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# FRA *today*

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# Featured

## 18 SOUTHERN EXPOSURE

Service members often share common experiences and fond memories of their tours together. A nuclear power plant operated at McMurdo Station is being implicated in dozens of cases of cancer and those who served at the Antarctic research facility fear they share another common bond — radiation exposure.

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### LOYALTY, PROTECTION AND SERVICE

FRA IS A CONGRESSIONALLY CHARTERED, NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION ADVOCATING FOR CURRENT AND FORMER ENLISTED MEMBERS OF THE U.S. NAVY, MARINE CORPS AND COAST GUARD ON CAPITOL HILL. FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP, PLEASE VISIT [WWW.FRA.ORG](http://WWW.FRA.ORG) OR CALL 800-FRA-1924.



### ON THE COVER

Operation Deep Freeze was the military contingent that supported scientists conducting polar research at McMurdo Station.

## Remembering and Looking Ahead



Eileen Murphy

**JANUARY IS ALWAYS** a time to reflect on the past year and look ahead to what is coming. National President Jeff Gilmartin is featured in a column this month (From the Bridge, page 5) to share his vision for the coming year.

As this issue goes to press, NP Gilmartin has just returned from Hawaii where he attended events honoring those lost and injured in the attacks on Pearl Harbor and Ewa Field 70 years ago. National Vice President Mark Kilgore also attended an event sponsored by FRA Branches 77 and 163 at the University of Arizona on December 4 and he and his wife, FRA Auxiliary Regional Vice President Southeast Babe Kilgore, attended FRA Branch 290's Annual Pearl Harbor Memorial Ceremony on board the USS Underwood (FFG 36) in Atlantic Beach, Florida on December 7. Multiple other FRA branches around the country also hosted events to honor the anniversary, including Triangle Branch 182 that sponsored a ceremony at the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, MD. We are still receiving photos of these events and we will compile the photos and post them on our Facebook page ([www.fra.org/fb](http://www.fra.org/fb) is a shortcut to it). We will run as many as we can in the February issue of *FRA Today*. If your branch held an event, please forward your pictures to my attention at:

FRA Today  
125 N. West St.  
Alexandria, VA 22314

In our On & Off Capitol Hill section this month, you will find a synopsis of some of FRA's legislative accomplishments for 2011 (page 14) and the aggressive and comprehensive legislative agenda for 2012 (page 9). Shipmates play an important role in FRA's legislative work through writing, emailing and calling members of Congress. Please be involved by using the Action Center on [www.fra.org](http://www.fra.org) and/or requesting *Communicate With Your Elected Officials*, the free guide FRA offers that provides the contact information for members of Congress as well as detailing who sits on the key committees related to our legislative work. Please read the summary of what the Action Center has accomplished in 2011 on page 8, and call 1-800-FRA-1924 to request your copy of *Communicate With Your Elected Officials* today!

### Correction

On page 32 in the December *FRA Today* we posted the photos of the National Officers. NVP Mark Kilgore was listed as being a member of Branch 61, which is in Chula Vista, California. Although that was true many years ago, he is very much a part of Branch 22 in Pensacola, Florida and serves as their secretary. We apologize for the error.

**Eileen Murphy** is the Director of Marketing and Communications and serves as the Managing Editor of *FRA Today*. Please contact her at [eileen@fra.org](mailto:eileen@fra.org).

# FRAtoday

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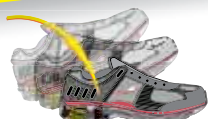
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Jeffrey A. Gilmartin

**A YEAR IS A** brief amount of time and I hit the ground running during the last weeks of the 2011 year by conducting the official site inspection of the Silver Legacy Hotel and Casino in Reno, Nevada, the site for the 2012 FRA National Convention. I also visited 15 branches over three regions before embarking on other priorities.

As always, membership is a high priority. Decreasing numbers in our membership directly impact our effectiveness on Capitol Hill. While current philosophy suggests an increase in membership retention, along with our current recruitment rates, will stabilize our flagging numbers, the solution does not reside in Headquarters, nor with the National Standing Committee on Membership and Retention. The solution to low membership numbers lies with the branches. With a realistic target demographic of between 40 and 60 years of age, the branches must give the newly recruited something to prove the time they participate in branch meetings and events is worthwhile and the money they spend on annual dues is a worthy investment. Branch meetings should be meaningful, but they should also be fun.

I've either seen or heard of great results coming from Ogden, Utah; Fort Worth, Texas; Cheyenne, Wyo; Goose Creek, S.C.; Poway, Calif.; and Wilmington, N.C. None of these locations have heavy fleet concentrations, but their success is due to the application of innovative ideas and lots of enthusiasm.

**Branches:** Brag about your successes. When your regional president comes to visit, tell him of your successes and he'll carry the news to other branches. What works for one branch may not work for yours, but enthusiastic shipmates and working committees

need to be shared within your community. Your branch should be known as a spearhead of community work, not just contributors to others' projects. Public relations start at home.

**Shipmates:** A successful shipmate is a well-prepared shipmate. Organizations such as the National Association of Parliamentarians and Toastmasters can be helpful in preparing and presenting concise, effective appeals for membership. Be well versed in FRA's Bylaws and Standing

**"[We] must give the  
newly recruited something  
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and events is worthwhile  
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is a worthy investment."**

**Rules.** Becoming an effective public speaker is primarily a matter of practice and being knowledgeable about your subject matter. Polish isn't necessary, but being genuine and sincere is crucial. Successful recruiting is conveying to your prospect "what's in it for them." If you can, also volunteer to serve on regional and national standing committees. Suggest ways for the committees to become fresh and appealing, including participation in events such as Autism walks or sponsoring Young Marines detachments,

and looking for alternatives to U.S. Savings Bonds as awards for the Americanism Essay Contest.

During my tenure as National President, I will be looking closely at the Association's budget. Our National Headquarters staff and others have been diligent in researching and realizing substantial cost-saving measures over the past several years, by implementing new technologies and processes, renegotiating contracts and other efficiencies. Unfortunately, we continue to run a deficit budget. The majority of regions boast five-digit treasuries and should consider assuming the costs of local area events such as Sailor of the Year programs and Pearl Harbor Day memorials. I will be working with the Headquarters Team to further examine existing and expiring contracts. A special committee has also been appointed to examine our Headquarters' Information Technology assets and make recommendations to the National Board of Directors to better leverage innovations realized by the commercial sector. The National Executive Director has requested the committee's scope be expanded to include audio-visual equipment, as much of it is either dated or non-functional.

After the earthquake in Virginia last year, it was discovered our Headquarters building sustained damage that wasn't initially visible and not covered by insurance. Options to address some long-standing plumbing issues within the building are also being explored and I believe we will need to replenish the Capital Improvement Reserve to address proper repair and maintenance of our building.

I look forward to serving the Association and shipmates during the coming year.

## Making Military and Civilian Benefits More Similar

To have military and civilian retirement on a similar basis is ridiculous unless [military personnel are authorized to] operate a 40-hour workweek and receive similar active duty pay PLUS overtime. Please pass that on to our elected officials who have never served in uniform.

C.E. Fleury

## Honoring Master Chief Der-Vartanian

The story of the passing of the first female E-9 (October 2011 *FRA Today*) was interesting and a nice thing for the FRA to do. However, the woman's name was spelled two different ways in the article. I think the editor should rerun this article with corrections and make an apology to the family.

Jan Van Horn



**FRA Response:** Retired Master Chief Petty Officer Anna Der-Vartanian died August 4, 2011, at the age of 90 and was laid to rest with full military honors at Arlington National Cemetery on November 29th. Hundreds of Sailors, family, and friends were at the ceremony to honor the first female master chief. We apologize for the error in our original tribute to Master Chief Der-Vartanian.

## Not Everything's Covered

Shipmate Swinford's note indicated he was reimbursed after 6 months for lab tests. I wasn't so fortunate. During my pre-op lab tests prior to surgery for cancer, my doctor ordered blood tests for coagulation studies, i.e., PT & PTT. These tests are always ordered before major surgery. The tests were done on outpatient basis, prior to being admitted to the hospital. Medicare denied payment saying they were not necessary; I had no history of a blood disorder. Tricare For Life said that when Medicare denies coverage, so do they, and I had to pay \$89.59. I appealed twice and was denied twice even though I had a letter from my surgeon indicating the need. I could not appeal a third time because the amount was less than \$150 (Medicare rule).

More recently I had to pay for a lab test for my wife because Tricare For Life said she hasn't paid her deductible amount yet. Tricare for Life and Medicare paid nothing for this test.

I was told when I joined the Navy that if I stayed 20 years, my wife and I would have free medical care the rest of our lives. Now I pay \$96.50/month and my wife pays \$110.50/month for Medicare premiums plus whatever Medicare and Tricare For Life doesn't cover. And now they want to raise the premiums and the deductions. Tricare Prime was less expensive and the coverage was better.

Robert Gaupel

## Fairness for Former Spouses?

I'm writing this in response to Diane Rojan's submission concerning benefits for second wives. During my divorce, my lawyer and I strenuously tried to keep my SBP and retired pay from being handed over to my ex-wife. She felt that as long as she was married to me during the last year and a half of my career, she was entitled to it all. The judge in my case was not a military-friendly judge. He was known, in the past, to award all entitlements to the spouse just because he could. He awarded my ex-wife my SBP, even though her tenure in my career was only 18 months. This meant money she did not earn would be hers if I died before her. My present wife would get nothing until my ex expires.

The laws do not protect the military person in divorce court. My ex did not get my retirement pay because of federal law and [our short marriage during] my military career. What the judge DID do was define my retirement pay as income and awarded her the equivalent of half my retirement pay as spousal support until her death. This judge still sits behind the bench issuing biased justice.

Dallas B. "Skip" Clark



## FRA in Action

I had the pleasure of watching our legislative representative, John Davis, testify on Capitol Hill about military compensation/retirement on C-SPAN. John was the only one of the four testifying witnesses to bring up the aspect of VA benefits for those service members who don't make the military a career for personal reasons or because of reduction in forces reasons.

He is to be commended for that testimony; however, I kept hoping he would enumerate those benefits for the three representatives that kept hammering on the "poor" service members that don't complete the 20 years of active duty to qualify for retirement pay.

An honorable discharge, no matter the length of service, qualifies the service member for VA benefits that include education assistance, housing assistance, and medical benefits. The REDUX program in the early '90s offered me \$15,000 a year for 40 years plus VA benefits. If I was single, either of those two choices would have been viable options, however, my wife sacrificed as much as I during our military career and neither included her. I chose to stay for the full 20 because of her.

