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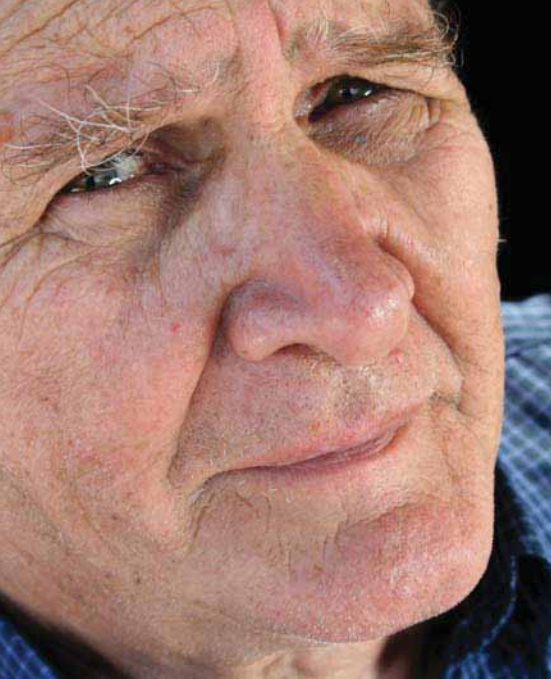


Word Warriors

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MESOTHELIOMA



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Featured

18 WORD WARRIORS

Napoleon once said, "The secret of war lies in the communication." More than 400 Navajo and other American Indians proved just that by using their native languages to defeat the enemy in World War II.

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LOYALTY, PROTECTION AND SERVICE

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ON THE COVER

Corporal Henry Bake, Jr., USMC and Private First Class George H. Kirk, USMC were Navajo Indians serving with a Marine Signal Unit. They are operating a portable radio set in a clearing they've hacked in the dense jungle close behind the front lines. Photographed in December 1943 at Bougainville. U.S. Marine Corps photograph.

Letter to SECNAV



Jeffrey A. Gilmartin

The FRA National President wrote the following letter to the Secretary of the Navy, Ray Mabus, in response to concerns voiced by members of FRA:

Dear Secretary Mabus:

Members of the Fleet Reserve Association understand that the procedures and practices involved in Navy ship naming are the products of evolution and tradition rather than legislation. They also understand the names for new ships are personally decided by the Secretary of the Navy, conditioned by such factors as the name categories for ship types now being built; the distribution of geographic names of ships of the Fleet; names borne by previous ships which distinguished themselves in service; names recommended by individuals and groups; and names of naval leaders, national figures, and deceased members of the Navy and Marine Corps who have been honored for heroism in war or for extraordinary achievement in peace.

Our members are very disappointed about the naming of several new Navy ships which breaks with long-established traditions associated with different types of vessels. The naming of a Dry Cargo Ship, traditionally named for famous explorers or pioneers, for a person who referred to his two years in the Navy as "the worst two years of my life"; an Amphibious Transport Dock, traditionally named for cities honoring pioneers, named for a member of Congress most famously known for falsely accusing U.S. Marines of intentionally killing innocent civilians in cold blood, referred to as "One of the 20 most corrupt members of Congress;" and under investigation by the FBI for possible ethics violations; and a Littoral Combat Ship, breaking from the tradition of other ships of the Independence Class, named after a member of Congress who never served in the military who was maimed by gunshot while hosting a constituent meeting. Many of our members believe ships should be named for heroes, not victims.

FRA is a non-partisan, non-profit professional military organization representing enlisted active, Reserve, retired and veterans of the United States Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard.

Your attention to these concerns is appreciated.

Sincerely,
JEFFREY A. GILMARTIN
National President

Jeffrey Gilmartin is the national president of the Fleet Reserve Association and is a member of FRA Branch 207 in Dale City, Va.

FRAtoday

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VOLUME 91 NUMBER 7



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Joe Barnes

A Prescription for Higher Pharmacy Fees

THE HOUSE APPROVED ITS version of the FY 2013 National Defense Authorization Act in May and the Senate Armed Services Committee completed its version of the legislation shortly thereafter and it awaits consideration by the full Senate at press time.

As previously reported, the Department of Defense's (DoD) 2013 budget request included significantly higher health care fees for all retirees that were tiered based on total retired pay. These included first-ever TRICARE for Life (TFL) and TRICARE Standard enrollment fees, much higher TRICARE Prime and pharmacy co-pays, and future adjustments for all of these pegged to the

annual health care inflation rate within a few years.

The House remained silent on most of these proposals, which is good news for current and future retirees. However, it did approve a five-year pilot program requiring TFL beneficiaries to use the home delivery option (rather than retail pharmacies) for at least a year for their prescriptions. This cost-saving measure is preferable to the broader and more onerous DoD proposal to authorize significantly higher pharmacy co-pays.

The Senate Armed Services Committee also chose not to authorize the higher enrollment fees referenced above for military retirees. However,

the panel did not object to DoD's plan for significantly higher pharmacy co-pays to eventually be indexed to healthcare inflation.

In addressing this complex issue, it's important to remember that DoD already has authority to increase pharmacy co-pays to the higher levels proposed in the 2013 budget proposal. And noteworthy to any discussion about healthcare fees are future adjustments and the associated index that will serve as the baseline in determining annual increases.

The House bill links future adjustments to the Consumer Price Index (CPI), which tracks inflation rates and is the basis for military retired pay adjustments and TRICARE Prime enrollment fee adjustments authorized last year. By contrast, healthcare inflation is significantly higher than the CPI and currently exceeds six percent annually.

Looking ahead, there's good news about halting drastic fee hikes, and bad news regarding the outlook for pharmacy co-pays. The adjacent Military Coalition chart, prepared by the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA), clearly reflects the significant pharmacy co-pay differences between the House and DoD/Senate plans through FY 2017.

Although the full Senate has yet to debate and vote on the Committee version of the 2013 defense authorization, it's clear that the House pharmacy co-pays plan is much less costly for individuals and the best option for beneficiaries. If this plan prevails in conference, TFL beneficiaries will be required to use the home-delivery option for at least one year. FRA understands that this plan limits delivery options, however many beneficiaries may come to appreciate the added convenience and cost saving of home delivery.

continued on page 9

DoD/Senate (top numbers) vs House-Passed Rx Copays (bottom row numbers, bold)

Retail Meds						
	FY12	FY13	FY14*	FY15*	FY16*	FY17*
Generic	\$5	\$5 \$5	\$6 \$5.15	\$7 \$5.30	\$8 \$5.46	\$9 \$5.62
Brand	\$12	\$26 \$17	\$28 \$17.51	\$30 \$18.04	\$32 \$18.58	\$34 \$19.14
Non-Formulary	\$25	— \$44	— \$45.32	— \$46.68	— \$48.08	— \$49.52
Mail-Order Meds						
	FY12	FY13	FY14*	FY15*	FY16*	FY17*
Generic	0	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	\$9 0
Brand	\$9	\$26 \$13	\$28 \$13.39	\$30 \$13.79	\$32 \$14.20	\$34 \$14.63
Non-Formulary	\$25	\$51 \$43	\$54 \$44.29	\$58 \$45.62	\$62 \$46.99	\$66 \$48.40

*Assumes 3% annual COLAs

Bottom Line: Compared to the DoD/Senate plan, the House-passed plan would:

- Cut retail copays by about 40% below DoD plan
- Keep access to non-formulary meds in retail stores
- Cut mail-order copays by more than 50% for brand-name meds
- Cut mail-order copays by 25% for non-formulary meds
- Keep mail-order copays at zero for generic meds

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Concerns about Retiree Healthcare

I feel military Retirees just cannot catch a break. The FY2013 DoD Budget details a proposal to start an enrollment fee for TRICARE for Life [that] is a double/triple whammy. In order to use TFL, a retiree must sign up for and pay for Medicare Part B and that payment is also being increased. If you don't sign up for Part B, you can't renew your ID card, so you'll no longer have insurance and your ID card is no longer valid — thus, you also lose your military exchange/base access privileges and probably your retirement pay. The military really gets screwed.

I did not stay in the Marine Corps for the retirement benefits, but I surely expected my country to fulfill its obligations as I did mine.



Lauren D. Ayers Jr.

FRA Response: *Military retirees who do not enroll in Medicare Part B are not eligible for TRICARE-for-Life benefits, but that is the only retirement benefit affected by Medicare enrollment. Those who choose healthcare through their current employer or simply elect not to enroll in Medicare are not denied access to commissaries and exchanges, MWR programs and other privileges, nor is their retired pay impacted.*

In your May 2012 issue you outlined who (Medicare, TRICARE for Live (TFL) or a combination of those plus the recipient) would pay for medical services. How is one to know if neither Medicare nor TFL will pay for a procedure?

I was recently sent to an emergency room for excessive bleeding and was admitted to the hospital. During my stay numerous tests were performed that neither TFL nor Medicare would pay for, but I wouldn't have any idea until I received a bill.

Furthermore, when my wife and I decided to make the Navy a career in 1957, one of the factors that had a tremendous affect on the decision was the promise of free healthcare and prescription drugs for the both of us, and dental care for me for the rest of our lives. We now pay close to \$200 per month for healthcare and over \$80 per month for dental care.

We were there when they needed us, in Korea, Vietnam, numerous deployments and being constantly ready during the so-called Cold War. Now that we are no longer needed, what do we get but broken promises? Makes one wonder if the sacrifices we made were worth it.

Mr. & Mrs James E. Howe

Senator Lindsey Graham (S.C.), the ranking member of the Senate Armed Services' Subcommittee on Military Personnel, recently stated, "I don't believe anybody was promised free lifetime medical care. That's a popular myth ... But, you

know, there was never any contract with anybody that, for the rest of your life, you will get free medical care. That's not part of the deal and was never part of the deal."

Tricare for Life has played an intricate part in the medical care I receive since I retired from the U.S. Navy after 22 years of service. Enlisting in 1960, I was promised free medical care, even though it may have been a [promise only] on the recruiter's part. Things are just going to get worse before they get any better. We can thank our government for the predicament we're in to begin with.

J.H. Snyder

As is the case with all military retirees, when I turned 65 I was told I had to go on Medicare Part B if I wanted to use TRICARE for Life. Of course, this requires paying the Medicare fees, which is one more hole in that "free health care for life" promise. Imagine my surprise when I was told by my civilian health care provider that Medicare will not pay for an annual physical, and that TFL wouldn't pay on any medical treatment that Medicare won't pay first. I immediately called TRICARE and that information was confirmed.

