer, William A., DPC	MAL
Davis, Doyle, LT USN	MAL	Lawson, Aaron C., E-4 USMCR	024
Debauche, Albert G., CPO USN	180	Leeds, Marion J., BMC	005
Denicola, Vincent J., EMCM(SS)	046	Leifheit, Frank R., SFC	MAL
Dodson, Thomas F., BMC	005	Lemaster, Francis A., FN USN	MAL
Down, Harold, EN1	046	Lingenfelter, Aldie, MSGT	MAL
Doyle, Bobby L., ADR1	022	Locklar, Donaldford H., AE1	MAL
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Palser, Hillis, RMC(SS)	MAL
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Anyone stationed on Weondi Island, attached to Mobile Amphibious Repair Base # 2 (MARB#2) 1944-1945.

Contact Jim Clippard. CPOJC@aol.com

Anyone who was stationed with VT-29, NAS CORPUS CHRISTI, 1963 -1966.

Contact AD1 Thomas Thaggard, tthaggard1@hotmail.com or 1147 Idlewood Dr., Waco, TX 76705.

Anyone who served at Poyners Hill Radio Station on North Carolina Outer Banks (1941-1945).

Contact Charles Dunton, USN (Ret.) at 301-599-6572.

Any USN AG aboard SS ELISHA WHITNEY.

Left New Orleans mid '44 thru Panama Canal to Pacific. Shuttled all over until end of WWII, then turned over to Australia at end of War. Only AG name I can remember is BOLLINGER. Contact PNCS Archie Ashworth, USN (Ret.), 3114 Nassau Dr., Corpus Christi, TX, 78418, phone: 361-937-6265 or email: kapitanarchie@sbcglobal.net.

Lane Kenneth Anderson (SFC or HTC)

Last known on board a DD in the Pacific. Originally from Colorado.

Amos Roland Winnett (HTCS)

Retired from U.S. NAVY. Last known duty station either USS Yellowstone or USS Sierra. Hometown: Warrior, Alabama. Served with me in the USS Dixie (AD-14). Contact E. L. Foster, Jr., 9533 Mobile Drive, Knoxville, TN 37923, 865-691-3114.

FTMC Gary Beckwith, USN (Ret.)

Last known duty station was Naval Weapon Station, Yorktown, VA. We had a great two years of shore duty from March 1974 - March 1976. Contact GMM1 Fred Foster, USN (Ret.), 218 Brookwood Trl., Perry, GA 31069 or 478-988-9651.

Francis Paul Bednar AO3, USN

At AO School NATTC JAX FLA in 1955. Contact Frank W. Potts, 843-553-3215, fmpotts54@aol.com.

FTCM J. Blair

Last known as Command Master Chief of U.S.S. PARSONS (DDG-33) home ported Yokosuka, Japan 1974. Contact SKC Tom Buch, USN (Ret.) at 5150 S. Oakridge Ave., Unit 63, Pahrump NV 89048, phone: 775-727-8762 or buchboard@ezznet.com.

MT2 Davey Breidenback

Last known duty station was W-4 Division, Weapons Department, USS Hunley (AS-31), Charleston, SC, 1974/76. Please contact NCC Joe Ploucha (Ret.) at fixinit4u@yahoo.com or 215-803-4854.

Bill Cowling, DK2 and Don Kelly, MM2

Stationed onboard the USS CHLORIS ARVE-4, homeported in Naples, Italy in the '50's. Contact SKCS Jim Masterson, USN (Ret.) at 508-678-9758 or jmasterson@umassd.edu.

CPOs who served aboard the USS Monongahela (AO-178).

From July 1984 to December 1987. Contact RMCS(SW) Dallas "Skip" Clark, USN (Ret.), DallasClark52@aol.com to organize a reunion.

Thomas Frazier BM3 or BM2

(Wife's name Rose) Was stationed on USS O'Brien (DD-725) 1966 to 1969, then transferred to swift boat duty Vietnam, his home town Albany, NY. Contact Gary Rude, Grudejr@aol.com or 850-983-9065.

VADM Lee Gunn, snipes Mack Gaston & James Lee, CAPT Bruce S. Forester, Donald G. Scott, Frank H. Tryon Jr.

Contact Mako Araki, book writer, 1560 Kanunu St., Apt. 1122, Honolulu, HI 96814-3204.

HM1 William "Bill" Mayfield

Last stationed: Naval Hospital, San Diego, CA. Retired in Corpus Christi, TX area. Contact HMCS James Bates, 818 SE Innsbruck, Ankeny, Iowa 50021 or e-mail jbates36@yahoo.com.