Fred DuPont

**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](mailto: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.



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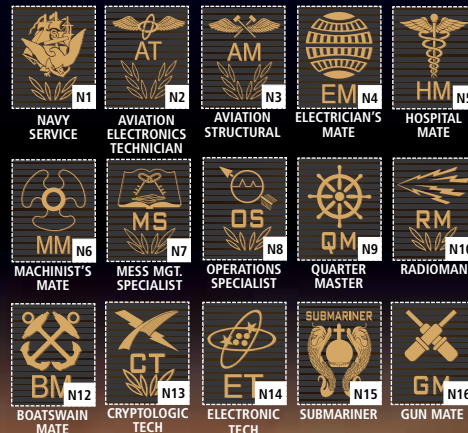


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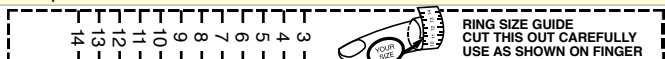
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John Davis

## Sequestration Budget Time Bomb is Ticking

**THE JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE** on Deficit Reduction (Super Committee) failed to agree on \$1.2 trillion in budget cuts before the November 23, 2011 deadline and, as a result, automatic budget cuts (sequestration) are slated to take effect beginning January 1, 2013. These programmed reductions will come equally from defense and non-defense accounts.

As this issue of *FRA Today* goes to press, 2012 begins with familiar and ongoing threats to military benefits. The threat of sequestration apparently didn't strike fear in the hearts of legislators, because the automatic cuts won't

occur for more than a year after the Super Committee deadline. Delaying the cuts until 2013 gives Congress time to possibly avoid the cuts by authorizing reductions in various programs through the regular legislative process. Finding \$1.2 trillion in budget savings over the next 10 years won't be easy and threats to military pay and benefits for those serving and who have served will continue.

FRA is closely monitoring the budget process and will keep shipmates informed through *FRA Today* and *NewsBytes*, FRA's free weekly e-mail update. To subscribe, e-mail [newsbytes@fra.org](mailto:newsbytes@fra.org).

### Action Center in 2011

Calendar year 2011 has been a banner year for shipmates using the FRA Action Center at [www.fra.org](http://www.fra.org). Shipmates' usage of this free service has increased substantially this year and included nearly 42,000 messages to members of Congress since January 1, 2011. (A total of 24,161 messages were sent in 2010.)

Shipmate involvement in advancing the Association's legislative agenda via the legislative process complements the work of the FRA's Legislative Team and our members' continued grassroots participation will be an important factor in determining the Association's success in 2012. A great example is the nearly 3,000 shipmates who responded to the November "Making Waves" e-mail alert and wrote to oppose pending floor amendments to the National Defense Authorization bill that would have been costly to military retirees. Thanks to shipmate involvement, none of the amendments listed in the alert were called for a vote.

### Senate Passes Defense Authorization Bill

The Senate debated floor amendments to its version of the FY 2012 National Defense Authorization Act (S. 1867) before passing the bill by a vote of 93-7 in early December. The Senate-passed bill:

- Authorizes the Department of Defense (DoD) to increase TRICARE Prime enrollment fees by \$2.50 per month for individuals and \$5.00 per month for families;
- Links future TRICARE Prime fee increases to the percentage increase (based on the annual inflation rate) applied to military retired pay;
- Authorizes pharmacy co-pay increases;
- Requires newly enrolled U.S. Family Health Plan (USFHP) beneficiaries to switch to TRICARE for Life (TFL) coverage effective October 1, 2011;
- Authorizes a 1.6-percent active duty and Reserve pay increase equal to the Employment Cost Index (ECI);
- Reduces Navy end strength by 3,000;
- Prohibits re-enlistment denial for service members determined by a Physical Evaluation Board (PEB) to be fit for duty, but subsequently determined to be unsuitable for military service;
- Authorizes \$25 million in supplemental Impact Aid to schools teaching military children and \$5 million in Impact Aid for schools educating military children with severe disabilities;
- Requires pre-separation counseling for Reservists within 90 days of demobilization.

The bill drew a veto threat from President Obama regarding a policy on the custody of suspected terrorists. The House passed its version of the legislation (H.R. 1540) in May and a conference committee must resolve differences between the two bills. The resulting conference committee report must then be approved by both chambers and signed or vetoed by the President.

Regarding amendments to the legislation, Sen. John McCain (Ariz.) withdrew an amendment that would have allowed future TRICARE Prime premium increases to be based on a DoD index related to healthcare inflation. Additionally, a plan to combine 71 amendments not considered during debate was dropped due to time constraints. At press time, a conference committee is working to reconcile differences between the House and Senate bills.

## 2012 FRA Legislative Agenda

FRA fights to preserve and enhance benefits and quality-of-life programs for active duty, Reserve, retired, and veteran personnel of the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard, their families and survivors. The Association's 2012 Legislative Agenda was approved by shipmates attending the 84th National Convention in Kansas City, Mo., and includes:

### EXPAND HEALTH CARE OPTIONS

**Health Care Reform:** Monitor health care reform and ensure that TRICARE and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care programs are not adversely impacted by unanticipated consequences during implementation.

### Oppose Excessive TRICARE

**Enrollment Fee Increases:** The Defense Department (DoD) must sufficiently investigate and implement other options to make TRICARE more cost-efficient as alternatives to shifting costs to TRICARE beneficiaries. FRA will oppose any indexing of future TRICARE fee increases beyond COLA increases.

### Support Adequate Funding for

**Military Health Service:** Ensure adequate funding for the Military Health Service (MHS) in order to meet readiness needs, fully fund TRICARE, and improve access and awareness of benefits for all beneficiaries regardless of age, status or location, including Reservists participating in TRICARE Reserve Select, TRICARE Retired Reserve, and Individual Ready Reserve personnel.

### DoD/VA Health Care Resource

**Sharing:** Ensure adequate funding for DoD and VA health care resource sharing in delivering seamless, cost effective, quality services to personnel wounded while participating in Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom, and other veterans, and their families.

### Expand Health Care Options for

**Retirees Under Age 65:** Expand health care alternatives including TRICARE Standard, TRICARE Prime Remote and the Federal Employee Health Benefit Program (FEHBP) as options for military retirees under age 65 who do not have access to military treatment facilities.

### Pharmaceutical Drug Benefit:

Monitor the pharmacy benefit and ensure that pharmacies maintain a broad uniform formulary. FRA supports efforts to reduce prescription costs through "federal pricing" and other discount programs, and will encourage increased utilization of home delivery prescriptions to limit co-pays for beneficiaries and reduce costs as alternatives to higher fees and co-payments.

### Allow Military Retirees to Pay for Healthcare with Pretax Dollars:

Secure authorization for military retirees to pay health insurance premiums on a pretax basis and allow for a tax deduction for TRICARE supplemental insurance premiums.

### PROTECT PERSONNEL PROGRAMS

**Active Duty Pay:** Secure additional annual active duty pay increases that are at least equal to the Employment Cost Index (ECI).

**Defense Budget:** Advocate for a Defense (DoD) Budget that is at least five (5) percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to ensure adequate funding for both personnel and weapons programs.

**Military Resale System:** Oppose privatization and ensure adequate funding for the Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA) to preserve the value of the current benefit and access for all patrons, and oppose consolidation of military exchanges based on results of costly recent studies on this concept and opposition from the services.

**End Strengths:** Track end strength levels to ensure there are adequate personnel available to meet the demands of OND, OEF and other operational requirements.

**BAH:** Reform enlisted housing standards by allowing E-7s and above to reside in separate homes, track the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) to ensure it is commensurate with actual housing costs, ensure adequate housing inventory and that housing privatization programs are beneficial to service members and their families.

**PCS Reform:** Track the PCS process; ensure adequate funding of the Transition and Relocation Assistance Programs, and authorization of increased PCS mileage rates and higher household goods weight limits for senior enlisted personnel. Also advocate for shipment of a second POV for accompanied overseas assignments.

**SCRA Enforcement:** Ensure that the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA) is enforced by regulatory agencies, including the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB).

**Coast Guard Parity:** Ensure parity with DoD of pay and benefits for Coast Guard personnel plus adequate funding for same within the U.S. Coast Guard budget.

**Impact Aid Program:** Ensure that the Department of Education has adequate funding to reimburse local school districts for educating military children and that the DoD budget includes sufficient supplemental funds to provide support for highly impacted school districts.

**Reservists' Out-of-Pocket Expenses:** Allow full tax-deductibility of non-reimbursable expenses related to military training and weekend drill.

**Sea Services Recruiters:** Work to ensure that recruiters have unrestricted access to secondary schools, colleges and universities on the same basis as private sector employers.

*continued on page 11*



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## 2012 FRA Legislative Agenda (continued)

**VETERANS' ISSUES****Improve Department of Veterans Affairs Funding:**

Support initiatives to help ensure timely and full funding for the VA, with special attention for VA health care to ensure access and care for all beneficiaries.

**Agent Orange Disability Claims:**

Seek to reverse the VA's policy that prevents "blue water" military retirees and veterans from claiming disability benefits for diseases associated with exposure to Agent Orange.

**Oppose Access Fees:** Oppose establishing a tiered enrollment fee structure for veterans in Priority Groups 7 and 8 within the VA Health Care System.

**Improve VA Claim Processing:**

Work to eliminate backlog of claims at the Department of Veterans Affairs and support reform of the antiquated Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) paper claims system.

**Education Enhancements:** Ensure full and timely implementation of improvements to the Post 9/11 GI Bill and work to improve other education benefit programs for veterans and survivors of disabled or deceased veterans who died of a service-connected disability, were killed on active duty or while on drill status.

**Reserve Retirees Veterans' Status:**

Seek full veteran status for Reservists with 20 years or more of service, who do not otherwise qualify for full veterans' benefits under current law.

**SAFEGUARD RETIREE BENEFITS****Protect Military Retired or Retainer Pay:**

Fight efforts to reduce military retired or retainer pay and ensure equitable cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) for all military retirees commensurate with their service and sacrifices, and oppose efforts to civilianize the military retirement system. And advocate for rounding up to the next dollar for retired pay and other benefits.

**Concurrent Receipt:** Support legislation authorizing the immediate payment of concurrent receipt of full military retired pay and veterans' disability compensation for all disabled retirees.

**Reserve Retirement Age:** Support extension of authority for early retirement (90 days active duty = three months reduction) for all Reservists who have served since 9/11/01, and the elimination of fiscal year specific rule associated with same.

**USFSPA:** Encourage the introduction and enactment of legislation to eliminate inequities in the Uniformed Services Former Spouses Protection Act (USFSPA).

**Retention of Final Month's Retired Pay:**

Support legislation authorizing the retention of the full final month's retired pay by the surviving spouse (or other designated survivor) for the month in which the member was alive for at least 24 hours.

**SBP/DIC Offset:** Support legislation to repeal the SBP/DIC offset for surviving spouses of personnel who die of service-connected causes.

**Paid-up SBP at Age 67:** Work to change the minimum age for paid-up SBP from age 70 to age 67, which will allow those who joined the military at age 17, 18 or 19 and serve 20 years to only be required to pay SBP premiums for 30 years.

**Retirees' TSP Contributions:** Work to authorize for military retirees the option of continuing to contribute to their Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) as they did when they were on active duty.

**Base Closures:** Support retention of military treatment and other facilities at BRAC sites that are patronized by sizeable retiree and Reserve populations and closely monitor the impact of closures and realignments.