Based on the FRA response to shipmates John J. Bury and B.J. Adams in the May 2012 Shipmate Forum, it would appear that the information that TFL won't pay if Medicare doesn't pay may be in error. Can you please clear this up? Right now there are a number of retired military where I work who have been told that TFL won't cover if Medicare won't pay.

Thanks to the FRA for being there for us.

Vin Faris

FRA Response: *Excellent question, Shipmate! As a general rule, TFL pays after Medicare, however there are instances where TFL will pay for services not covered by Medicare. As an example, Medicare does not cover vaccinations against shingles, but TFL will often cover a portion of the cost. If a medically necessary service is not covered by Medicare, the patient is required to pay a \$150 deductible for each fiscal year. Once the deductible has been met, TFL will pay 75 percent of the remaining cost of the service and the patient is responsible for the rest, up to a maximum out-of-pocket cost of \$3,000. If you believe your medical treatments may be covered by TFL, please contact WPS, the company that processes TFL claims, at 1-866-773-0404. Beneficiaries who reside overseas should visit <http://www.tricare-overseas.com/> for further claims information.*

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



John Davis

Budget Battles Target Retirement Benefits

AS THIS EDITION OF *FRA Today* goes to press the House has approved its version of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA, H.R. 4310) and the Senate Armed Services Committee has marked up its version. The Senate measure (S. 3254) awaits consideration by the full Senate. The annual Defense authorization bill addresses many issues and Defense-related programs, including pay, healthcare and benefits for active duty, Reserve and retired personnel, their families and survivors. As these bills advance, there is growing anxiety among lawmakers about the inevitability and impact of severe automatic budget cuts (sequestration) scheduled to take effect in July 2013 in accordance with provisions of the Budget Control Act of 2011. Sequestration would further cut Defense spending beyond reductions proposed in the Administration's FY 2013 budget and beyond. FRA agrees with Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta, who said these cuts "would do catastrophic damage to our military, hollowing out the force and degrading its ability to protect the country." Defense spending accounts for 17 percent of the federal budget, but will shoulder 50 percent of the overall sequestration cuts unless Congress excludes DoD from the mandated reductions.

The Administration's FY 2013 budget includes plans to implement drastic increases in TRICARE enrollment fees and pharmacy co-pays for all military retirees. These automatic annual increases would erode the value of retirement pay over the years and would eventually outpace cost-of-living-adjustment (COLA) increases that are pegged to inflation. Congress did not rubber stamp the Administration's budget and, as usual, approved some changes and ignored or modified others.

The House bill (H.R. 4310) and associated costs exceed spending limits set by law, which has prompted the Administration to threaten a veto. The legislation does not authorize drastic increases to TRICARE enrollment fees, the higher pharmacy co-pays proposed in the bill are smaller than requested and the measure includes an

important provision to limit future co-pay increases to the Consumer Price Index (CPI). (It is also important to note that DoD currently has the authority to increase these co-payments without congressional approval.) The House version also includes language that prohibits the establishment of a commission that would propose changes to the military retirement benefit. Read the NED Perspective column (on page 5) for additional information on pharmacy fees addressed in both bills, and a more detailed summary of key personnel issues addressed in the House bill is available on page 8 of the June issue of *FRA Today*.

The legislative text of the Senate Armed Services Committee's version of the NDAA is not yet available; however FRA's Legislative Team has learned the measure includes provisions that:

- Establish a pay and retirement commission to review benefits, but prohibit benefit cuts for those currently serving or already receiving retired pay;
- Do not authorize DoD proposals to drastically increase TRICARE Prime enrollment fees, and create new enrollment fees for TRICARE Standard and TRICARE-for-Life beneficiaries;
- Allow DoD to increase TRICARE pharmacy co-pays per DoD's plan (does not require legislation);
- Authorize a 1.7-percent annual increase in active duty and Reserve pay;
- Do not authorize another Base Relocation and Closure (BRAC) Commission to close military bases;
- Require DoD to report unit and individual dwell time between deployments.

After the full Senate approves its version of the legislation, a conference committee will be appointed to resolve differences between it and the House measure. The resulting conference report must then be approved by both chambers and signed by the President.

Shipmates are urged to use the Action Center at www.fra.org to ask their legislators to weigh in on provisions that would devalue military service.

TRICARE ISSUES

Medicare/TRICARE Doc Fix Bill Introduced

Representatives Allyson Schwartz (Pa.) and Joe Heck (Nev.) recently introduced the "Medicare Physician Payment Innovation Act" (H.R. 5707) that would resolve the ongoing debate regarding Medicare/TRICARE physician reimbursement rates. The measure seeks to permanently repeal the Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR) formula currently used to establish these rates, which are scheduled to be cut by 30 percent effective July 1, 2013. The bill proposes that 2012 payment levels be maintained until December 31, 2013, and thereafter, rates would be adjusted over a five-year transition period to create a more predictable payment system ("Doc Fix") for physicians by 2018.

Members are urged to use the FRA Action Center at www.fra.org to ask their representatives to support this bipartisan legislation.

FRA Meets with House Minority Leader

FRA's Director of Legislative Programs John Davis and representatives from 24 other military and veterans' organizations participated in a roundtable discussion hosted by House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (Calif.). The meeting focused on the impact of sequestration, proposed increases in TRICARE fees for all retirees, access to mental health treatment, and employment concerns for veterans, Reservists, and military spouses.

FRA specifically asked lawmakers to exclude DoD from sequestration and enact legislation (H.R. 812, H.R. 3612) that would amend VA policies that limit the ability of "Blue Water" veterans to file for disability benefits related to health concerns resulting from Agent Orange exposure while they served off the coast of Vietnam.

Eighteen other lawmakers attended the event including House Minority Whip Rep. Stenny Hoyer (Md.), ranking members of the House Armed Services Military Personnel Subcommittee Rep. Susan Davis (Calif); the House Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Subcommittee Rep. Sanford Bishop (Ga.); and House Budget Committee Chris Van Hollen (Md.).

NED PERSPECTIVE continued from page 5

Current threats to military pay and benefits are real and much more serious than in recent years. FRA is working hard to address these threats and, as always, grassroots support is essential to advancing or defeating legislation associated with personnel programs and other issues. I strongly urge all shipmates, their spouses and family members to track what's

happening on Capitol Hill through FRA's print and electronic publications, and weigh in regularly with their respective U.S. representative and senators via the FRA Action Center at www.fra.org. Urge support or opposition for all proposals that impact pay, healthcare, benefits and quality-of-life programs for those currently serving and those who've served in the past.

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

TRICARE Legislation Introduced

Senators Frank Lautenberg (N.J.) and Marco Rubio (Fla.) introduced legislation (S. 3203) that seeks to protect TRICARE beneficiaries from excessive and unfair enrollment fee increases and significant hikes in pharmacy co-pays. The "Military Health Care Protection Act" recognizes that military service is unlike other civilian occupations and associated healthcare benefits are earned through 20 or more years of arduous service and sacrifice.

FRA's support is cited in a press release from Senator Lautenberg's office, noting that the legislation would "establish that the percentage of increase in certain military health care fees in any given year cannot exceed the percentage of increase in military retired pay. This would protect military retirees, surviving spouses, and their families from undue financial burden."

Lautenberg previously introduced similar legislation in the 109th and 110th Congresses and amendments to curb TRICARE fee increases.

Members are urged to use the FRA Action Center at www.fra.org to contact their senators on this important issue.

GI Bill Protections Implemented

President Obama recently signed an executive order requiring that institutions of higher learning provide information about dropout rates and opportunities for financial aid, as well as protections for active duty personnel, veterans and their family members from unethical recruiting practices. There has been growing concern on Capitol Hill that some for-profit schools had been overcharging and misleading veterans and service members on the benefits of their educational curriculum. The executive order creates a complaint system for military and veterans receiving educational benefits and a mechanism to refer the complaints to the appropriate government agency to investigate any complaints. For more information on this story go to www.consumerfinance.gov/students/knowbeforeyouowe/.

ACTIVE DUTY ISSUES

FRA Statement on Coast Guard Budget

The FRA recently submitted a statement regarding the proposed FY 2013 Coast Guard budget to the Senate Appropriations' Homeland Security Subcommittee, in conjunction with a hearing on the Coast Guard budget. The Association called for Coast Guard funding parity with Department of Defense (DoD) personnel programs, which remains a high priority for FRA. The statement also notes continuing challenges within the Coast Guard to adequately fund previously authorized programs and FRA's deep concern about the impact "sequestration" (automatic cuts mandated by the 2011 Budget Control Act) will have on Coast Guard programs, unless Congress intervenes before July 2013.

Other issues addressed included adequate housing, access to child care, and sufficient end strength for operational commitments. A copy of the full statement is available at www.fra.org/testimony

Memorial Day Observances

FRA's National President Jeff Gilmartin represented the Association at Memorial Day ceremonies at Arlington National Cemetery on Monday, May 28. FRA joined other national military and veterans organizations in honoring the men and women who have died in service to our nation by laying a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknowns. Branches from the East Coast Region's Central Liaison Committee also sponsored a ceremony at the U.S. Navy Memorial in Washington, D.C., and other FRA branches and shipmates participated in Memorial Day ceremonies across the country to pay tribute to America's fallen heroes.

On Saturday and Sunday (May 26 and 27), shipmates from the D.C. area, including Past National President James Scarbro and members of the FRA National Headquarters (NHQ) team, staffed an information booth at Rolling Thunder, an annual motorcycle tribute in the nation's capital to show the country and the world that Vietnam POWs and MIAs are not forgotten.

House Passes Child Custody Protections

In an overwhelming vote (390-2), the House recently approved legislation that amends the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA) to include protections for child custody arrangements of parents who are deployed in support of a contingency operation. If a motion to change a child's custody arrangement is filed while a parent is deployed, no court may modify the existing custody judgment, except if there is clear and convincing evidence that it is in the best interest of the child. The FRA-supported "Servicemember Family Protection Act" (H.R. 4201), sponsored by Reps. Michael Turner (Ohio) and Rob Andrews (N.J.), also prohibits any court from considering a member's past or future absences due to deployments in determining child custody disputes. The bill now moves to the Senate for further deliberations.

Members are urged to use the FRA Action Center at www.fra.org to contact their senators on this important issue.

DoD, CFPB Partnership Protects Service Members

Defense Department (DoD) and Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) officials recently signed an agreement that underscores their partnership in protecting the financial concerns of service members. The DoD and CFPB will work together to monitor market trends directed at service members and their families, coordinate consumer protection measures, identify risky small-dollar loans, and explore ways to improve laws related to financial protections for military members and their families.