Mark Evans McKim

I am interested in talking to anyone who served with my father on the USS Honolulu in World War II or anyone that may have known him during his 24-

year career in the USN. He is no longer living and I am trying to piece together his military career as a living memorial to my two daughters and my four grandchildren. Contact Bobi McKim Rush, 2107 Ladrillo Aisle, Irvine, CA 92606, Bobirush@yahoo.com, or 949-552-2284.

Fel Pasqua, AK-2

Last known duty station: USS Intrepid (CV-11) in 1973 at Quonset Pt., Rhode Island. Contact PRC Lee Gold or Beverly at 732-657-5773 or prcleeGold@verizon.net.

USMCRD San Diego Boot Camp 1952 Platoon 208 (DI'S SGT. D.W. Boyd & CPL J.E. BELL).

USNTC Great Lakes Boot Camp CO 99 Aug 1954 (CC GM1 B.C. FROTHINGHAM).

Contact AZ1 Dale E. Chambers, USN (Ret.) at RollinShrs@aol.com.

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Names in blue indicate 50 year continuous members. Names in bold indicate a Past National Officer.

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Dr. Steffanie Seaver PSY.D is an expert in the area of interpersonal relationships. Researcher, author and accomplished public speaker, she has lectured nationwide for over a decade. Dr. Seaver has also been involved with several publications covering relationship and lifestyle issues.

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Jason M.
Manhattan Beach, CA

A: Well Jason,

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Message from Regional President Southwest

I WOULD LIKE TO thank all the members in the Southwest Region for giving me the opportunity so serve as Regional President for a second term. It hardly seems possible that we are already three fourths the way through this year. My, how time flies. I have visited all the Units in the Region at least once and several more than once. Regional Vice President, Darlene Slaughter, traveled with me on several occasions. It was extremely nice to have a traveling companion on the longer trips especially when we had to stay overnight. It is amazing how hard the members work and how much they are able to accomplish. They cook dinners and breakfasts at their clubs, have potlucks, hold drawings, and make lap robes for the VA hospitals and convalescent homes. They also hold rummage sales, bake sales, and collect food for needy families.

Most all the work they do goes to benefit their branches and their communities. For instance Unit 289 is helping to buy new carpeting for their branch home and Unit 61 is selling tickets on a patriotic quilt made by one of its members with half of the money earned being donated to the local Battered Women's Shelter. Unit 61 also gave a \$1,000.00 scholarship to a graduating senior, who is also the grandson of a Unit member. Several other Units have given scholarships to students.

On Mothers Day I had the great honor of presenting to Caroline Heisler of Unit 61, Chula Vista, CA, her 60 continuous year membership pin along with a letter and certificate signed by our National President, Sandy Robbins. Caroline is the oldest active member in the LA FRA. Caroline will be 105 years young on August 18th and on August 19th, there will be a big birthday party for her at the Branch home.

Units, along with their Branches, participate in Veterans and Memorial Day services. Congratulations to Branch 163, Phoenix, for winning first place with the float they entered in the Veterans Parade. Branch and Unit 289 sponsors the Memorial Day Service in Imperial Beach while Branch and Unit 61 sponsors the Memorial Day Service in Bonita. Thanks to the Boy Scouts for participating in the service during the Avenue of Flags Dedication.

Branch and Unit 70, Poway, are hosting the Regional Convention to be held in Tucson, Arizona in August. Hosting a convention requires a lot of hard work and time to be put in by the members. It also requires lots of teamwork. Thank you, Branch and Unit 70, we look forward to a great convention.

Branch and Unit 175, Orange County, helps support the Naval Sea Cadets, Seal Beach Battalion. Branch and Unit 289 is a sponsor of the Sand Castle Days in Imperial Beach, CA. A big "Thank You" to all the Branches and Units for the tremendous amount of work you do.

Several of the Units in the Region now have male members in their Units and hopefully they become very active in their Units. Most of the Units have either all ready had their election for officers or will be having them soon. Congratulations to all the new officers and I hope to attend some of the installations.

In Loyalty, Protection and Service



GEORGINA HERMES
Regional President Southwest



Gi Gi Hermes, RPSW presenting Caroline Heisler, Unit 62 Chula Vista, CA with her pin for 60 years of continuous membership in the LA FRA. Caroline will also be 105 years old on August 18th.



Unit and Branch 163, Phoenix, AR won 1st place for the float they entered in the Veteran's Day Parade on Nov 2006.

Fran Hoadley is the editor of *LA FRA News* and the *FRA Today* Liaison.



Initiation of new member, Nicole Anita Little Cloud as member of Unit 10, by RPWC Jan Carlson. This lady has made a great change with her enthusiasm for Unit 10. She has already agreed to take the President position this year.



Unit 210 President Elect Jessica Arestad and PRPSE Russ Belt preparing to cast the wreath upon the river on Memorial Day 2007.



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