**TRICARE ISSUES****TRICARE Young Adult Prime Option Available**

The TRICARE Young Adult (TYA) Prime option is now available for young adult beneficiaries for a monthly premium of \$201. TYA Prime is a managed health care option with low out-of-pocket costs. Care is delivered through military clinics and hospitals and the TRICARE network of civilian providers.

Qualifying beneficiaries must be under age 26, unmarried and not eligible for their own employer-sponsored health care coverage. In addition to TYA Prime, young adult dependents may also be eligible for TYA Standard, which has been available since May 2011, at a cost of \$186/month (\$176/month after January 1, 2012).

For additional information and application forms, visit [www.tricare.mil/tya](http://www.tricare.mil/tya)

**TRICARE Data Theft**

Letters were sent to 4.9 million TRICARE beneficiaries by the Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC), a contractor for TRICARE Management Activity (TMA), regarding the theft of their personal data. Computer tapes stolen from a SAIC employee's car contained beneficiaries' names, Social Security numbers, birth dates, phone numbers, and laboratory results, but did not include financial data, such as credit card numbers or bank information.

TMA has directed SAIC to provide one year of credit monitoring and restoration services to patients who express concern about their credit. SAIC will also conduct analysis of all available data to help determine if identity theft occurs due to the data breach. TMA believes the risk of harm is low despite the sensitive data involved, as retrieving information from the tapes requires knowledge of and access to specific hardware and software and knowledge of the system and data structure.

*Concerned patients may contact the SAIC Incident Response Call Center, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Eastern Time; at (855) 366-0140 (toll free) for United States callers and (952) 556-8312 (collect) internationally.*



## VETERANS ISSUES

**FRA Meets with Senate Steering Committee**

FRA National Executive Director (NED) Joe Barnes and representatives from other military and veteran organizations participated in a round table discussion in late November with the Senate Democrat Steering and Outreach Committee. The agenda included discussion of the challenges facing today's veterans, including employment, remote access to Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) healthcare and other programs in Alaska and service members' transition from the Department of Defense to the VA. The group also discussed legislation (H.R. 674) combining Sen. Patty Murray's (Wash.) "Hiring Heroes Act" (S. 951), Rep. Jeff Miller's (Fla.) "Veterans Opportunity to Work Act" (H.R. 2433) and veterans' tax-credit language into a comprehensive package designed to reduce veterans' unemployment rates. The measure was approved by the Senate and House, and signed into law by the President. (See story to the right for further details on provisions intended to reduce veterans' unemployment.)

A total of 16 senators participated in the round table discussion including Majority Leader Harry Reid (Nev.), Super Committee co-chairwoman and Senate Veterans Affairs Committee Chairwoman Patty Murray (Wash.), Majority Whip Dick Durbin (Ill.) and former VA Committee chairman Daniel Akaka (Hawaii).

**Veterans' Day 2011**

In accordance with a long-standing tradition, FRA shipmates participated in Veterans' Day ceremonies around the country on Friday, November 11th, 2011, which also marked FRA's 87th anniversary. These included FRA National President Jeffrey A. Gilmartin attending a White House breakfast before ceremonies at Arlington National Cemetery and a special wreath-laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknowns following President Obama's address to veterans and their family members who assembled for the occasion. FRA JrPNP Jim Scarbro and Auxiliary President Gini Larson were also in attendance.

**FRA Participates in Military Family Caucus Summit**

FRA's National Veterans Service Officer (NVSO) Chris Slawinski participated in the Military Family Caucus Summit on Capitol Hill. The summit was hosted by Caucus Co-Chairs Representatives Sanford Bishop (Ga.) and Cathy McMorris Rodgers (Wash.), and provided an opportunity for military members, veterans, family members and other stakeholders to discuss active duty, guard, Reserve, veteran and family concerns.

Slawinski participated in a breakout session on veteran issues, including the continuing challenges associated with transitioning from DoD to VA for wounded personnel. The panel was moderated by Representative Corrine Brown (Fla.), member of the House Veterans Affairs Committee (HVAC).

**Employment Help for Veterans**

President Obama announced the establishment of the Veterans Jobs Bank, powered by the National Resource Directory ([www.NRD.gov](http://www.NRD.gov)), that provides a central source for veterans to locate job opportunities. The Veterans Job Bank is unique in that it provides users with the ability to define their search criteria by keyword, Military Occupational Code (MOC) and location. Based on information provided, the search engine pulls a selection of global job opportunities that have been posted or specifically tagged for veterans on job boards, such as Simply Hired and corporate websites.

In related news, the President signed legislation (H.R. 627) into law that includes combined provisions of Senator Patty Murray's (Wash.) "Hiring Heroes Act" (S. 951), Representative Jeff Miller's (Fla.) "Veterans Opportunity to Work Act" (H.R. 2433) and veterans' tax-credit language. The latest job figures from the Bureau of Labor Statistics show that nearly one million veterans are currently unemployed, including more than 600,000 veterans of past eras and conflicts, and the comprehensive package is designed to reduce the unemployment rate among veterans.

Provisions of the legislation include:

- Expanding education and training opportunities for older veterans by providing nearly 100,000 unemployed veterans of past eras and wars with up to one year of additional Montgomery GI Bill benefits for education or training programs at community colleges or technical schools for high-demand jobs.
- Making the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) — an interagency workshop coordinated by Departments of Defense, Labor and Veterans Affairs — mandatory for service members moving on to civilian life and help them secure 21st Century jobs through resume-writing workshops and career counseling.
- Providing disabled veterans up to one year of additional vocational rehabilitation and employment benefits.
- Mandating DoD work with the states to create licensing and credential standards for returning service members to acknowledge skills learned in their military occupations.
- Allowing service members to begin the federal employment process prior to separation in order to facilitate a truly seamless transition from the military to jobs at VA, Homeland Security or other federal agencies.
- Strengthening protections for members of the Reserve Component to minimize hostile work environments.
- Providing a tax credit of up to \$5,600 for hiring veterans who have been looking for a job for more than six months, as well as a \$2,400 credit for veterans who are unemployed for more than four weeks, but less than six months. Also provides a tax credit of up to \$9,600 for hiring veterans with service-connected disabilities who have been looking for a job for more than six months.



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## VETERANS ISSUES

### PDBR Increases Disability Ratings for Many

The Physical Disability Board of Review (PDBR) was mandated by the FY2008 Defense Authorization Act to reassess the accuracy and fairness of disability claims that resulted in combined disability ratings of 20 percent or less for service members who were separated from service due to medical conditions rather than being medically retired. Since January 1, 2009, only 2,842 of the more than 77,000 eligible for reassessment have applied. Nearly half of those reviewed have been upgraded to 30 percent or more.

To be eligible for a PDBR review, service members must have been medically separated between September 11, 2001, and December 31, 2009, with a combined disability rating of 20 percent or less, and found ineligible for retirement. At the present time, there is no time limit or cutoff date by which you must apply for this review, however, the longer you wait, the more difficult it may be to gather required medical evidence from your VA rating process, your service treatment record or other in-service sources.

To request a PDBR review, visit:

<http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/infomgt/forms/eforms/dd0294.pdf>

The FRA Legislative team is Joe Barnes, National Executive Director; John Davis, Director of Legislative Programs; Bob Washington, Health Care Advisor and Outreach Manager; Chris Slawinski, National Veterans Service Officer and Ed Dockery, Assistant Director of Legislative Programs.

### Veterans' Critical Issues Report Available Online

The Independent Budget (IB) Critical Issues Report for Fiscal Year 2013 is now available online. Intended to alert Congress, the Administration and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) on veterans' concerns, the report addresses needed legislative and regulatory action associated with healthcare, benefits and other services.

The FY 2013 IB will be released in February and marks the 27th year that AMVETS, Disabled American Veterans (DAV), Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) and the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) have published the guide for policymakers tasked with serving the needs of America's veterans. Along with numerous other organizations, FRA consistently supports the IB.

A copy of the report is available at: [http://www.independentbudget.org/2013/CI\\_2013.pdf](http://www.independentbudget.org/2013/CI_2013.pdf)

**AS WE START THE** New Year and the Second Session of the 112th Congress, it's important to note the many threats to member pay and benefits that the Association effectively addressed during 2011.

### HEALTH CARE BENEFITS

- TRICARE Prime enrollment fees will increase by \$5 (family coverage) / \$2.50 (single coverage), however, the index for future adjustments will be the Consumer Price Index (CPI) which tracks the overall inflation rate for retired pay and benefits — vice a higher health care inflation rate proposed by DoD.
- Elimination of the co-pay for prescriptions dispensed via the TRICARE home-delivery program.
- A Super Committee recommendation to establish a TRICARE-for-Life enrollment fee (\$200) was not approved since the panel failed to agree to future budget cuts. A White House proposal to create a commission to consider restructuring the military retirement system was not approved.
- A plan to shift military retirees from TRICARE Prime to TRICARE Standard (\$1500 individual enrollment fee / \$3500 for family coverage) was halted. The plan would also ban TRICARE coverage for retirees with civilian employee coverage.
- The year-long delay on imposing Medicare/TRICARE physician reimbursement rate cuts in excess of 27% ends on 12/31/11 and Congress is apparently working on yet another extension of at least one year. This issue is significant to access to care for beneficiaries.

### PROPOSALS IMPACTING RETIREMENT AND SURVIVOR BENEFITS

- Strong and continuing support for full concurrent receipt of military retired and veterans' disability compensation prompted reintroduction of legislation addressing this issue (S. 344, H.R. 333) along with an amendment to the Senate 2012 NDAA.

- An amendment to Senate Defense Authorization bill (S. 1867) to repeal the SBP/DIC offset for surviving spouses of personnel who die of service-connected causes was approved.
- FRA opposed a change to the cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) formula associated military retired pay, Social Security, disability compensation and other benefits. The "chained CPI," would take into account substitutions that consumers make in response to changes in prices resulting in reduced annual COLA amounts.
- Congressional testimony and other efforts in opposition to a Defense Business Board (DBB) plan to replace current retirement system with a 401(k) plan helped halt legislative proposals to reform the program, along with a White House proposal to establish a BRAC type commission to consider restructuring the military retirement system and other benefits.
- FRA advocated legislation (HR 493) that would forgive overpayment of military retired or retainer pay for any period after the death of the recipient through the last day of the month in which such death occurs.

### ACTIVE AND RESERVE ISSUES

- Effectively advocated a 1.6 percent 2012 pay increase for active duty and Reservists despite a multi-year federal employee pay freeze.
- Successfully advocated for a provision in the House Defense Authorization bill (H.R. 1540) that extends authority to provide lodging for Navy enlisted personnel during ship construction or refitting work.
- Supported the "Ensuring Our Military Pay Act" (S. 724) that would guarantee service members (including Reservists) would be paid if there is a government shut down or a default on government debt obligations.
- Effectively advocated supplemental Impact Aid via the DoD budget for public schools impacted by military populations — including students with disabilities.