The Principles of Cooperation between the DoD and the CFPB include the following goals:

- Protecting service members and their families from illegal consumer financial practices and products;
- Enabling the DoD and CFPB to provide input to one other to reduce financial risk for service members and their families;
- Working together to address consumer financial concerns of military members and their families;
- Reducing risk in the small-dollar lending market; and
- Supporting financial literacy among service members and their families.

House Panel Reviews Military and VA Mental Health Programs

FRA staff attended a recent meeting of the Congressional Military Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Caucus to discuss current mental health programs. This Caucus, co-chaired by Representatives Tim Murphy (Penn.) and Grace Napolitano (Calif.), serves as an informal group of lawmakers who are dedicated to discussing, understanding, and advancing the issues pertaining to military mental health and suicide prevention. This bipartisan Caucus hosted experts from the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Veterans Administration (VA) to discuss the ongoing mental health crisis in the military and what is being done to address it.

In related news the Medical Surveillance Monthly Report (MSMR) for April 2012 indicated that the single biggest diagnosis category for active duty members to be hospitalized is mental disorders (21.9 percent). In 2011 there was more hospitalization for mental disorders than any other category (14.9 percent). In 2007 and 2009 the rate was 10.1 percent and 10.4 percent, respectively. FRA has repeatedly highlighted this issue in testimony and in discussions with legislators and their staff.

For more information about the Caucus go to:

<http://militarymentalhealthsuicidepreventioncaucus-ryan.house.gov/about-us>

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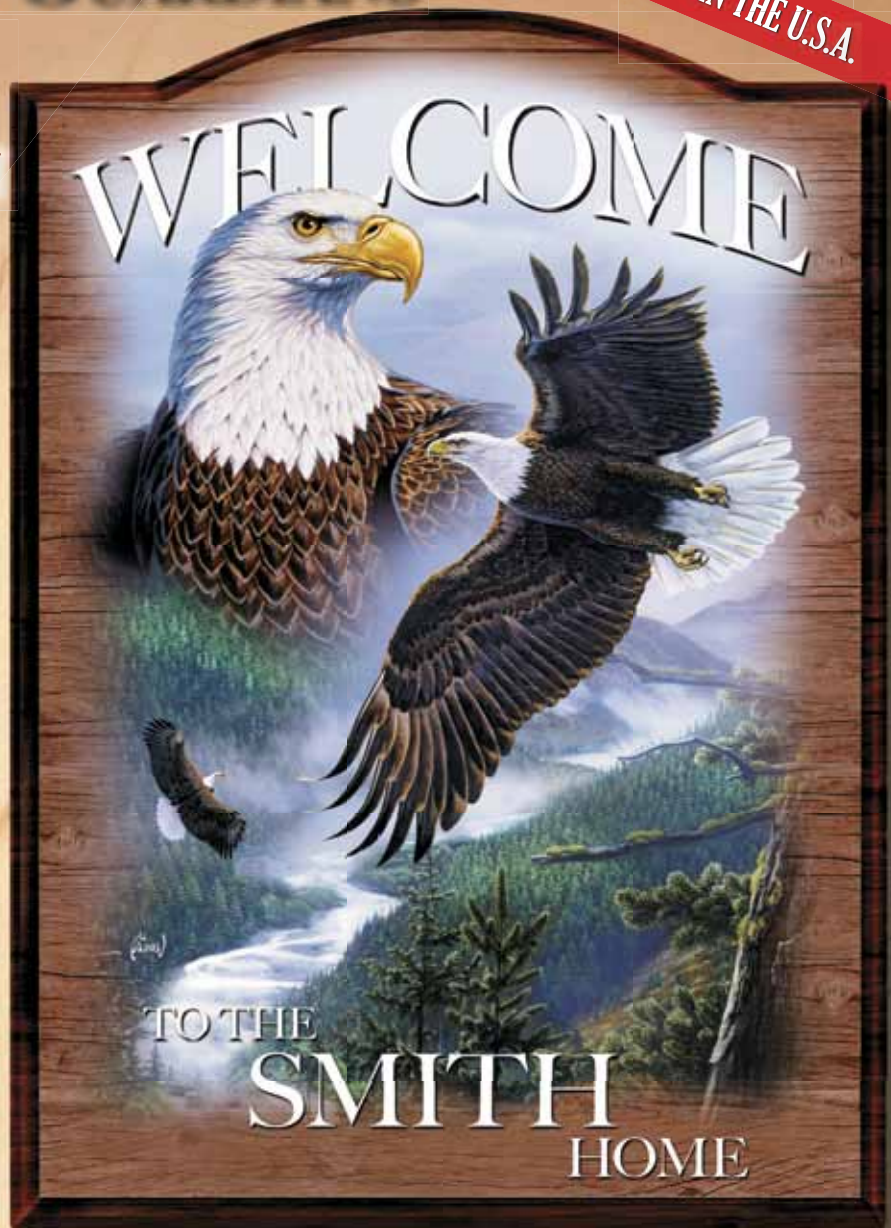
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A limited number of *The Soaring Guardians* Personalized Welcome Signs will be hand-crafted, and strong demand is expected for this edition, which has been created in cooperation with acclaimed artist Al Agnew. Interested clients are advised to act now to avoid disappointment. Order yours today, payable in four installments of only \$24.98 each, for a total of \$99.95*. Send no money now. Just complete the Reservation Application (including the name to be personalized) and return it today!

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VETERANS ISSUES

Senate Panel Discusses VA Claims Delays, DoD Disability Ratings

The Senate Veterans Affairs Committee held a hearing on the continued increase in wait times for service members to receive determinations of their medical disability ratings and associated compensation. Issues discussed included the challenges facing the Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES) established by the Department of Defense (DoD) and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), which was developed to improve the disability evaluation process for wounded, ill or injured service members.

Although IDES was intended to ensure that no disability claim would take more than 295 days to adjudicate, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) indicates that disability cases for active duty service members are currently taking an average of 394 days to complete. Although the IDES system is an improvement over the previous claims processing system, VA and DoD staff testifying at the hearing recognize serious problems with IDES.

FRA is deeply concerned about the growing backlog of claims at the VA, and has repeatedly emphasized this problem in its testimony and in meetings with legislators and their staff. Those service members injured in service to our country deserve accurate, consistent and timely disability determinations.

In related news, Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta and VA Secretary Eric K. Shinseki announced a milestone in the Integrated Electronic Health Record (iEHR) effort. Initial capabilities of iEHR will be rolled out in 2014 at two test sites (San Antonio, Texas, and Hampton Roads, Va.), where DoD and VA provide medical care to thousands of service members and veterans. After years of speculation on making records "interoperable," the secretaries are also reaffirming 2017 as the target date for full iEHR operability.

For more information on iEHR, visit www.defense.gov/news/EHRDoDVAFactSheet.pdf

Petition to Help Camp Lejeune Marines and their Families

Retired Marine Corps Sgt. Jerry Ensminger has started a petition on Change.org asking the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Congress to provide medical care for the 200,000 people who lived on the Marine Corps base at Camp Lejeune, N.C., during the three decades that water on the base was poisoned by cancer-causing chemicals. Ensminger's petition calls on VA Secretary Eric Shinseki and the chairs of the House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committees, Rep. Jeff Miller (Fla.) and Sen. Patty Murray (Wash.), respectively, to authorize the VA to provide medical care for the families who were stationed at Camp Lejeune between 1957–1987, a 30-year period when water on the base was contaminated. The contamination at the base has been well-documented through the years and VA has been slow to respond to calls for medical help for affected veterans and their families. To sign the petition, go to: <http://www.change.org/petitions/health-care-now-for-military-families-poisoned-at-camp-lejeune>.

After VA Secretary Shinseki declared it "premature" to provide healthcare to these veterans, Miller, Murray and Ranking Members Rep. Bob Filner (Calif) and Sen. Richard Burr sent a letter asking President Obama to intervene on the matter. The letter, in part, says, "There is enough scientific evidence already that warrants giving the benefit of the doubt to those who need help now."

FRA supports the Janey Ensminger Act (H.R. 1742), sponsored by Rep. Brad Miller (N.C.), that authorizes VA health care for former military veterans and family members stationed at Camp Lejeune for three decades beginning in 1957, when the water at the base was acknowledged to contain carcinogens. Members are urged to visit the FRA Action Center at www.fra.org to ask their representative to support this legislation.

FRA also addressed this issue in testimony before the House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committees, and in discussions with legislators and their staff. The Camp Lejeune water problem was also the topic of a feature story in the June issue of *FRA Today*, which is available at www.fra.org/publications.

VA Eliminates Copayment for Telehealth Care

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has recently announced it will no longer charge veterans a copayment when they receive care in their homes from VA health professionals using video conferencing. This change will primarily benefit veterans with limited mobility, such as spinal cord injury patients. Whenever medically appropriate, VA will make the home the preferred place of care for veterans to ensure timely and convenient access to VA services. VA data indicates that expanded use of technology in the home enables patients with chronic health conditions, such as diabetes, chronic heart failure and hypertension, to live independently and actively engage in managing their health and prevents avoidable hospitalization of patients who otherwise might need long-term institutional care.

For more information about telehealth, visit www.telehealth.va.gov/

House Subcommittee Discusses Prosthetics

The House Veterans Affairs' Oversight and Investigation Subcommittee recently held a hearing to examine the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) prosthetic program and its procurement process. The subcommittee heard testimony concerning VA's proposal to change procurement processes for prostheses which could result in prosthetics funding being used for other purposes. FRA has repeatedly requested adequate funding for the prosthetic program in testimony before the House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committee. VA's research must focus on improving treatments for conditions that are unique to veterans. Medical and prosthetic research is one of the most successful aspects of all VA medical programs.

For more info go to: <http://veterans.house.gov/press-release/subcommittee-questions-va-prosthetic-contracting-practices>

Feel Like You're Defying Gravity

This is my story

I used to be more active. I used to run, play basketball, tennis; football... I



was more than a weekend warrior. I woke up every day filled with life! But now, in my late 30's, I spend most of my day in the office or sacked out in front of the TV. My energy has fizzled and I'm embarrassed to admit that I've grown a spare tire (I'm sure it's hurting my love life). Nowadays I rarely walk. For some reason it's just harder now. Gravity has done a job on me.

Wear them and you'll know

But that's when a friend told me about a new kind of shoe. A shoe biomechanically engineered to make standing and walking on hard surfaces like concrete, tile and linoleum easy. They defy the force of gravity by absorbing harmful impact and propel you forward maximizing energy return. The longer he talked, the more sense it made. He was even wearing a pair himself!