- Supported authorization of early retirement and involuntary separation benefits associated with military end strength reductions.
- FRA successfully advocated for provision in NDAA that prohibits denial of re-enlistment for a service member determined by Physical Evaluation Board (PEB) to be fit for duty, but is subsequently determined to be unsuitable for service.

### VETERANS ISSUES

- FRA supported legislation clarifying presumption for "Blue Water" Vietnam veterans with disability claims related to Agent Orange exposure (S. 1629 and H.R. 812).
- FRA advocated "The Veterans Appeals Improvement Act" (H.R. 1484) which passed in the House and seeks to establish a Veterans Judicial Review Commission to develop ways to improve the accuracy, transparency, and timeliness of the VA claims appeals process.
- Supported legislation (H.R. 2646) that ensures funding for VA hospital construction projects and medical facility leases in FY2012 (P.L. 112-37).
- Successfully supported enacted legislation (H.R. 674) to provide tax credits for businesses to hire veterans (P.L. 112-56).
- Advocated for enactment of the "Restoring GI Bill Fairness Act" (H.R. 1383) that increases the tuition cap to \$27,000 for certain veterans currently attending private schools (P.L. 112-26).

### OTHER ISSUES

- Strongly supported enactment of the U.S. Coast Guard Authorization bill (H.R. 2838) which passed in the House and authorizes Coast Guard programs through 2014.
- Halted efforts to significantly change to the military resale system by reducing the annual subsidy of military commissaries and combine the three exchange systems (AAFES, NEXCOM and MCX).



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## Plan for 2012

**FRA SHIPMATES ARE DOING** fantastic things in their branches and in their communities. Sometimes we find out about these things and are able to highlight them in FRA Today, but many times our shipmates remain unsung heroes.

During a recent round table discussion with several Association leaders and National Headquarters' staff members, a suggestion was made to find ways for branches to share the great work they are doing with the rest of the shipmates, to inspire, encourage and motivate similar activities.

In February, this column will focus on the background and importance of the awards given at National Convention each year. These awards are an opportunity to recognize and reward the efforts of branches and individuals, so we want to make sure all readers are aware of the criteria for the awards and the nomination process.

From March through December, we are looking to shipmates to provide content for this column. Although we won't be able to publish everything that is sent in, we will review and include as many ideas and photos as possible. The following is the planned editorial calendar, and shipmates are encouraged to submit ideas, anecdotes and photos that relate.

Please send your submissions to:

Membership Matters

FRA

125 N. West St

Alexandria, VA 22314

or email to [penny@fra.org](mailto:penny@fra.org)

If sending photos, please send high resolution jpeg files or mail a commercially printed photo.

### **MARCH: CHOOSING/TRAINING BRANCH LEADERSHIP**

What are the most effective ways you have found to recruit, train and retain branch leaders? Some branches promote the concept of continuity in leadership as being effective while others find that an infusion of "new blood" helps create positive results. We would love to show both sides of that discussion!

### **APRIL: SETTING BRANCH GOALS**

Branches that establish goals and involve their membership in achieving those goals can accomplish monumental things. If your branch has set and achieved a goal — or if you are just embarking on a new goal — please let us know how you decided on the goal and what your steps are to making that goal a reality.

### **MAY: RETENTION EFFORTS**

Has your branch achieved a 100% retention rate or better? What is it that you do to make that happen? Share your story and inspire other branches to increase their retention rates. Give us the statistics and the stories!

### **JUNE: RECRUITING EFFORTS**

Recruiting is a challenge for many shipmates. We are frequently asked for tips on how to promote membership in FRA. Please share what you do to increase your success in recruiting new FRA shipmates.

### **JULY: OUTREACH EVENTS**

Whether you attend an outreach event as an individual or as part of a branch activity, we would like you to share how you find the events, what you do to stand out in the crowd and how you judge whether or not it was a success.



Penny Collins

### **AUGUST: COMMUNITY SERVICE**

Branches and individual shipmates are always doing tremendous things to help their local communities. Please share what you are doing with stories and photos. This is your chance to brag about your efforts and inspire others to get involved.

### **SEPTEMBER: COMMUNICATION WITH SHIPMATES**

We know that membership retention rates are directly connected to shipmates feeling involved and connected. What do you do to keep in touch with your shipmates?

### **OCTOBER: IMPROVING BRANCH MEETINGS**

The success of branch meetings is a key component of the vitality of the branch. What does your branch do to make branch meetings interesting, informative and worth the trip?

### **NOVEMBER: STARTING A NEW BRANCH**

If you were involved with starting a new branch, please share what you did to make it happen. If you are considering starting a new branch, let us know that too! What motivated you? What are the steps you took to get going? What advice would you share with others?

### **DECEMBER: BEST OF THE YEAR REVIEW AND BZS**

We will provide a way for shipmates to vote on the best submissions during the year and in December we will report on the results.

---

**Penny Collins** is FRA's Director of Membership Development and a member of FRA Branch 24 in Annapolis, Md. She can be reached at [penny@fra.org](mailto:penny@fra.org).

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# SOUTHERN EXPOSURE

by Lauren Armstrong



Jim Landy at McMurdo  
Station, Antarctica


Jim Landy served two tours at McMurdo Station, a scientific research center in Antarctica, as part of Operation Deep Freeze, the military contingent that supported scientists conducting polar research. Antarctic deployments were scheduled by season — usually October to February — when the temperatures were a bit higher and the sun never set. He deployed for four seasons as a jet mechanic (1970-1974) and then returned for a second tour (1977-1981) as a flight engineer on C-130 Hercules aircraft. He loved his polar assignments and enjoyed the beauty of each endless day.

However, he is now fighting a variety of cancers he believes are related to his service there. Since 2008, Landy has suffered the ravages of liver, stomach, esophageal, brain and spinal cancer — all of which he believes are the result of radiation exposure from the nuclear plant that powered the McMurdo facility from March 1964 to October 1973.

All historical photos provided courtesy  
of Bill Vogel and Pam Landy.







The PM-3A nuclear plant was used to produce electricity for the research facility, as well as provide heat and desalinate water for McMurdo personnel. The plant had numerous malfunctions and was eventually decommissioned after a leak was discovered. Landy and some of the other 15,000 Navy servicemen who served at McMurdo Station during the plant's operation and shutdown can't help but wonder to what extent they were exposed to harmful radiation.

The anecdotal data is compelling. Landy isn't the only McMurdo veteran with cancer and other radiation-related illnesses. **Jim Chock** has testicular cancer. **Charlie Swinney** was diagnosed with prostate cancer, which spread to his spine and brain and eventually led to his death in 2009. When **Bob Boyles** was diagnosed with thyroid cancer, the first thing his doctor asked him was "When were you exposed to radiation?" **Gene Loper** has thyroid disease, another illness associated with radiation exposure. **Joe Aucoin** has bladder cancer. **Tony Carr** died with cancer. **Dan Desko** died from blood cancer. **Joe Howe** has colon cancer. **Izzy Gantz** is enrolled in hospice care as he fights cancer. **Skip Fulford** had one lung removed and is now fighting cancer in his remaining lung. **Walter Glennon** died in 2006 of esophageal cancer. **And the list goes on....**

*continued on page 21*

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Despite some 438 documented malfunctions at the plant and 123 reports of radiation exposure, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has denied all claims for benefits related to these illnesses. A group of McMurdo vets and surviving family members are working to ensure these veterans get the benefits they deserve.

"The list of people who served at McMurdo who've been diagnosed with cancer is alarming," says Bill Vogel, an unofficial spokesperson for the McMurdo vets.

Vogel served as an aircrew loadmaster in Antarctic Development Squadron Six (VXE-6) and spent three six-month seasons at McMurdo (1975 – 1978). Although he isn't personally experiencing any radiation-related illnesses, he's taken his shipmates' concerns to heart and is carrying the banner on their behalf.

"Charlie Swinney, a fellow loadmaster, and I became good friends at McMurdo and stayed in touch over the years," explains Vogel. "He was initially diagnosed with prostate cancer at an early age, which spread to his spine and brain. When he died in February 2009, he had more than 200 tumors in his body. Charlie lost everything in his fight against cancer. Besides losing the fight for his life, he lost his home, his car – everything – after he was diagnosed. Charlie kept asking the VA to look into his case, but all claims for benefits were denied. Shortly before his death, Charlie asked me to continue the fight on behalf of all the other VXE-6 vets who've been impacted. After reading all the documentation Charlie had collected, I couldn't say no."

## Nuclear Power in the Antarctic

The Navy launched Operation Deep Freeze in 1955 to maintain and supply the logistical needs of permanent research stations in Antarctica. For 44 years, Naval Support Force Antarctica and Antarctic Development Squadron Six (VX-6 and later VXE-6) provided the military's primary support to the U.S. Antarctic Program.

Antarctica is the planet's coldest, driest and highest continent, which creates a very hostile living and working environment for the scientists and support staff who reside there year round. In April of 1960, the Atomic Energy Commission issued a report on the advantages of using nuclear reactors at remote military installations as

a cost-effective alternative to diesel-fueled power plants. Diesel fuel was considered expensive at the time and, when transportation costs were factored in, the cost per gallon more than tripled. If it was required to transport a 12-cent gallon of diesel fuel to particularly remote areas, such as the interior of Antarctica, the cost rose to nearly six dollars/gallon. Producing nuclear power was estimated to reduce those costs by half, so in August of 1960 Congress authorized the construction of a nuclear power plant at McMurdo Station, the primary base for Operation Deep Freeze.

The 413-ton nuclear plant was designed to fit inside a military cargo plane and, although it was actually shipped to the Antarctic, its designation as a portable power source

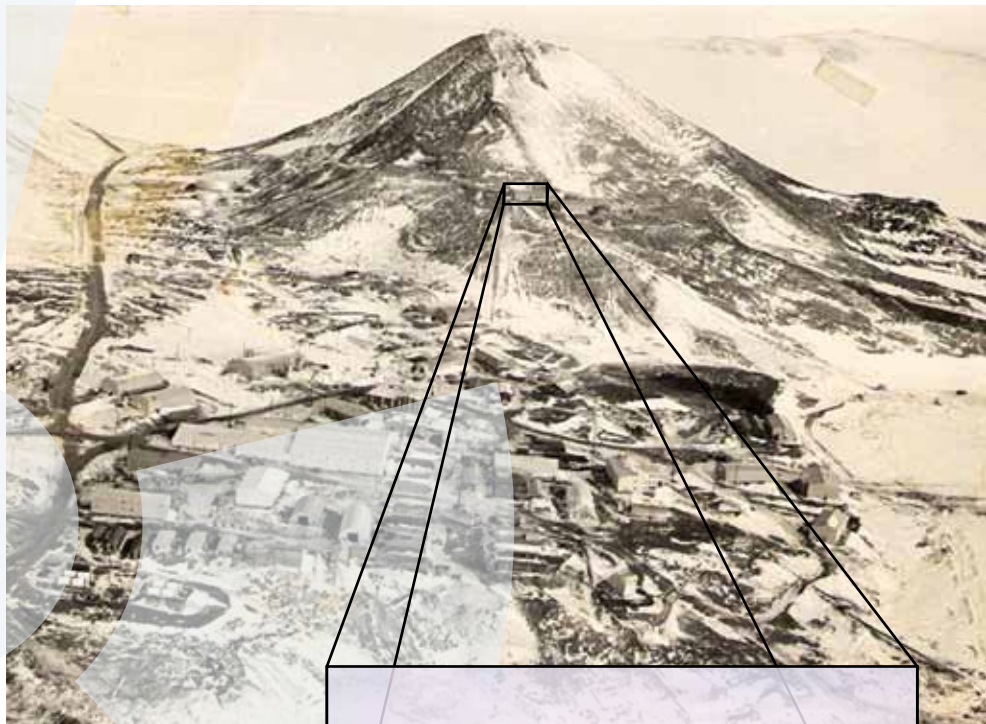


McMurdo Station personnel climbed Observation Hill as a form of recreation.



was part of its military acronym. The PM-3A title designated it as a “portable, medium” output reactor that was the third in a planned series of reactors the military intended to use for multiple purposes. (The two earlier reactors were operated in Thule, Greenland, and Sundance, Wyo.) The A indicated that the reactor was a field installation. The men assigned to PM-3A were part of the Naval Nuclear Power Unit or NNPU, which soon evolved to “Nukey Poo” and became the nickname for the problem-prone reactor.

PM-3A was installed on a slight terrace on a slope called Observation Hill, only a few hundred yards above McMurdo Station. The plant ran on Strontium-90 pellets, a dangerous fuel that is highly radioactive before it enters the reactor core. The first of four large steel tanks held the reactor itself and the second contained a steam generator in which extremely hot pressurized water from the reactor was turned to steam. The third tank was empty to allow for thermal expansion in the other tanks and the fourth was reserved to hold the spent fuel from the reactor until its level of radioactivity had decreased enough for shipment back to the United States. Under normal conditions, these tanks would be surrounded by thick concrete to contain radiation, but in the sub-freezing temperatures at McMurdo, pouring concrete would be impossible. As a substitute, the most radioactive parts of the plant were wrapped in lead and the tanks were installed in an excavated area that was subsequently filled with crushed gravel. A building was constructed over them. Although PM-3A produced only about half its



The PM-3A nuclear plant was situated above the quarters and dining facilities for McMurdo personnel.



expected output, the excess heat was used to melt ice into water that was used for drinking, cooking and bathing by McMurdo personnel.

### A New Frontier

There was a great deal to be learned about using nuclear power in general, and nuclear power in Antarctica specifically. Both the continent and the technology were new frontiers.

“A lot of things about nuclear power were new and not that much was known about the dangers. By today’s standards, none of this would have happened,” says Landy’s wife, Pam.

According to Vogel, testing and safety measures at McMurdo were not as stringent as they could, or should, have been. “Only the folks who worked in the plant itself were issued dosimeters. Guys who worked on the flight line or in other areas of the station weren’t

ever issued any type of measuring device so our radiation exposure levels could be recorded. There’s no way to know how much radiation we may have been exposed to.”

And even when dosimeters were issued, their use didn’t follow proper protocol. Joe Aucoin was a fireman at McMurdo and it was his responsibility to conduct fire safety inspections on the PM-3A plant. He was issued a dosimeter to wear when he was inside the plant and told to report it if his meter showed exposure.

“Joe told me that when he noticed his meter had registered radiation exposure, he reported to the plant supervisor,” relays Vogel. “The supervisor simply threw the dosimeter away and issued Joe a new one. Joe doesn’t believe the event was ever documented and, today, he suffers with bladder cancer.”

*continued on page 24*

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Even under the best of conditions, closer attention should have been paid to potential exposure hazards, but the plant had a high malfunction rate. During its ten-and-a-half-year lifespan, numerous malfunctions forced the plant to be shut down, modified and repaired.

According to the Navy's Final Operating Report on PM-3A, there were 438 reported malfunctions at the plant — nearly 56 a year — including hairline cracks in the reactor lining and leaking water from the tank surrounding the reactor. Because of the station's remote location, replacement parts were often constructed onsite with whatever materials were available at the time. Other reports indicate that when repairs were needed, standard materials were sometimes used, resulting in additional failures and potentially more leaks.

The report also references 123 instances of "radiation exposure in excess of 350 mRem in seven consecutive days." The report continues to explain that the excess exposure was authorized by the OIC (officer in charge) and individual exposures remained below the allowable quarterly limits. There were five reported cases of "airborne particulate radioactivity exposure to personnel" greater than allowable limits and "appropriate action was taken in these cases to reduce personnel exposure."

"As far as I know, there is no official record of how much radiation was released from the PM-3A plant. If radiation release records were kept, then where are they and why can't we see them?" asks Vogel. "The Final Operating Report talks about radiation leakage and cites that 2.5 gallons per hour had been released, which was then reduced to 2.5 gallons per day. Nowhere in the report do they cite for how many hours or days this went on, nor what the total amount of radiation leakage was. I believe the answer is that they simply didn't know."

Other problems were addressed as they arose. For example, the melting ice around the plant was found to contain Sodium 24 — a radioactive isotope. To address the concern a perforated drainage pipe was buried and a large fan was installed to cool the gravel surrounding the tanks. According to "The Story of Nukey Poo," published in the *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* in October of 1978, the fan was blowing irradiated air, but testing done at the time indicated that the air samples did not contain unduly large amounts of radiation. Any remaining seepage was stored with radioactive waste for return to the U.S. or run off to the "non-radioactive" waste disposal system.

Vogel says it's all well and good that they attempted to resolve this problem, but questions how effective the

solution might have been. "Our drinking water came from ice they scooped up from the base of Observation Hill — where all that runoff would have gone. Big loaders would scoop up the ice and dump it into evaporators, where it was melted and processed for our consumption."

## Malfunctions and Shutdown

As a result of the numerous malfunctions and subsequent shutdowns, the plant was only functionally available 72 percent of the time and its unreliability required a diesel plant be staffed year-round as a backup power supply. PM-3A wasn't providing the expected cost savings.

During a routine maintenance shutdown in 1972, a leak was discovered in the primary reactor system. Repair would be costly and given its less-than-stellar performance, it was decided that PM-3A would be closed permanently. The decommissioning process continued over the next seven-and-a-half years and included the removal of 11,800 cubic yards, or 12,200 tons, of radioactive soil from the site in compliance with the Antarctic Treaty.

"When it was necessary to remove the radioactive soil from Observation Hill, they had to blast the soil out of the ground because it was frozen solid. This created great clouds of dirt and





(left to right): LC-130s lined up at the South Pole, members of VXE-6 in 1976, a control panel at PM-3A

dust, which we all breathed in. The soil, which was documented to be contaminated with Alpha radiation, was loaded into small dump trucks and driven through the unpaved roads of McMurdo. The soil was not covered and, as the trucks bumped along these rough roads, it was common to see soil dropping out of them. We walked through it and tracked it all over the station and into our quarters. The wind never stops blowing at McMurdo, so soil particles were constantly being blown everywhere," recalls Vogel.

"The Story of Nukey Poo" also outlines some of the other problems in constructing, operating and decommissioning the PM-3A plant and offers some assurances about the safety of the soil being removed from the site: "Presumably, it is only alpha radiation that is being emitted by the soil and ... the Navy's Public Information Officer at Christchurch, New Zealand, said 'You would have to lie on the dirt for three months to acquire as much dose [radiation] as a chest X-ray.'"

Simply lying in the dirt may not have posed a life-threatening hazard, but the real danger of Alpha radiation exists when the material is ingested. And the effects of exposure can lie dormant in the body for decades.

"My husband was at McMurdo when the nuclear plant was operating and also when they were removing the contaminated soil. He's told me how the soil dropped off the trucks and was often whipped into dust clouds. McMurdo personnel ingested

## Connection or Coincidence?

Walter Glennon, who served at McMurdo from 1966 to 1969, was concerned about his own cancer diagnosis, as well as the cancers at least 20 of his former Deep Freeze shipmates were experiencing. In June of 2004, he wrote a letter outlining his experiences:

"On several occasions, I was called upon to visit the plant [to] have some heliarc welding performed. While at the nuclear power plant I would be furnished with meals and allowed to shower. On more than one occasion, the plant scrambled ... requiring the plant to be reset and brought back on line. The operators of the plant said this posed no threat. Well, I wonder."

The letter goes on to explain that he was diagnosed with esophageal cancer in November of 2001, which led to radiation and chemotherapy treatments and the eventual removal of his esophagus.

"At the decommissioning of VXE-6 and subsequent reunions, I talked with many former members who had also developed some form of cancer," Glennon's letter continues. "The only common factor was a nuclear power plant at McMurdo Station."

Glennon passed away in 2006, but his wife continues to promote the cause. She's done interviews with local news stations and others to raise awareness of the problem. "Walter wanted people to get their VA benefits from this because there's so many of them that have cancer or have died," says Ann Glennon of her late husband's efforts.



this through their eyes, noses and mouths," Pam Landy explains.

"Between the runoff water used for drinking, cooking and bathing and the dirt particles we were breathing," adds Vogel, "I don't see how we couldn't have ingested iodizing radiation."

The *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* story also says that as officials drafted a plan to remove the contaminated soil, it was also revealed that "there had been three occasions when cracks had appeared in the containment vessels. These were welded up, but not before they had allowed an undisclosed amount of shield water to soak into the backfill. Neutrons passing through the tank had further activated the backfill."

"We were never cautioned about this soil being contaminated with radiation or being harmful to our health," recalls Vogel. "Long before the soil removal began, it was considered OK to climb Observation Hill as a sort of recreation area. There was a log book at the top, where you could document your climb. We were never advised to stay clear of the area or advised of any risk."

"I believe we were all at a greater risk than what we all assumed," says Jim Landy.

## Burden of Proof

Despite documented malfunctions and leaks, and eyewitness reports of

improper risk assessments, proving radiation exposure to the VA has been nearly impossible for the McMurdo veterans.

According to the Landys, four McMurdo veterans noticed a pattern and started investigating the potential of exposure back in the 1990s. Four of them filed claims for veterans' benefits, which were denied. They fought with the VA until their deaths, but never received any benefits related to radiation exposure. As more cases of cancer began to appear, more McMurdo vets sought help, but every claim for VA benefits has been denied – with one very notable exception.

In November 2004, one McMurdo veteran received a VA determination and disability rating that said, "Service connection for post-traumatic stress disorder [PTSD] (claimed as due to radiation exposure in Antarctica) has been established as directly related to military service."

The determination goes on to outline the veteran's dates of service at McMurdo and cites the previously mentioned Final Operating Report, which "shows the water supply from 1962 to 1967 was contaminated by radionuclides from the PM-3A reactor ... The site plan for the location of the PM-3A power plant failed to consider the designed effluent [runoff] containing radioactive material and the plume the effluent would make down the hill

towards the men that were at the station, failed to discover the plume and to band (sic) traffic through that area which allowed effluent-containing radioactive material and fallout to be tracked in the open water supply, failed to realize the number of sources of radioactive material and the hazards involved with ingesting this material and exposed over 15,000 members of the U.S. Navy to a hazard of ingesting radioactive material." The service-connection was awarded for the veteran's PTSD, but the determination also references that he was diagnosed with cancer in 1993.