Excitement swept through my body

I received my package from GravityDefyer.com and rushed to tear it open like a kid at Christmas. Inside I found the most amazing shoes I had ever seen – different than most athletic shoes. Sturdy construction. Cool colors. Nice lines... I was holding a miracle of technology. This was the real thing.

GDefy Benefits

- Absorbs Harmful Shock
- Have Instant Comfort
- Improve Energy Return
- Appear Taller
- Cools Feet
- Reduces Foot Odor
- Customize Your Fit
Accommodate most orthotics



Energy
without
the can!

I put them on and all I could say was, "WOW!" In minutes I was out the door. I was invincible; tireless in my new Gravity Defyer shoes.

Customer Satisfaction Speaks for Itself!

4 out of 5 customers purchase a 2nd pair within 3 months.

Years of feeling exhaustion seemed to slip away. It was as if my legs had been replaced with super-powered bionics. At last, I was back in the game. Gravity has no power over me!

Nothing to lose: Start your 30 Day Trial Today!

So, my friend, get back on your feet like I did. Try Gravity Defyer for yourself and live better, one step at a time.



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For ultimate comfort.



REBOUND PROPELS YOU FORWARD
Maximize energy return.

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Twin Stabilizers

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Rugged Polymer Sole

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Rocker construction protects metatarsal bones and aids fluid stepping motions



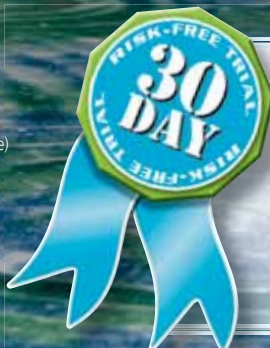
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COMPARISON OF THE HOUSE AND SENATE NDAA BILLS

The House has passed its version of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA-H.R. 4310). The Senate version of the NDAA (S. 3254) has been approved by the Senate Armed Services Committee and is awaiting consideration by the full Senate.

The chart provides a comparison of key provisions associated with FRA's legislative agenda. What is notable about both bills is what is not in them. Neither bill authorizes new TRICARE enrollment fee increases for military retirees (Prime, Standard and TRICARE-for-Life) and neither bill addresses additional rounds of Base Realignment and Closures (BRAC) proposed in the Administration's FY 2013 budget. Although the full Senate has yet to debate its version of the legislation and amendments are yet to be filed, at press time neither bill addresses improvements for concurrent receipt; repeal of SBP/DIC offset, and other improvements the Association supports.

After the Senate approves its bill, a conference committee will resolve the differences between the two bills. Funding constraints, the threat of sequestration (further automatic across-the-board budget cuts), and veto threats will impact the final bill.

ISSUE	H.R. 4310*	S. 3254**	FRA POSITION
TRICARE Fee Increase	Does not authorize new TRICARE fee increases	Does not authorize new TRICARE fee increases	<i>FRA opposes further TRICARE fee increases proposed by DoD for 2013 and beyond</i>
Pharmacy Co-pay Increases	Authorizes higher pharmacy co-pays that are less than DoD proposed and limits future increases to annual retired COLA	Allows DoD to significantly increase co-pays with future adjustments pegged to health care inflation.	<i>FRA opposes higher pharmacy co-pays and the House provision is less onerous to beneficiaries with future adjustments linked to CPI</i>
Earned Healthcare Benefits for Retirees	States that healthcare benefits are earned with 20 or more years of military service	No similar provision	<i>FRA supports House provision clarifying that retiree healthcare benefits are earned benefits</i>
TFL Home Delivery	Authorizes a five-year pilot program for TFL prescription home delivery. Beneficiaries could opt out of program after one year.	No similar provision	<i>FRA supports home delivery pilot program in lieu of TFL and other enrollment fees and higher pharmacy co-pays</i>
BRAC-like Pay and Retirement Commission	Does not authorize creation of BRAC-like retirement commission	Authorizes "fast-track" BRAC-type commission to review retirement benefits and active duty pay; excludes currently serving and retirees	<i>FRA opposes BRAC-like commission that bypasses oversight and expertise of key committee and subcommittees</i>
Unified Medical Command	Mandates a unified medical command	No similar provision	<i>FRA supports unified medical command as a major cost-savings TRICARE initiative</i>

COMPARISON OF THE TWO NDAA BILLS

ISSUE	H.R. 4310*	S. 3254**	FRA POSITION
Sequestration	No similar provision	Requires DoD to submit a detailed report to House and Senate Armed Services Committees on impact of sequestration by Jan. 2, 2013	<i>FRA supports DoD exclusion from sequestration</i>
Pay and Bonuses	Authorizes a 1.7% pay increase for active duty equal to ECI and extends bonuses	Authorizes a 1.7% pay increase for active duty equal to ECI and extends bonuses	<i>FRA supports pay increase that is at least equal to the Employment Cost Index (ECI)</i>
End Strength	Mandates end strength reductions for Navy (from 325,700 to 322,700), Marines (from 202,000 to 197,000) and the Army	Mandates end strength reductions for Navy (from 325,700 to 322,700), Marines (from 202,000 to 197,000) and the Army	<i>FRA supports adequate end strength to support demanding operational commitments and minimize stress on military personnel</i>
Dwell Time	No similar provision	Requires DoD report on dwell time by individual and unit for Reserve and active duty with annual budget submission for FY 2014–2017	<i>FRA supports additional oversight to ensure service members have adequate dwell time between deployments</i>
Impact Aid	\$25 million in additional Impact Aid for schools with large military populations and \$5 million for children with special needs	\$25 million in additional Impact Aid for schools with large military populations and \$5 million for children with special needs	<i>FRA supports additional Impact Aid for schools impacted by large military populations</i>
TRICARE for Reserve Involuntary Separation	Authorizes TRICARE Standard for 180 days for involuntary separated Reservists	Authorizes TRICARE Standard for 180 days for involuntary separated Reservists	<i>FRA supports this provision</i>
Navy Name Change	Changes name of the Dept. of the Navy to the Dept. of the Navy and Marine Corps	No similar provision	<i>FRA supports the name change</i>

*Based on bill that passed the House. ** Based on Senate Armed Services Markup.

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Truly Unique

Time travel at the speed of a 1935 Speedster?

The 1930s brought unprecedented innovation in machine-age technology and materials. Industrial designers from the auto industry translated the principles of aerodynamics and streamlining into everyday objects like radios and toasters. It was also a decade when an unequaled variety of watch cases and movements came into being. In lieu of hands to tell time, one such complication, called a jumping mechanism, utilized numerals on a disc viewed through a window. With its striking resemblance to the dashboard gauges and radio dials of the decade, the jump hour watch was indeed "in tune" with the times!

The Stauer 1930s *Dashtronic* deftly blends the modern functionality of a 21-jewel automatic movement and 3-ATM water resistance with the distinctive, retro look of a jumping display (not an



True to Machine Art esthetics, the sleek brushed stainless steel case is clear on the back, allowing a peek at the inner workings.

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Penny Collins

Outreach Events

OUTREACH EVENTS FOR LOCAL communities can be a very worthwhile venture for FRA branches. These events can be used to disseminate information about the Association to prospective members, as well as a way to recruit new members on the spot. Some of our branches have been highly successful in showcasing the FRA at various events and shared their stories in this article.

Whether it is a Veteran's Appreciation Day, Airshow, Navy Week, open house at a military exchange or commissary, Memorial Day, Veterans' Day or other patriotic holiday observances, these are all great opportunities to raise awareness of FRA's important work on behalf of our members. Check your local newspapers and TV networks to learn about such events in your community, or better yet, organize your own and invite other community organizations to participate. These events are also a perfect place to promote FRA's Americanism Essay Contest, branch-sponsored youth activities and the FRA Education Foundation's scholarship program.

In some branches, the Americanism and Patriotism Committee will plan and coordinate branch involvement in Memorial Day, Veterans' Day or Pearl Harbor Day observances. These

usually include a planned program with a guest speaker where veterans and the public can come and hear the stories about heroic efforts of service members' courage and commitment to our nation. The Public Relations Committee can be involved in advertising the event in advance and publicizing shipmates' involvement after the fact in local news media and in FRA Today. The Youth Activities Committee can coordinate these events with local schools, scout troops and NJROTC units as an opportunity to engage young people from around the area.

Members of Branch 94 in Corpus Christi, Texas, included many segments of the community when they dedicated a Memorial Wall to honor departed shipmates. The memorial was a branch initiative, but began when Dylan Stephens led the construction of a Memory Garden as his Eagle Scout project. The Memorial Wall was an extension of that tribute and members of Boy Scout Troop 87, the Corpus Christi Patriot Band and Color Guard, a Navy chaplain and many area dignitaries and residents participated in and attended the monument's dedication ceremony, which was open to the public. The dedication also included a Two-Bell Ceremony and 21-gun salute, and provided

exceptional exposure for Branch 94's tremendous outreach effort.

Shipmate Frank Gates, of Branch 293 in Elizabeth City, N.C., was invited to speak about the FRA at local meetings of the USCG Chief Petty Officer's Association and the USCG Enlisted Association. After the meetings, Shipmate Gates recruited six and 10 new members, respectively, to join the Branch. This is an awesome example of using an outreach event to strengthen FRA's membership base.

Shipmate Mark Dernovsek, secretary of Branch 222 in Slidell, La., reported that several shipmates and Auxiliary members made a strong showing when they rode a parade float in last year's Veteran's Day parade and manned a recruiting/information table at the Annual Slidell Street Fair in April 2012.

On an annual basis, branches in the D.C. area and members of FRA's National Headquarters (NHQ) staff man a recruiting table at the Rolling Thunder Memorial Day Program on the National Mall. For two days shipmates volunteer their time to distribute information about the FRA and speak with veterans who stop by. Over 100,000 veterans roll into D.C. to pay their respects to fallen heroes and this is another grand opportunity to show the FRA flag.

FRA NHQ can provide a variety of information and recruiting materials for your outreach events. These should be ordered at least three weeks prior to your event to ensure timely delivery. Requests can be made through FRA's Member Services Department by calling 1-800-372-1924.



Branch and Unit 222's recruiting booth.



Branch 94's Memorial Wall.

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.

Word Warriors

During World War II (WWII), an elite group of Japanese soldiers used their command of the English language to intercept U.S. radio traffic in the South Pacific. Their specialized skills also allowed them to transmit misinformation in American-sounding messages that confused and often compromised Allied troops. The Japanese were also very accomplished at breaking American codes, which became increasingly complex to thwart the enemy's efforts. Unfortunately, as the U.S. codes became more complicated, it took longer and longer for cryptographers to encode and decode the messages. These factors compounded the Allies' already critical need for secure communication on the battlefield.

The United States Marine Corps came up with a unique — and highly successful — solution. They recruited Native Americans, most notably the Navajo, to transmit secret messages in their native languages. These "Code Talkers" are credited with saving thousands of lives with their never-broken code.



An Elegant Solution

The solution was the brainchild of a World War I (WWI) veteran who was one of very few non-Native Americans who could speak the unwritten Navajo language. Philip Johnston was the son of missionaries and had learned the language during his childhood on a Navajo Reservation. He knew how successful the Choctaw telephone squads had been during WWI using their native language to transmit secure messages and felt the Navajos could be equally successful. Johnston proposed his idea to the Marine Corps and demonstrated how a three-line message in English could be translated, transmitted and decoded in about 20 seconds. Encryption machines being used at the

time would have required 30 minutes to perform the same job.

Once convinced, the Marine Corps recruited 29 Navajo Indians in two weeks for this top-secret duty. Candidates had to be fluent in Navajo and English, but the recruits weren't told what type of duty they would be asked to perform.

"They were taken to a closed and guarded room with a blackboard, some chalk and an eraser, and told to make a code," explains Peter MacDonald, a Navajo Code Talker who served in the 6th Marine Division in the South Pacific and North China during WWII and is now the president of the Navajo Code Talkers Association. "They were given sample codes to use as examples, but all of them were written codes. That created a big problem, because Navajo is not a written language. There is no alphabet. It must all be memorized. Even when I went through the training years later, we were searched as we left the classroom to ensure we were not taking any notes out."

The "First 29," as they are often called, developed a code so ingenious and so unique that it was never broken by the enemy. Some American Indian Code Talkers during WWII used their tribal languages to simply translate and convey messages, but the Navajo Code Talkers used Navajo words to represent each letter of the English alphabet and these tribal words were then used to spell out a message in English.

"So [for] A, we took a red ant that we live with all the time. B we took a bear, C a cat, D a dog, E an Elk, F, Fox, G, a goat and so on down the line," explained Chester Nez, one of the original Navajo Code Talkers in a 2004 interview recorded by the National Museum of the American Indian.

Multiple words were assigned to represent commonly used letters so that recurring words wouldn't



**"My language
was my weapon."**

— David Patterson, 4th Division, USMC, Navajo Code Talker



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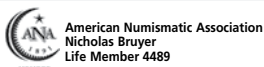
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be a clue for enemy cryptographers. For example, the letter A might be represented by the Navajo word for ant (wol-la-chee), apple (be-la-sana) or axe (tse-nill), which made it that much more difficult for the enemy to decipher the message. Other code words were developed to represent military terms, such as locations or types of equipment and weapons. For example, the United States was referred to as "Ne-he-mah" (our mother) and a submarine became "besh-lo" (iron fish).

"An aircraft carrier became 'one that carries birds' and a battleship was a 'whale.' We also used combinations, like a hill was referred to as a sick horse; H plus ill. It took two and a half months to create the code, which consisted of about 260 words," said MacDonald. "By the end of the war, the code included more than 600 words."

"The Code we used at the start of the war wasn't the same one we used at Okinawa — the last major engagement," said Navajo Code Talker Jimmie King, Sr., in a 1971 interview at the first reunion of the group.

Messages were encoded only when absolute secrecy was required and the beauty of the code was that the messages made little sense, even if the listener understood Navajo. No Code Talkers were ever captured, but even a Navajo soldier taken prisoner at Bataan couldn't decipher the code, says MacDonald. "The messages weren't just translated to Navajo and then back to English. When a Navajo Code Talker received a message, he heard a string of seemingly unrelated words."

"For example, a company of Marines was pinned down on the north side of Iwo Jima, with fire coming at them from all directions. The message sent in Navajo to the beach command post would have been translated to read:

Sheep-Eyes-Nose-Dear-Destroyer-Tea
Mouse-Turkey-Onion-Sick Horse-3-6-2-
Bear. The Code Talker at the other end
would understand that to mean Send
demolition team to Hill 362B. This could all
be directed, coded, sent and decoded in
a matter of about 20 seconds," continued
MacDonald. "Tanks and flame throwers
were immediately dispatched to rescue that
company of Marines. Other codes would
have taken 35 to 45 minutes to descramble.
The effectiveness was unbelievable."

The Irony

Like many Native Americans of that era, the Navajo Code Talkers grew up in a time when speaking their Native language was discouraged. MacDonald didn't learn English until he attended day school at the age of six. "The Anglo teacher only spoke English and we were forbidden to speak Navajo." After two years, he'd learned enough English to be advanced to the third grade and went to a federal boarding school run by the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Shiprock, New Mexico.

"I was nine years old with a very limited English vocabulary," recalls MacDonald, who would often revert to Navajo when talking with his fellow classmates. "I slipped almost every day and, when that would happen, a school official would grab me by the hair and put a 6-inch by 2-inch bar of yellow soap in my mouth and work it until I threw up. All for one Navajo word. If you repeated the offense, you had to scrub floors all weekend. We were not allowed to sing our songs or practice any Navajo traditions.

"Boarding school was run like the military and was very regimented. We'd march to class and had to have tight corners on our beds. We had inspections and were punished for any infraction. Non-native names were also given arbitrarily," adds MacDonald, whose Navajo name meant "one who grasps with strength."

The boarding schools were designed to replace traditional Indian ways with mainstream American culture. Christianity was taught in an effort to eliminate Native religious practices. Students' hair was cut and they were required to wear non-Native clothing. They were, in all ways, taught that their Native culture was inferior.

"[My cousin and I] always laughed and said, 'I think they're trying to make little white boys out of us,'" recalls Charles Chibitty, a Comanche Code Talker, in a 2004 interview preserved by the National Museum of the American Indian. "As a child, I was forbidden to speak my Native language at school. Later my country asked me to. My language helped win the war and that makes me very proud."

When Chibitty was honored at a 1999 ceremony, then-Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs for the Department of the Interior Ken Grover said, "It's

“As a child, I was forbidden to speak my Native language at school. Later my country asked me to. My language helped win the war.”

— Charles Chibitty, Comanche Code Talker

incredibly ironic that the Bureau of Indian Affairs dedicated itself for the first half of [the 20th] century to destroying the Native languages that proved to be so useful to our armed forces during World War II.”

MacDonald echoes the irony of a government that wanted the Indians to abandon their Native languages and then benefited so greatly from them during the war. “A few weeks [before the original Code Talkers joined the Marine Corps], they were forbidden from speaking Navajo. Then they were asked to speak it and come up with a whole new purpose for it.”

From Indian Warriors to U.S. Marines

American Indian tribes have always embraced a warrior spirit and the tradition of protecting their people and lands. This warrior tradition called many to serve in the military, particularly after Japan’s attack on Pearl Harbor.

MacDonald’s boarding school experience was followed by a year or so of learning Navajo traditions and ceremonies from his grandfather. “I was about 14 when I left school to become a medicine man like my grandfather, learning Navajo philosophies, songs and ceremonies,” he remembers. “When I realized, after about a year, that this apprenticeship was going to take another three or four years, I decided to go to work at a sawmill about 45 miles away from home.

“I didn’t go into the Marine Corps until early 1944, when the Code Talker program was well underway,” recalls MacDonald, who had seen his fellow tribesmen return from war well-dressed and telling stories about the glory and excitement of war. “I compared these returning veterans, looking

sharp and fresh from the adventure of combat, with my own worn out moccasins and boring job at a sawmill. When the recruiter asked if we wanted to join the Marine Corps, go to war and shoot the enemy, it sounded good to me.”

MacDonald was just 15 years old when he joined the Marine Corps. “I didn’t have a birth certificate, but my cousin, who was a Marine, vouched for my age and said I was 17. There were no hospitals and no electricity on the Reservation, so nobody had a birth certificate. This worked to the advantage of older Navajos, too. Carl Gorman, one of the original 29 Code Talkers, was 35 when he went in. He told them he was 25 — the oldest you could be and still get in.”

Guadalcanal and Beyond

The Navajo Code Talkers took part in every major WWII engagement in the Pacific theater, including Guadalcanal and Iwo Jima, serving at all levels from squads on the front lines to headquarters.

“In August 1942, the Code Talkers landed on Guadalcanal, the first Allied offensive of the war. This was the first time the code was used and was a great success,” recounts MacDonald. “The commander of the 1st Marine Division, General Alexander Vandergrift, said, ‘Navajo code is terrific. Enemy doesn’t get it, we don’t get it, but it works great. We want more.’ This opened the door for more recruiting of Navajos.”

The Code Talkers’ capabilities were invaluable. In addition to their use of the code, they also understood all facets of military communication, including wire and radio equipment. They set up and maintained lines of communication and were also trained as gunners.

Chicago Doctor Invents Affordable Hearing Aid Outperforms Many Higher Priced Hearing Aids

Reported by J. Page

CHICAGO: A local board-certified Ear, Nose, Throat (ENT) physician, Dr. S. Cherukuri, has just shaken up the hearing aid industry with the invention of a medical-grade, affordable hearing aid. **This revolutionary hearing aid is designed to help millions of people with hearing loss who cannot afford—or do not wish to pay—the much higher cost of traditional hearing aids.**

**“Perhaps the best quality-to-price ratio in the hearing aid industry” – Dr. Babu, M.D.
Board Certified ENT Physician**

Dr. Cherukuri knew that hearing loss could lead to depression, social isolation, anxiety, and symptoms consistent with Alzheimer’s dementia. **He could not understand why the cost for hearing aids was so high when the prices on so many consumer electronics like TVs, DVD players, cell phones and digital cameras had fallen.**

Since Medicare and most private insurance do not cover the costs of hearing aids, which traditionally run between \$2000-\$6000 for a pair, many of the doctor’s patients could not afford the expense. Dr. Cherukuri’s goal was to find a reasonable solution that would help with the most common types of hearing loss at an affordable price, not unlike the **“one-size-fits-most” reading glasses** available at drug stores.

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He evaluated numerous hearing devices and sound amplifiers, including those seen on television. Without fail, almost all of these were found to amplify bass/low frequencies (below 1000 Hz) and not useful in amplifying the frequencies related to the human voice.

Inspiration from a Surprising Source

The doctor’s inspiration to defeat the powers-that-be that kept inexpensive hearing aids out of the hands of the public actually came from a new cell phone he had just purchased. **“I felt that if someone could devise an affordable device like an iPhone® for about \$200 that could do all sorts of things, I could create a hearing aid at a similar price.”**

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The high cost of hearing aids is a result of layers of middlemen and expensive unnecessary features. Dr. Cherukuri concluded that it would be possible to develop a medical grade hearing aid without sacrificing the quality of components. The result is the MDHearingAid PRO®, starting well under \$200. **It has been declared to be the best low-cost hearing aid that amplifies the range of sounds associated with the human voice without overly amplifying background noise.**

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“I have a \$2,000 Resound Live hearing aid in my left ear and the MD HearingAid PRO in the right ear. I am not able to notice a significant difference in sound quality between the two hearing aids.”