## Call to Action

When Swinney, an Ohio veteran, died following his 16-year battle with cancer, Ron Regan, an ABC News reporter in Cleveland, publicly questioned the link between Swinney's illness and his service at McMurdo. As more complaints about potential radiation exposure surfaced, Regan took the matter to Ohio Senator Sherrod Brown, who wrote to then-Defense Secretary Robert Gates and VA Secretary Eric Shinseki, requesting an investigation into the veterans' claims. Senator Richard Blumenthal (Conn.) has also joined the campaign to get answers for the McMurdo veterans.

Secretary Shinseki's response to Brown and Blumenthal says the VA is aware of the McMurdo situation



(left to right): Senior Chief Jim Landy, VXE-6 aircrews (circa 1977), Bill Vogel in front of an LC-130, 1977.

and references the radiation dose exposure assessment the Department of Defense (DoD) is performing to "identify Veterans that may have been affected by the released radiation ... The dose reconstruction process will assign a dose exposure to each McMurdo veteran."

According to Shinseki's letter, the referenced Radiation Dose Exposure Assessment will use a National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) interactive Radio Epidemiological Program, which "provides a statistical estimate on the probability that a Veteran's disease is associated with ionizing radiation exposure."

"These statements raise more than a few questions from those of us involved," says Vogel. "The 2004 determination is an official VA admission that the PM-3A plant was responsible for exposing more than 15,000 members of the U.S. Navy to the hazard of ingesting radioactive material at McMurdo Station. I don't know what criteria was used in 2004 to make that determination, but why isn't that same criteria being used for the numerous McMurdo vets with cancer? Why are they starting all over again with the dose assessment? And when the VA determined that we were exposed to harmful radiation back in 2004, why didn't they attempt to make contact with us to warn us and offer medical testing? If you're aware

that 15,000 people were exposed to harmful radiation levels, don't you have the absolute responsibility to at least attempt to contact them and advise them of the situation? They did nothing and many McMurdo veterans have become sick with cancer and died. And now they want to do more investigation!

"Those of us who have worked, researched and studied this case believe the VA is attempting to further deny these veterans the benefits they need and deserve, while refusing to answer our questions," continues Vogel. "It's our understanding that the assessment will focus on vets who were exposed to radiation as a result of nuclear weapons testing and we fear our group's concerns are not going to be represented."

DoD will publicly present their assessment at the Veterans' Advisory Board on Dose Reconstruction (VBDR) in San Antonio, Texas, on March 22 and 23, 2012. The event is being billed as the VBDR Plenary, which implies a full and complete accounting. The Landys have been advised that the plenary is open to the public and that time will be available for members of the audience to speak to the board directly. Vogel and Pam Landy are both hoping to attend. Updates and agenda details will be available at [www.vbdr.org](http://www.vbdr.org) as they become available.

## Making It Right

"I don't think there was any intent to expose us to radiation," says Vogel. "It was just ignorance. We were in the Atomic Age and everyone was very excited about nuclear power and what

it could accomplish. But the fact is that we were exposed and the government should do right by those who are suffering the consequences."

"It's totally wrong that the government is treating vets the way they are," adds Pam Landy. "We have very dear friends who have passed away and others, like my husband, are still fighting. All of them were in Antarctica during this time frame. Many of our friends fought till they died, but still the VA won't budge."

Vogel, who is also the president of the Antarctic Development Squadron Six (VX/VXE-6) Association, feels an obligation to his shipmates who participated in Operation Deep Freeze, commonly called the Puckered Penguins. He writes a column for the group's website, attends reunions and keeps track of those who are ill. The association's goal is to provide a forum in which VX/VXE-6 veterans can share their common experiences.

"Unfortunately, our common bond includes radiation exposure," muses Vogel with a sad smile. "Guys like Charlie Swinney served in the squadron for 14 years. He dedicated the majority of his military career to serving in Antarctica and he deserved better than he got. I talk with him every night and like to think he can hear me and is pleased with the work we're doing to make it right for those who are still with us."



**Lauren Armstrong** is the Contributing Editor and Member of the FRA Auxiliary. She can be reached at [lauren@fra.org](mailto:lauren@fra.org).



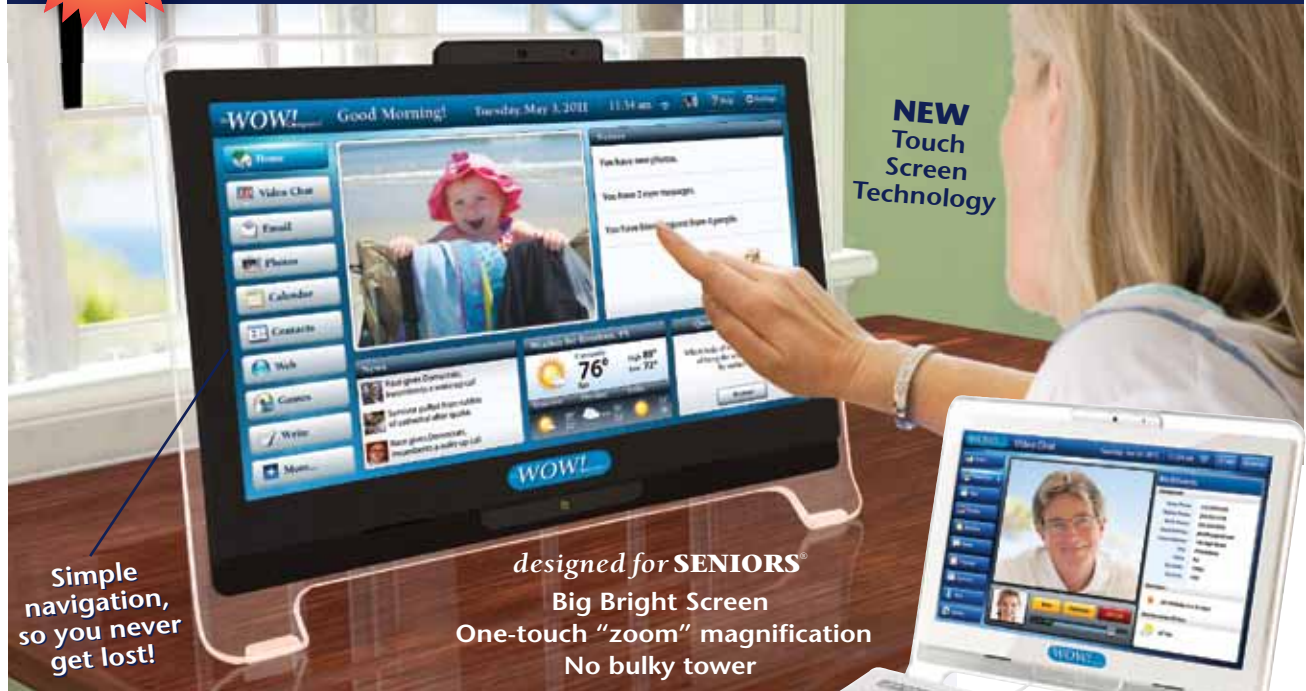
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I just wanted to tell firstSTREET that I am having a great time on my WOW computer. I am learning something new everyday. I am 79 years old and cannot believe that I am typing and sending e-mails to all my friends now. My daughter and granddaughter are so excited now that I have a computer. They use computers on their jobs everyday, but they cannot believe what you can do on this computer. It is wonderful... Thanks.

— Johnnie E., Ellijay, Ga

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## The U.S. Bill of Rights

**A DECADE AFTER THE** United States declared its independence from Great Britain, it became apparent that the new nation needed more specific governing documents than the Articles of Confederation that were penned after the Revolutionary War. A Constitutional Convention met in Philadelphia on May 25, 1787, to draft a new constitution and after three months of debate the U.S. Constitution was signed by 38 of the 41 delegates. The document wouldn't become binding, however, until it had been ratified by nine of the 13 states.

By December, five states had ratified the document, but Massachusetts and several other states had reservations about it, citing its lack of specific protections for personal rights. A compromise was reached in February of 1788; Massachusetts and other opposing states would agree to ratify the Constitution if they could be assured that amendments would be made immediately. New Hampshire became the ninth state to ratify the Constitution on June 21, 1788, and the country began operating under the new law of the land on March 4, 1789.

The first Congress of the United States met later that year and on September 25, 1789, adopted 12 amendments to the U.S. Constitution. This Bill of Rights sought to guarantee the freedoms of speech, press, assembly, and exercise of religion; the right to fair legal procedure and to bear arms; and that powers not delegated to the federal government were reserved for the states and the people. When Virginia ratified 10 of the 12 original amendments on December 15, 1791, it provided the two-thirds majority vote among the states needed for the amendments to become law.

One of the two original amendments not ratified addressed the population system of determining representation and was never enacted. The second prevented laws that affect congressional salaries from taking effect until the beginning of the next session of Congress. This amendment was ratified in 1992, making it the 27th and most recent amendment to the Constitution — more than 200 years after the Bill of Rights became law.

### The Bill of Rights

Amendment 1 — Freedom of speech, press and religion

Amendment 2 — The right to bear arms

Amendment 3 — Protection of homeowners from quartering troops, except during war.

Amendment 4 — Rights and protections against unreasonable search and seizure

Amendment 5 — Rights of due process of law, protection against double jeopardy, self incrimination

Amendment 6 — Rights of a speedy trial by jury of peers and rights of accused

Amendment 7 — Rights to trial by jury in civil cases

Amendment 8 — Protection from cruel and unusual punishment, excessive bail

Amendment 9 — Protection of rights not specified in the Bill of Rights

Amendment 10 — States' rights and the power of the states

The Bill of Rights protects our individual rights and forms the cornerstone to our freedoms. FRA encourages all citizens to take a moment to reflect upon the many blessings of liberty we enjoy.

*Which of the original 10 amendments are the most important? Visit [www.fra.org/history](http://www.fra.org/history) to share your views.*

*The original Bill of Rights is on display at the National Archives in Washington, D.C.*

*Visit [www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/bill\\_of\\_rights.html](http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/bill_of_rights.html) to learn more.*



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**Take Action!**

FRA provides the Action Center on [www.fra.org](http://www.fra.org) and a pocket guide called *Communicate With Your Elected Officials* to make communicating with members of Congress easy and convenient. On the Action Center, you can access a list of hot issues and send pre-written messages (or write your own) to your legislators to weigh in. You can also look up your senators and representative to see how they've voted on issues of importance to FRA shipmates. Both the *Action Center* and the *Communicate With Your Elected Officials* guide are free benefits brought to you by FRA. If you would like a copy of *Communicate With Your Elected Officials*, please e-mail [Eileen@fra.org](mailto:Eileen@fra.org) and include your name and mailing address.