— Dr. May, ENT physician

“We ordered two hearing aids for my mother on Sunday, and the following Wednesday they were in our mailbox! Unbelievable! Now for the best part—they work so great, my mother says she hasn’t heard so good for many years, even with her \$2,000 digital! It was so great to see the joy on her face. She is 90 years young again.”—Al Peterson

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“Up front, we could report the number of casualties, enemy positions and direct fire to enemy positions. It was similar in tank units,” explains MacDonald. “We could direct movement and gun fire using code. If other communications troops were killed or injured, Code Talkers would take over their position and duties as needed.”

“We went where we were needed most,” adds King. “We weren’t only signalmen, we were riflemen and gunners, too.”

In a recorded interview, King recalls the Code Talkers’ efforts in the fiercest battle of WWII for U.S. Marines. “Pelelieu was the longest hours and where we suffered the most,” remembers King. “We had no medical attention, no food or water. Boys passed away or were wounded, but would never yell or moan. We lost some Code Talkers. We couldn’t reach them because the fire was so intense.”

The Code Talkers also played a critical role in the battle to take the Pacific island of Iwo Jima. Sam Tso, a Navajo Code Talker whose words are also preserved by the National Museum of the American Indian, recalls how the Japanese machine gunners were dug in and mowing down Marines in waves as they tried to cross the open plain north of Mount Suribachi.

“Finally, they told several of us Code Talkers to get across somehow, locate the machine guns and call in artillery on them ... I just ran as fast as I could and made it across without being hit.”

Tso, who used corn powder and traditional prayer to prepare for the battle, was able to call in a firestorm of artillery.

In the first 48 hours of the battle for Iwo Jima, the Code Talkers transmitted more than 800 messages, all without error. “The code was continually going through the air, from the front lines to ships

to airplanes and back again,” says MacDonald, who proudly quotes Major Howard Connor, a signal officer for the 5th Marine Division on the island. “Were it not for the Navajos, the Marines would never have taken Iwo Jima.”

Some of the Code Talkers’ recollections aren’t as dramatic, but are equally telling of the times. While some states still barred Native Americans from voting, some Code Talkers experienced racial prejudice and weren’t immediately accepted in their units. For example, Code Talker Paul Blatchford was mistaken by Allied troops for a Japanese soldier and, as a result, Code Talkers were often given non-Native body guards to vouch for their allegiance and ensure their safety.

Navajo Code Talkers had their own radio frequency and when time and favorable airwaves were available, King recalls sending messages specifically aimed at enemy listeners. “When there was enough frequency, we would break in, beat cans and make a huge noise. We’d send messages like ‘Kick Tojo’s ass!’ in Navajo.”

Returning Home

In many Native American cultures, returning warriors are honored with a ceremony to welcome them home and restore stability to their lives. According to Native beliefs, time away from family, community, culture and homeland leaves a soldier out of balance, so songs, prayers and other cultural traditions are meant to bring the soldier’s life back into balance. These spiritual ceremonies are still performed today in some tribes, often in conjunction with Christian rites, and are considered a healing event for the veterans.

Gorman, who had been raised a Christian, recounts how traditional ways helped him after he returned from the war in *Navajo Weapon*, a book by Sally McClain.

“Were it not for the Navajos, the Marines would never have taken Iwo Jima.”

— Major Howard Connor, 5th Division, USMC

"I didn't have a ceremony when I came home," he said. "I didn't quite believe in it anymore. A medicine man that was an old friend suggested I have one, but I didn't have the money to pay him to perform it. He agreed to do a one-night sing over me for free. I participated in the sing and felt a great weight leave my mind and body. I felt very rested afterwards. I realized then that I needed to make peace with what I had experienced during the war."

And while all veterans are respected and revered in the Navajo culture, the Code Talkers weren't initially allowed to speak of their unique contribution to the war effort, because the program was considered a military secret that might be used in future conflicts.

"We had to keep what we'd done a secret," recalls MacDonald. "When I was discharged in 1946, I was told not to tell anyone what we did. We knew about communication equipment, Morse Code, semaphore and were certified as radiomen, so that's what we were supposed to tell folks about our service. It wasn't until 1968 that the Navajo Code Talker program was declassified. We could finally tell our parents and families what we'd done. It felt good to be able to eventually talk about what we'd accomplished."

Recognition by Nation

Although the Code Talkers could finally share their remarkable war endeavors, they had to wait decades for official recognition by the federal government. MacDonald, who was elected to serve an unprecedented four terms as chairman of the Navajo Nation, was among the first to receive personal acknowledgement.

"In the early 1970s, President Nixon sent a telegram congratulating us on our service," he recalls. "And when I was first elected chairman of the Navajo Nation in 1971, he sent the Marine Corps Band to play at my inauguration. That was also the year the Navajo Code Talkers Association was formed."

In 1982, President Ronald Reagan declared August 14th be remembered as Navajo Code Talkers Day. "We celebrate the day and share our experiences with our children and grandchildren," says MacDonald, who is working diligently to preserve the legacy of the Navajo Code Talkers.

Peter MacDonald, a Navajo Code Talker, served in the 6th Marine Division in the South Pacific and North China during WWII. He is currently the president of the Navajo Code Talkers Association.



Ten years later, 35 Navajo Code Talkers attended the dedication of a Pentagon exhibit in their honor. And in 2000, the U.S. Congress authorized the Navajo Code Talkers to receive Congressional Gold and Silver Medals for their contributions.

"In a 2001 ceremony, President George W. Bush presented gold medals to four of the five surviving Original 29," says MacDonald. "The rest of us received silver medals. They all had a statement written on the back in Navajo that said, 'With the Navajo language they defeated the enemy.'"

"It took a long time for America to recognize our contributions and I feel bad that many — those who never came home — weren't able to enjoy the recognition accorded to the Navajo Code Talkers. And many of those who did return passed on in the 1980s. I wish they were alive to enjoy the recognition."

Preserving the Legacy, Language and Culture

As president of the Navajo Code Talkers Association, MacDonald is at the forefront of efforts to preserve the Navajo Code Talkers' story. Among his top priorities is the capital campaign to construct the National Navajo Code Talkers Museum and Veterans Center in Window Rock, Arizona.

"The museum and veterans center is a huge undertaking and big responsibility," says MacDonald, "A bigger job than my 16 years as chairman of the Navajo Nation. And although it's a tremendous responsibility, it is shared by everyone and we're hoping to have it completed by Fall 2015. It will take a lot to meet our deadline, but I believe it



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Code Talkers from Other Tribes

Historically, there are approximately 500 distinctive Native languages spoken in North America and the Navajos weren't the only ones to use their tribal tongues to support U.S. military efforts.

During World War I, 15 Choctaw Indians and members of other tribes used their traditional languages to transmit wartime messages. It's important to note that at that time, these Native Americans were not even considered U.S. citizens.

During WWII, the U.S. military expanded on the Choctaws' earlier success and used Code Talkers from more than a dozen tribes, including the Choctaws, Hopis and Cherokees. Seventeen Code Talkers came from the Comanche tribe, where programs are in place to preserve the culture and the language, which is still spoken today. About 420 Code Talkers were recruited from the Navajo Nation during WWII — the most from any Native American group.

The Navajo and Hopi Code Talkers were assigned to serve in the Pacific, where they waged war against Japan; Comanches were assigned to fight the Germans in Europe and the Meskwakis fought them in North Africa.

can and will be done with the help of America and our friends. I'm pushing 84 and, as old as I am, I want it done."

According to the association's website (www.navajocodetalkers.org), the museum and veterans center will focus on the history and significance of the Navajo Code Talkers' legacy and their significant role in the outcome of World War II. It will include demonstrations of the Navajo code and culture in the larger perspective of modern history. The museum and integrated education programs will also "serve as the national repository for the once-secret military voice code and the legendary skill, endurance, courage and ingenuity of the Navajo Code Talkers. The state-of-the-art veterans center will provide integrated services, resources and opportunities for all armed services veterans, active duty military personnel, and their families and will be a place to honor and celebrate the courageous deeds of all Americans and Native Americans, alike, in military service."

Navajo Code Talker Kee Etsicity summed it up this way in a recorded interview with the National Museum of the American Indian.

"We, the Navajo people, were very fortunate to contribute our language as a code for our country's victory. For this I strongly recommend we teach our children the language our ancestors

were blessed with at the beginning. It is very sacred and represents the power of life."

Many of the quotes used in this article are documented in interviews and oral histories provided by Navajo Code Talkers who are no longer with us. Had their messages not been preserved, these firsthand accounts would have been lost forever. There are only 38 surviving members of the Navajo Code Talkers — most in their mid- to late-80s — and MacDonald emphasizes the need to ensure their story endures.



"America is a diverse community," says MacDonald. "We all have different talents and skills and, in time of crisis, when we are facing threats, we need each other's talents and skills to defend freedom and the liberties we enjoy. Young people need to experience this in an active way. We need to be cemented together to protect the things we cherish.

"The Navajo Code Talkers' legacy needs to be preserved," continues MacDonald. "It's not just a Marine Corps legacy or Navajo legacy. I believe it's a true American legacy."



Lauren Armstrong is the Contributing Editor and Member of the FRA Auxiliary. She can be reached at lauren@fra.org.



BRANCH 175 ORANGE COUNTY, CALIF.

Branch members performed a flag-folding demonstration for students at St. Callistus School and answered questions about WWII, saluting and the flag itself. Shown with a group of younger students are (l to r) Roger Hamerlinck, Phil Famolaro, Gordon Olson, Jesse Ontiveros, Winnie Hamerlinck, Jim Angeley and Ellen McNamara.



BRANCH 261 LEMOORE, CALIF.

Branch President Bob Craig (right) and First Vice President Rob Walecki prepare food at the annual Mothers' Day Breakfast. Approximately 100 individuals attended this event, which was open to the public.



BRANCH 113 STOCKTON, CALIF.

Shipmate Robert J. Hill accepts his pin for 40 years of continuous FRA membership from Branch President Richard M. Carpino.



BRANCH 182 BETHESDA, MD.

PRPEC Paul Gunther, (left, Americanism Essay Chairman) and Branch President D. Keith Kaider congratulate Rishub Nahar, the branch's 7th grade, first place winner in the FRA Americanism Essay Contest. Nahar also placed third in the East Coast Region for his age group.



BRANCH 42 QUONSET POINT, R.I.

Shipmate Bill Grimshaw recently celebrated his 99th birthday and was acknowledged by his shipmates. He rarely misses branch meetings and is also a member of the Seabee Veterans of America. Congratulations, Shipmate Bill!

BRANCH 162 GRETNA, LA.

Americanism Essay Contest winners from Phoenix High School pose with (l to r, back row) Shipmate Robert Kinghorn, Austin Bienemy, Javointay Sylve, Alaysha Narcusse, De'Aidea Demoll and Melissa Cook (teacher), (front row) Arione LaFrance, Tamisha Isidor and Zara Ragas.

**BRANCH 21 FORT COLLINS, COLO.**

During the branch installation ceremony, Branch President Floyd Taladay, Vice President Robert Westphal, Master of Arms Harry Campbell, Secretary/Treasurer Robert Brown and Chaplain Arthur Clark take the oath of office.

BRANCH 1 PHILADELPHIA, PA.

Shipmate Patrick LaRose delivers issues of FRA Today magazine and Branch 1's White Hat Newsletter to YN2 Doutin Heibaugh at the U.S. Navy Recruiting Command, Philadelphia, Pa., while YNC Joyce Johnson (left) and Loleta Bowden (right) look on.

**BRANCH 126 JACKSONVILLE, FLA.**

Branch President James J. Thomas presented an FRA medal, ribbon and framed Certificate of Achievement to Cadet Joshua Nissen during a formal ceremony at Ed White High School.

**BRANCH 294 CROSSVILLE, TENN.**

Because of its outstanding recruiting and retention efforts, the branch received FRA's 100% Membership pennant for the second year in a row. Branch officers (l to r) Secretary Jack Fogel, Vice-President Gerald Stevenson, Board Member Stuart Litman, Treasurer Marcia and President Joe Smith attached the pennant to the branch colors.

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



China Marines

THE 4TH REGIMENT OF the U.S. Marine Corps was sent to Shanghai in January of 1927 to protect the lives and property of American citizens living in the International Settlement there. Although the Marines weren't involved with the conflict between Chiang Kai-shek's national forces and the Communists, the political tensions at the time made their presence in Shanghai important to American, as well as British, Japanese, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch and French interests in the area. By April, Chiang Kai-shek's forces controlled the city and the newly named 4th Marines began to make Shanghai their home, maintaining guard duty at the International Settlement.

It was choice duty for these "China Marines." Goods and services were readily available at very inexpensive prices. Units would often hire a Chinese man to clean, do laundry, shine shoes and run errands. Living conditions were good and exotic goods such as ivory, jade, silk and gold could be had for small sums.

In 1931, Japanese forces moved southward to occupy principal Chinese cities, putting Japan and China at war with one another. This put the 4th Marines in an awkward situation. The U.S. opposed the Japanese conquests, but Japan was a partner in defending the International Settlement. The Japanese withdrew from the International Settlement and the 4th Marines, along with their British counterparts, remained neutral in the war for Shanghai. They strengthened the northern boundaries of the Settlement, but neither the Japanese nor the Chinese tried to breach the Marines' domain.

In August of 1937, the second battle for Shanghai began. This time the Japanese were more successful and the Chinese withdrew from the city in October. This left the International Settlement and the French Concession (slightly to the south) as isolated communities in a hostile Japanese country. Even so, life in the International Settlement remained relatively unchanged. The Chinese post office, radio and telegraph offices, and the central bank continued to operate with relative normalcy in this neutral enclave.


But by August of 1940, Britain announced it would withdraw all its forces from Shanghai and

North China, and much of the U.S. force was also ordered from the area. By early 1941, only the 4th Marines and the Yangtze River Patrol gunboats remained to defend the International Settlement. The Japanese would periodically enter the Settlement and the Marines would drive them out. This continued until November, when the regiment withdrew. As the 4th Marines marched to the harbor to board ships bound for the Philippines, they were bid farewell by both Japanese and Chinese dignitaries and citizens.

The 4th Marines were then assigned to the Philippines and arrived just a week before war broke out. They were ordered to defend the Olongapo Naval Station and the Mariveles Naval Section Base. The Marines were ill-equipped, armed only with what they'd been able to bring from Shanghai, much of which had been used for training or not used at all. Working together with naval defense forces of the U.S. Asiatic Fleet and U.S. Army Forces in the Far East (USAFFE) ground units, the 4th Marines defended their original positions until called to defend the beaches of Corregidor, under the control of Army General Douglas MacArthur. The island of Corregidor was the largest of four islands at the mouth of Manila Bay and a vital defensive asset for the Allies.

The Japanese attacked the Marines' position from the air for hours at a time in late December 1941 and early January 1942. After only a slight reprieve, the Japanese resumed their shelling and bombing onslaught in early February, which continued mercilessly throughout the siege. In addition to the barrage, the Marines' food supply was dwindling and they were forced to live on 31 ounces of food per day. When Bataan fell on April 9th, the Japanese were able to intensify their assault on Corregidor, pummeling the island with even more shells and bombs. It is estimated that more than 16,000 shells hit the island during a single day's attack. The Japanese made a shore assault with an overwhelming force, striking the final blow to the 4th Marines. In order to save the nearly 1,000 wounded men and what remained of their fighting

continued on page 33



**Edsall Class Veterans Association**

November 9–11, 2012, Galveston, Texas. Contact Mac Christy ENC USN (RET.), 841 Thomas Rd, Pomona KS 66076, 785-255-4368, machief@hughes.net.

Hospital Corpsmen (AAoNHC)

September 19–23, 2012, San Antonio, Texas. Contact Awtrey Peace, 850-626-1125, awtreyp@yahoo.com.

National Chief Petty Officers Association

October 17–20, 2012, Las Vegas, Nev. Contact AKCM Marjorie Hays at 361-991-2383.

US Navy GCA/ATC

September 12–16, 2012, Branson, Missouri. Contact Kent Fairchild, 796 S. Lemoore Ave., Lemoore, CA 93245, 2chiefkent6186@aol.net.

USS America (CV/CVA-66) Reunion

September 11–15, 2012, Baton Rouge, La. Contact Harry Rodriguez, Prime Management, 3416 Primm Lane, Birmingham, AL 35216, 845-661-1284, hatron10@aol.com.

USS Basilone (DDE/DD-824)

July 24–27, 2012, Syracuse, N.Y. Contact Philip E. Poplaski, 315-457-6847, pepumkc8@aol.com.

USS Belle Grove (LSD-2)

July 8–15, 2012, Billings, Mont. Contact Bob Dunker, 194 Emerald Hills Dr., Billings, MT 59101-7229, 406-248-2719, flyindunk@aol.com.

USS Bristol (DD-857)

October 1–4, 2012, Savannah, Ga. Contact Paul Ratcliffe, 835 The Hideout, Lake Ariel, PA 18436, 973-309-4040, pd_ratcliffe@msn.com.

USS Calvert (APA-32)/USS Harry Lee (APA-10)

October 10–14, 2012, Philadelphia, Pa. Contact John Cole, 506 Red Wing Ave., Kenyon, MN 55946, 507-789-6344.

USS Casa Grande (LSD-13)

October 2–6, 2012, Pensacola, Fla. Contact Ron Hiles, 10615 Ridge Road, RT. 1, Amanda, OH, 740-969-4619, randahiles@copper.net.

USS Duxbury Bay (AVP-38)

September 20–24, 2012, Williamsburg, Va. Contact Robert Smith, 7 Lee Ave., Stony Point NY 10980-1613, 845-238-1055, bobsmith7@verizon.net.

USS Elokomin (AO-55)

September 25–28, 2012, Norfolk, VA. Contact Robert F. O'sullivan, 25 Denny St., Dorchester, MA 02125, (617) 288-3755, theeloman@verizon.net.

USS Floyd B. Parks (DD-884)

September 10–17, 2012, Chicago, IL. Contact Bill Birdsong, 17139 Owl Tree Rd. Riverside, CA 92504, 951-789-5309, soonbil@gmail.com.

USS Goldsborough (DDG-20)

August 5–10, 2012, Bremerton, Wash. Contact Larry L. Nelson, 3731 W. G St. Apt. A, Bremerton, WA 98312-4636, 360-649-4374, zuba58@comcast.net.

USS Harry E. Yarnell (DLG/CG17)

November 9–11, 2012, Tampa Bay, Fla. Contact Glenn Hunsberger, 212 Webb St., Harford, NC 27944, 757-287-5429.

USS Hoel (DDG-13)

August 9–12, 2013, Everett, Wash. Contact John Peverly, 425-335-4066, jpeverly@comcast.net.

USS Ingersoll (DD-652/DD-990)

September 27–30, 2012, Charleston, S.C. Contact Don Molowski, 724-547-5573, pdmolowski@verizon.net.

USS Kretchmer (DE/DER-329)

September 19–22, 2012, Philadelphia, Pa. Contact Jim Strong, 7248 Resinda Dr., Dayton, OH 45459, 937-436-1245.

USS Leary (DD/DDR-879)

September 19–23, 2012, Warwick, R.I. Contact Richard Englander, 2745 Harvest Drive, Sarasota, Florida 34240, 941-341-0070, creibra@verizon.net.

USS Louisville (CA-28)

August 21–27, 2012, Branson, Mo. Contact Mike Marino, 33 Windham Crescent, Kings Park, NY 11754, 631-265-0526.

USS Mahan Association (DD-364/DLG-11/DDG-42/DDG-72)

October 10–14, 2012, San Diego, Calif. Contact Dick Hollowell, 9339 Praful Ct., Santee, CA 92071, 619-606-3173, mahanwebmaster@cox.net.

USS McMorris (DE-1036)

October 18–21, 2012, Nashville, Tenn. Contact Jules Galbreth, 313 Parkwood Place, Lewisville, TX 75067, 972-219-9674, julorgal@yahoo.com.

USS Midway Veterans Association

September 20–22, 2012, Washington, D.C. Contact David Payson, 509-946-0810, minandave@charter.net.

USS Norris (DD/DDE-859)

September 20–23, 2012, Cincinnati, Ohio. Contact Ed Mehl, 11 Bethany Forest Dr., Dagsboro, DE 19939, 302-541-0685, e.mehl@mchsi.com.

USS Perkins (DD-26/DD-377/DDR-877) Association

September 12–16, 2012, St. Louis, Mo. Contact Robert J. Linton, 8900 Julia Dent Dr., St. Louis, MO 63123-2020, 314-397-2388, malinton@sbcglobal.net.