**Communicate!**

FRA offers Communities on [www.fra.org](http://www.fra.org) to help shipmates keep in touch with their branch, communicate with HQ, and get information. Use the Communities and be involved! Login to [www.fra.org](http://www.fra.org) and click Communities. You will see the communities to which you belong — each branch and MALs have individual communities. There are also communities for *FRA Today* and *On Watch* readers, people concerned about health care, and more. This is a place to ask the experts or share your opinions or frustrations.

**Provide Input!**

FRA is very interested in hearing from you. There's always a survey available at [www.fra.org/survey](http://www.fra.org/survey). The surveys are quick, easy and help us share your concerns with lawmakers on Capitol Hill.

**NewsBytes**

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**Shipmates from USN Hospital Annex, Imola, Napa, Calif.**

1944 to 1945. Please contact James A. Atwood, 127 Clipper Bay Rd., Brunswick, GA 31523.

**PR1 Joe Young**

Last known duty station was VP-34 in Trinidad, BWI. Please contact Marvin R. Kubler, 4 Chatham St., Barnegat, NJ 08005.

**Carrier Crew in Vietnam, 1968**

I'm looking for anyone on board the carrier stationed off the coast of Vietnam in May of 1968, who can recall the choppers that took all 50 of the Marine Corps KIAs from Khe Sanh.

**All Icebreaker Muster**

May 13-18, 2012, Amelia Island, FL. Contact Louis Lariccia, 1 623-308-0093.

**Marine Corps Aviation Recon Association (MCARA)**

May 10-14, 2012, Nashville, TN. Contact Dana Nachtrieb, 719-207-4399, dcnachtrieb@bresnan.net.

**USS Alamo (LSD-33)**

April 22-24, 2012, San Antonio, TX. Contact Gary W. Moss, 5670 West Shore Drive, Pensacola, FL 32526, 850-944-3499, ponylake10@cox.net.

**USS Beatty (DD-756)**

September 10-16, 2012, Portland, Maine. Contact Tom Accuosti, PO Box 805, Southbury, CT 06488, 203-592-8556, ctaccuosti@gmail.com.

**USS Caiman (SS-323)**

May 7-10, 2012, San Antonio, TX. Contact Douglas W. Smith, 3835 B Maple Ave., Bremerton, WA 98310, 360-377-4763, dbrider@comcast.net.

Contact Don Ledbury, 203 Monte Ter., Monticello, FL 32344.

**Crew at Naval Exam Center**

I'm looking for anyone who served at the Naval Exam Center at Great Lakes, Ill., 1949 to 1954. Please contact Henry Worrells at henryworrells@embarqmail.com.

**GM3 Larry Mills**

He was stationed aboard the USS Blue (DD-744) in Long Beach, Calif., January 1955. Contact J.R. Buker at buje1257@frontier.com or P.O. Box 872, Wellsboro, Pa 16901.

**Richard (Dick) Robinson**

He was an IC electrician who was later selected for LDO and deep submergence program. I retired in 1975 as ICCS(SS) from the Submarine Force and my last command was the R.B. Russell (SSN-687). Would like to hear from him or anyone who knows his whereabouts. Contact Ron Ryland at rjssg574@md.metrocast.net

**Patrol Frigate (PF) Sailors, 1945-1953**

Please contact Joseph Bays at 206-293-8180 or by e-mail at jhbays@earthlink.net.

**USS Diphda (AKA-59)**

May 6-10, 2012, Tucson, AZ. Contact Judy (Coogan) Bentley, 21632 N. Chipmunk Trail, Woodhaven, MI 48183, 734-675-0148, judycoo@hotmail.com.

**USS Grenadier (SS 525, SS 210)**

May 20-23, 2012, Myrtle Beach, SC. Contact Reggie Thurlow, 1584 N Meadowcrest Blvd, Crystal River FL 34429, 800-418-9195, rcrici@embarqmail.com.

**USS Iwo Jima (LPH-2/LHD-7)**

June 6-10, 2012, Mclean, VA. Contact Robert G. McAnally, 152 Frissell Street, Hampton, VA 23663, 757-723-0317, yujack@megalink.net.

**USS New Jersey (BB-62)/USS New Jersey Veterans Organization**

August 8-12, 2012, Cherry Hill, NJ. Contact Ernest J. Dalton, 7143 Rolling Hills Lane, San Antonio, TX 78227, 210-275-7886, PS159@sbcglobal.net.

**USS Robison (DDG 12)**

September 6-9, 2012, Charleston, SC. Contact Jim Saeugling, 11096 E Roundup Dr, Dewey, AZ 86327-5400, 928-775-0991, ddg12assn@gmail.com.

**Graduates of Recruit Training Center (RTC) Orlando**

We are looking for RTC Orlando graduates, all years, male and female, to participate in the design and fielding of a Lone Sailor Navy Memorial at Blue Jacket Park, Orlando, Fla. This is the site of the former RTC "Grinder" and USS Blue Jacket. Little identifies the role of RTC in the transition of civilians from many parts of this great nation into patriotic, loyal, and professional U.S. Navy Sailors. Contact SCPO Mike Phillips at P.O. Box 782111, Orlando, FL 32826 or visit [www.lonesailorfl.com](http://www.lonesailorfl.com) for more information.

**USS Ticonderoga CVA 14, VAQ 130 Det 14**

Shipmates that were aboard during July and August of 1969. Please contact AT2 Alan Banek, abanek2215@gmail.com or 301 Cotton Lane, Alexander City, AL 35010.

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E-mail [fratoday@fra.org](mailto:fratoday@fra.org) or mail your request to: FRA, Looking for..., 125 N. West St., Alexandria, VA, 22314.

REUNIONS

**USS Skate (SSN-578)**

September 2-9, 2012, Norfolk, VA. Contact Ray Fritz, 5923 Lake Valley Road, Lake Wylie, SC 29710, 803-619-1121, RaysAbode@bellsouth.net.

**USS Towers (DDG-9)**

September 11-15, 2012, Boise, Idaho. Contact Bill Lobb, 3853 S. Carbondale, Meridian, Idaho 83642, 208-703-8367, btclobb@yahoo.com.

**USS Whitehurst (DE-634)**

October 9-11, 2012, Washington, DC. Contact Jim Howe, 113 Meadow Dr, Chehalis WA 98532-9667, 360-740-4229, jimnraehowe@yahoo.com.

**USS/USCG Edisto Reunion**

April 22-26, 2012, Indialantic Beach, FL. Contact Glenn Smith, P.O. Box 747, Mims, FL 32754, 321-269-5637, gdsmit@cfl.rr.com.

Members can post reunions online at [www.fra.org](http://www.fra.org), submit to [reunions@fra.org](mailto:reunions@fra.org) or mail to: FRA Reunions, 125 N. West St., Alexandria, VA 22314.

### BRANCH 126 JACKSONVILLE, FLA.

Then-RPSE Bobby Smith (far left) and Branch President J.J. Thomas (far right) initiated two new members, Henry Moreland and Herbert Pearce. Welcome, Shipmates!



### BRANCH 15 WALHALLA, S.C.

Branch President Tom Jurkovich (center) and Shipmate Homer Moss (right) spoke with visitors to FRA's information table during Octoberfest 2011 festivities.



### BRANCH 41 ROANOKE, VA.

Branch President Joe Black (left) congratulates Shipmate Billy Pugh on his 40 years of continuous FRA membership.



### BRANCH 202 COLUMBIA, S.C.

Branch Treasurer Tommy Brown (left) received his 45-year continuous FRA membership pin from Branch President James Turner. Shipmate Brown is 91 years old and attends branch meetings regularly. He had three ships blown out from under him at Pearl Harbor and has been the branch treasurer for decades.



### BRANCH 118 CAPE CORAL, FLA.

Shipmates Darrell, LaBarbera, Hope Hospice Volunteer Rosana Hutchison and Branch President Dick Phillips honored William Gallant (seated left), a veteran at the facility. He was joined by his friend Ray Malles (seated right).



### BRANCH 113 STOCKTON, CALIF.

Shipmate Daniel Crespo was recognized for his 50 years of continuous FRA membership by Branch President Zeb Motley.



### BRANCH 115 ALLENTOWN, PA.

FRA's Director of Membership Development Penny Collins congratulates Shipmate Joseph S. Wright on his retirement from the U.S. Coast Guard. Wright received a Certificate of Appreciation from FRA's East Coast Region.

### BRANCH 234 ANDERSON, S.C.

Following a presentation of \$1,000 to the Electric City Young Marines Unit, (l to r) Shipmate Sanders, Branch President Franklin Collins, Shipmates Bill McGregor and Leon Boyd pose with the future Marines and their Unit Commander Stephen Graham.



### BRANCH 20 GROTON, CONN.

Shipmate Joseph Stoklosa, 95, received his 60-year FRA membership pin and certificate from RPNEng Phil Justin. Joe is the last surviving shipmate who signed the documents to purchase the Branch 20 Home.



### BRANCH 5 NORFOLK, VA.

PNP Tom Leisher (left) presents a 55-year continuous FRA membership pin to PRPEC Ralph Holcombe at a recent branch meeting.

**To submit** a photo for *News From the Branches*, please e-mail a photo as an attachment in jpeg format to [FRAToday@fra.org](mailto: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.



NAME	BRANCH	NAME	BRANCH
Adams, Robert S, GMGC, USN	028	Hermoso, Cecilio E., USN	099
Adkins, Robert D, ADJ3, USN	MAL	Hines, John R, CPO, USN	MAL
Allen, Chester L, CWO4, USN	MAL	Huff, Ormond H, EMC, USN	366
Alton, Frank G, CPO(SS), USN	MAL	Hughes, Joseph V, BMC, USN	309
Ambrose, Walter R, MM1, USN	006		
Arnold, Arthur A, BM1, USCG	124	James, William G, TSGT, 159	
Arnsdorff, Sam B, ATC, USN	312	Jenkins, Harry J, ADR1, USN	MAL
		Jennings, Melvin L, YN1, USN	MAL
<b>Barr, Jack H, ADC, USN</b>	<b>245</b>	Johnson, Johnny, E. T., TMCS(SS), USN	245
Barratt, Norris S, MGYSGT, USMC	MAL	Johnson, Lyman, DK1, USN	049
Bartlett, Henry B, BMCS, USN	007	<b>Johnson, Ralph G, LT, USN</b>	<b>120</b>
Baynard, Bobby G, POC, USN	057	Joseph, Leroy, SKCS, USN	281
Beckwith, Gordon E, MUC, USN	024		
Berger, Donald L, EMC, USN	047	<b>Kurtz, Frank J, CWO, USN</b>	<b>004</b>
Boyer, George, PNC, USN	038		
		Langlois, Russell A, EN1, USN	342
Calato, Salvatore, CWO3, USNR	MAL	Larson, Robert B, EMC, USN	268
Callais, Charles C, GMGC, USN	MAL	Latimer, Richard L, 1STSGT, USMC	047
Carr, John A., MM1, USN	210	Lee, Ronald S, HTC, USN	MAL
Cebulski, Anthony A, AOC, USN	126	Lespron, Jesus R, ADJC, USN	312
Chapman, John, AE1, USNR	093		
Clark, James W, CGM, USN	005	<b>Macawile, Felix B, CPO, USN</b>	<b>046</b>
Cogburn, John H, PO1, USN	047	Macklin, Edward R, MS1, USN	MAL
Cronce, Edward W, AVCM, USN	099	Marine, Melbourne M, CMCS, USN	223
Crossno, Alvin L., BM2, USN	094	Marks, Kenneth C, AEC, USN	120
		Mellin, Frank L, ADRC, USN	010
De wispelaere, Edmond, MSC, USN	245	Milam, Lacy, SH1, USN	366
Deas, James E, ADCS, USN	086	Mimmich, Walter P, GMC, USN	115
<b>Degraffenreid, Floyd, RMCS, USN</b>	<b>032</b>	<b>Moore, Clarence C, AMC, USN</b>	<b>124</b>
Derry, Thomas, QMC, USN	293		
<b>Dias, Freeman, AOC, USN</b>	<b>MAL</b>	Nelson, Harlan C, AOC, USN	MAL
Dibiasi, Richard, POC, USNR	020		
<b>Drapczak, Stanley, ADC, USN</b>	<b>124</b>	Osiecki, Edward J., ABCM, USN	MAL
Driscoll, Joshua C, BT2, USN	219		
		Peterson, Charles F, AMSC, USN	273
Eadie, Robert W, AD1, USN	020	Phillips, Donald D, LT, USN	363
Eaton, Gerald E, HM1, USN	001	<b>Phillips, Robert L, YNCM, USN</b>	<b>309</b>
<b>Edmonds, B L, AOCM, USN</b>	<b>126</b>		
Edwards, William L, LCDR, USN	017	Rebholz, R J, CWO2, USN	182
Ellington, Bernice W, MCPO, USN	086	Riddle, Homer C, LT, USN	029
Evans, John L, IMC, USN	292	Risher, William F, USMC	026
		Rossa, Ray R, HMC, USN	MAL
Faulkner, Wallace N, PCCM, USN	290		
Figueroa, Michael, CTIC, USN	295	Sandifer, Homer A, PHCS, USN	MAL
Fleming, Arnold E, AMS1, USN	MAL	Schmitz, William W, AMH1, USN	163
Foster, Paul E, EM1, USN	099	Scott, James F, SKCS, USN	011
		Skillman, Francis R, RM1, USN	168
Gibbs, Randolph H, EMC, USN	099	Slaughter, Mike, AM1, USN	070
Glasser, William James, MMC, USN	026	Soblotne, Raymond William, BM1, USN	005
Grobe, Lee J, OMC, USN	018	Staley, Robert V, HMC, USN	101
Grove, Robert S, AEC, USN	124	Stetson, Frederick M, MSCS, USN	037
Gwyn, Leo O, USN	267	Surma, Edward S, YNC, USN	027
Haberski, Albert S, AT1, USN	071	Teghtmeyer, Francis E, AVCM, USN	230
Harder, Kenneth E, CWO4, USN	050	Tonnessen, Harry O, TDC, USN	210
Hargrave, Paul E, CDR, USN	049	Trombley, Daniel J, CS1, USN	312
<b>Hawkins, Robert L, ADCS, USN</b>	<b>MAL</b>		
Hebrock, John W, BMC, USN	040		



NAME	BRANCH
Tucker, Paul J., SGT, USMC	029
Vettel, Edward J., RDM3, USN	269
Vindhurst, Harold P, EOCS, USN	281
Wager, George F, AMHC, USN	066
Waldman, Frederick A, RMC(SS), USN	MAL
Walker, Ernest, YNCS, USN	MAL
Watkins, Ralph H, MSGT, USMC	MAL
Watters, William D, ADRC, USN	085
Watts, Donald, LCDR, USN	MAL
Weir, James F, BMC, USN	009
Welch, John J, PO2, USN	022
Wersebe, Delbert A, QMC, USN	203
Willard, Russell R, ENC, USN	MAL
Williams, Albert L, LT, USN	295

Names in **red** indicate 50 year continuous members.

No  
Contract

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"Well, I finally did it. I finally decided to enter the digital age and get a cell phone. My kids have been bugging me, my book group made fun of me, and the last straw was when my car broke down, and I was stuck by the highway for an hour before someone stopped to help. But when I went to the cell phone store, I almost changed my mind. The phones are so small I can't see the numbers, much less push the right one. They all have cameras, computers and a "global-positioning" something or other that's supposed to spot me from space. Goodness, all I want to do is to be able to talk to my grandkids! The people at the store weren't much help. They couldn't understand why someone wouldn't want a phone the size of a postage stamp. And the rate plans! They were complicated, confusing, and expensive... and the contract lasted for two years! I'd almost given up when a friend told me about her new Jitterbug phone. Now, I have the convenience and safety of being able to stay in touch... with a phone I can actually use."

**The cell phone that's right for me.** Sometimes I think the people who designed this phone and the rate plans had me in mind. The phone fits easily into my pocket, and flips open to reach from my mouth to my ear. The display is large and backlit, so I can actually see who is calling. With a push of a button I can amplify the volume, and if I don't know a number, I can simply push "0" for a friendly, helpful operator that will look it up and even dial it for me. The Jitterbug also reduces background noise, making the sound loud and clear. There's even a dial tone, so I know the phone is ready to use.

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Long Distance Calls	No add'l charge	No add'l charge
Voice Dial	FREE	FREE
Nationwide Coverage	Yes	Yes
Friendly Return Policy <sup>1</sup>	30 days	30 days

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in for years at a time or subject to termination fees. The U.S.-based customer service is second to none, and the phone gets service virtually anywhere in the country.

**Call now and receive a FREE gift when you order.** Try Jitterbug for 30 days and if you don't love it, just return it<sup>1</sup>. Why wait, the Jitterbug comes ready to use right out of the box. If you aren't as happy with it as I am, you can return it for a refund of the purchase price. Call now, the Jitterbug product experts are ready to answer your questions.

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## Message from the New England Regional President

**THE LEAVES HAVE CHANGED** color, there's a cool nip in the air and the Holidays have come and gone. The members of the New England Region were hard at work helping those in need during the Holidays.

They made baskets of food to be delivered to needy families in their communities and have also collected canned goods for local food pantries in Massachusetts, Maine, Connecticut and Rhode Island. Members of Unit 66, South Shores, South Weymouth, MA, collected and filled boxes with playing cards, notepads, beef jerky, holiday candy and hygiene products which were sent to our Men and Women in Afghanistan. The auxiliary members also visited and gave gifts to the patients in our veterans' hospitals. They donated toys and monies to the *Marine Corps Toys for Tots* program. I know these children have enjoyed a gift from "Santa." Our wonderful auxiliary members are so generous and giving of themselves to those who are less fortunate.

This year the National President Gini Larson has chosen for her project the *Susan G. Komen for the Cure* and the *Prostate Cancer Foundation*. I know there are members in our region and in other regions who had one of these diseases. We also have members who have it now. Let's help find a cure for these diseases by donating to the National President's Project. The Units in the New England Region will give their all to help in these worthy causes.

As we embark on this New Year let us remember our cardinal principles; Loyalty, Protection and Service. I am so proud to represent the New England Region as their Regional President again this year. Thank you members of the New England Region, Happy New Year and Hallelujah!



**DEBRA BARNES**  
*Regional President New England*



New England Region at National Convention in Kansas City, MO.  
Left to Right: Past National Chaplain Ellen Kotheimer, Quonset, Unit 42, Davisville, RI; PNP Georgia Gallagher, South Shores, Unit 66, South Weymouth, MA., Marion Sullivan, Unit 20, Groton, CT and PRP New England Cookie Loveless, Pinetree, Unit 156, Brunswick, ME.



New England PRP Robert Gallagher, Branch 3, Boston, MA, presented Debra Barnes with her Regional President's cover at installation in Kansas City, MO.



The simplest, most accurate watch on the planet!

# You never have to set this watch... in fact you never even have to look at it.

*This new Talking Atomic Watch is the ultimate in simplicity, accuracy, and practicality. It's accurate to within a billionth of a second... and it talks!*

I just threw my watch in the trash. I got it as a gift a while back—and it was something else. It had four different digital displays, about a dozen buttons, was waterproof to about a thousand feet, and I think it could even tell me the weather. I'll never know, though, because, like I said, it's in the trash. Turns out it couldn't do the one thing I want a watch to do... tell me the correct time. It always ran a little slow, which was bad enough, but there were so many displays and they were so small that I couldn't tell the time even if it was accurate. When I tried to reset it, I pushed the wrong button and set it on military time, and I couldn't figure out how to switch it back. That was the last straw. Now, I've got a great watch, the Talking Atomic Watch from *firstSTREET*. It's super-accurate, easy-to-read, and it will even tell... yes tell ... me the time. Best of all, I'll never have to set it! This is the watch I've been waiting for.

## Whether you travel or not... this watch is a necessity.

This Talking Atomic Watch from *firstSTREET* maintains its phenomenal accuracy because it is designed to receive a signal from the US Atomic Clock in Fort Collins, Colorado. This clock is the standard for time measurement worldwide... it can go 20 million years without gaining or losing a second! It never needs to be set, because it automatically adjusts itself for daylight savings time and leap years.

## Easy to read, even easier to hear.

The most accurate watch in the world is of no use if you can't read it. This timepiece is designed to tell you the correct time... anytime. It features a clear, uncluttered analog display that you won't need reading glasses to see. Best of all, you can press a button and it will tell you the time in a clear, easy-to-understand voice. So whether you're driving to an appointment or dining in a candlelit restaurant ... you are

*"I bought the Atomic Talking Watch for my father, who is 95 years old and can barely see. The "talking" feature was the main reason I got it for him, since he can no longer "see" a regular watch. I was attracted to the "atomic" feature because all my father has to do is to place it in a window to update, if necessary.*

*He uses the watch all of the time and shows it off to all of his friends more than once... and has come to heavily rely upon it. So much so, that I bought him a "backup" talking watch just in case it would happen to fail. However, it has been running strong for the past 2 years."*

R. Humphreys

*"Ten-ten AM,  
Thursday,  
January 5th,  
2012"*



sure to know the exact time. Press the button again and it will even tell you the day and date if you want. There's even an automatic hourly chime.

## Try it for yourself... it's risk-free.

The US Atomic Clock cost billions to build and maintain, but you can have the next best thing for less than one hundred dollars. Thanks to a special arrangement with the manufacturer, we can offer you this watch at a special price with our exclusive home trial. If you are not completely amazed by the accuracy and quality of this product, simply return it within 90 days for a "No Questions Asked" refund of the product purchase price. Call now.

**Talking Atomic Watch** was ... ~~\$89.95~~

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helped me out after  
I got diagnosed"*

**LeRoy Riddell**

1935 - 2008

U.S. Navy Retired

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and the Fleet Reserve

Former National President of the  
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