USS Piedmont (AD-17)

September 26–30, 2012, Omaha, Neb. Contact Bill Kastens, 1824 SW Village Dr., Topeka, KS 66604, 785-272-2604, bmk1930@sbcglobal.net.

USS Plymouth Rock (LSD-29)

September 20–25, 2012, King Of Prussia, Pa. Contact David Dortch, 870-236-3725, tazrhondave@yahoo.com.

USS Robert L. Wilson (DD/DDE-847)

October 3–7, 2012, Virginia Beach, Va. Contact Richard Utyero, 4213 Matthews Lane, Kensington, MD 20895, 301-564-0541, rutyero@verizon.net.

USS Sea Cat (SS-399)

September 24–29, 2012, Little Rock, Ark. Contact Ed Hymer, 1114 Elm Ave., Norwalk, IA 50211, 515-981-3006, ednmeg@mchsi.com.

USS Spinax (SS/SSR-489)

May 20–24, 2013, Groton, Conn. Contact Jack Hunter, 37 Namquid Dr., Middletown, RI 02842, 401-849-7282, jhunter2007@cox.net.

USS Springfield (CL-66/CLG-7)

September 27–30, 2012, Mobile, AL. Contact Richard Wilson, (253) 210-5609, graham98338@comcast.net.

USS Stribling (DD-867)

July 26–29, 2012, Mayport, Fla. Contact HM2 Tom Miller, 304 Thornhill Drive, Braselton, GA 30517, 706-824-0166, elainemiller@comcast.net.

USS Westchester County (LST-1167)

October 4–7, 2012, Reno, Nev. Contact John Nosek, 1354 Bridle Way, Minden, Nevada 89423, 775-392-0116, lst1167@gmail.com.

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HISTORY & HERITAGE continued from page 30

force, Allied leaders surrendered Corregidor on May 6, 1942.

Despite overwhelming odds, the 4th Marines and their compatriots held the Philippines for six months. And despite the loss at Corregidor, the regiment's resistance slowed Japan's southward advance and gave Allied forces time to mobilize needed manpower and supplies.

Many Corregidor survivors were taken as prisoners of war (POW), with most of the 4th Marines forced to march or ride overcrowded boxcars to a prison camp called the 92nd Garage, later to Bilibid Prison and Manila Station, and then on to Cabanatuan. The inhumane treatment these POWs endured during their incarceration was horrific. No concessions were made for the ill and wounded prisoners and no medical treatment was available. Rations consisted of maggot-infested rice and a watery rice stew, and the lack of proper nutrition led to scurvy, beriberi and pellagra for most of the prisoners, forcing the men to make as many as 20 trips to the open-trench latrine each night. Work details had the prisoners laboring 12 hours/day, six days/week tilling large farm fields by hand. Those who failed to toil sufficiently "for the emperor" were severely beaten in the presence of other prisoners. It was a common occurrence for POWs to witness the brutal execution of their fellow prisoners.

As the tide of WWII turned against Japan, the POWs were boarded onto crowded ships and sent to Japan where they were forced into slave labor. Japan never made it known that American men were aboard the vessels that were often sunk by Allied submarines. Approximately 10,800 POWs died at sea during these transports. Once in Japan, the prisoners were put to work in copper and coal mines or in other efforts to support Japan's war machine. Though starving and battered, these brave

men continued to fight the enemy by employing sabotage at every opportunity – driving rivets in crooked or tightening only every other bolt in the shipyards and adding too much sand to cement used for construction work.

As Allied forces advanced to liberate the POWs, the Japanese killed many prisoners to ensure they wouldn't be returned to the enemy. The 6th Ranger Battalion liberated Cabanatuan in late January 1945 and Bilibid Prison was liberated by an advance patrol of the Army's 37th Infantry in early February, freeing many 4th Marines in the process. Among those released from Bilibid was Soochow, a stray dog the Marines had adopted in Shanghai and smuggled to the Philippines. Amazingly, the dog had also been taken prisoner when Corregidor surrendered and he survived on the Marines' meager shared rations while imprisoned. Soochow returned to the U.S., where he lived out the remainder of his days as the pampered mascot of the Marine Corps Recruit Depot in San Diego, Calif.

Twenty-one months after the fall of Corregidor, the 4th Marines were reactivated on Guadalcanal and went on to fight through Emirau, Guam and Okinawa. The regiment was deactivated following WWII, but was reactivated in 1951 at Camp Pendleton, California. In 1972, the 4th Marines moved to its current home on Okinawa, where the Corps' "oldest and proudest" is the only forward-deployed regiment. Today's 4th Marines is comprised entirely of Unit Deployment Program Infantry Battalions and its personnel are justifiably proud of the regiment's distinguished heritage. They feel it is their rightful place to be at the tip of the spear.

Visit www.fra.org/history to share your thoughts on the China Marines.

REUNIONS continued from page 31

USS Wiltsie (DD-716)

September 27–30, 2012, San Diego, Calif. Contact Jim Mankowski, 1284 Seacoast Dr., Imperial Beach, CA 81832, 619-424-7370, DD716TED@comcast.net.

VP-22

July 12–16, 2012, Lincoln City, Ore. Contact Bud White, 870 Edwards St. NE, Palm Bay, FL 321-723-5544, white@cfl.rr.com.

VP-44

November 8–11, 2012, Pensacola, Fla. Contact Gene Toffolo, 229-794-4119, genejanjay@aol.com.

VR-22 Reunion Group

September 10–14, 2012, Charleston, S.C. Contact Gene Shonkwiler, 1801 Columbia Drive, Winter Haven, FL 33881, 863-969-3850, GShonkwile@aol.com.

WAVES National

September 18–23, 2012, Orlando, Fla. Contact Barbara J. Mcguire, 2207 Ladywood Ct, Brandon, FL 33511, 813-571-2098, bdogwood@tampabay.rr.com.

Members can post reunions online at www.fra.org, submit to reunions@fra.org or mail to: FRA Reunions, 125 N. West St., Alexandria, VA 22314.

NAME	BRANCH	NAME	BRANCH
Adams, Dale E, CPO, USN	MAL	Henderson, Richard T, ADRC, USN	MAL
Arbogast, William L, SH2, USN	308	Hengerle, Henry G, CS1, USN	005
Avery, John M, HMC, USN	182	Hill, James H, EN1, USN	001
Azevedo, Anthony L, HMC, USN	008	Hilvers, Eugene M, ADRC(AC), USN	MAL
Baxter, Gordon L, ET1, USN	018	Hines, John, USN	MAL
Benjamin, Gilbert T, CAPT, USMC	367	Hodapp, Carl M, CTC, USN	008
Birch, Richard T, FCCM(SW), USN	MAL	Holt, Dewey L, MRC, USN	217
Blanchard, William H, CE1(DV), USN	MAL	Houston, Benjamin, SKCM, USNR	089
Blomskog, Dale V, PHC, USN	018	Hubbard, Garth E, MSC, USN	MAL
Bly, Rooney R., SGT, USMC	170	Irvin, William D, CS1(SS), USN	021
Bradley, Bronson, GMG1, USN	010	Jackson, Ralph A, SWC, USN	090
Briley, James L, AK, USN	022	Jenkins, George L, SH2, USN	017
Butler, Murray C, USN	145	Johnson, Harry H, PNCS, USN	023
Butrum, Aumurul M, RMCS, USN	MAL	Kaufman, Gerald R., TMCS, USN	099
Callahan, George A, SH1, USN	MAL	Kennedy, Robert A, AFCM, USN	261
Cannaday, Roger L, ATC, USN	126	Komaromy, James E, CTCS, USN	182
Chaffee, Alan I, BMC, USN	170	Leach, Jack, EMC, USN	MAL
Chase, Charlie D, RMCS, USN	101	Leggett, Luther G, HM1, USN	126
Christensen, Rudy R, PHCM, USN	230	Lorbiecki, John R, MM1, USN	238
Clarke, Robert R, DPCS, USN	007	Mackey, Charles G, STGC(SW), USN	MAL
Cobb, William F, SMC, USN	130	Mandel, Joseph H, QMC, USN	214
Cotton, Robert A, ATC, USN	256	Markley, George E, OMC, USN	319
Cudworth, George F, GMG1, USN	MAL	Mason, John H, GYSGT, USMC	037
Cummings, Robert D, YN1, USN	290	Mathews, Edward W, AVCM, USN	091
Davis, Elbert, CPO, USN	046	McKinney, Robert A, SK2, USN	MAL
Demarest, Raymond J, PR1, USN	008	McKittrick, Michael A, ET1, USN	163
Descheemaeker, Robert H, BM1, USN	106	Migliorini, Ernest B, LCDR, USN	260
Dingess, James L, YN1, USN	MAL	Miles, Warren F, SHC, USN	MAL
Dorney, William J, CAPT, USN	009	Miles, W. M., USN	307
Duverney, Fred P, GMC, USN	066	Milgrim, Harold, MCPO, USN	099
Edmondson, Donald M, AZC, USN	163	Mitchell, Von R, AK1, USN	126
Fashbaugh, William E, CW02, USN	324	Moore, Robert R, MSCS, USN	060
Felix, Andronico U, MSC, USN	166	Moore, Robert Alfred, CDR, USNR	301
Fowlkes, William F, CTR1, USN	275	Nelson, Marvin H, AVCM, USN	091
Freudeman, Paul E, HTC, USN	110	Nowels, Phillip R, ENC, USN	053
Gardner, Thomas H, PHC, USN	050	Onstott, Norman R, CTC, USN	MAL
Goodman, Abraham, FTBC, USN	MAL	Paris, Gerald E, EMC, USN	023
Goodrich, Jesse C, ATC, USN	261	Pasilis, George P, BMC, USN	MAL
Gramling, Thomas F, AVCM, USN	210	Peacock, Robey T, BMC, USN	MAL
Greenwood, John I, GMCM, USN	361	Perkins, Herbert L, ADR1, USN	MAL
Griffin, Glenn A, MMC, USN	216	Peters, Cecil E, ADRC(AC), USN	315
Gutsell, James, QMCS, USN	MAL	Peters, Richard J, DPCM, USN	060
Hale, Tommy R, AD1, USN	MAL	Powell, Milton O, EMC, USN	040
Hall, Keith, AG1, USN	259	Purefoy, Hardy W, PRCM, USN	099
Hall, Jesse W, AMC, USN	259	Quinn, Joseph S, LCDR, USN	024
Harju, Thomas R, MM1(SS), USN	046	Rabb, Ernest, PO1, USN	MAL
Harman, James R, ETCS, USN	367	Rakus, Edward J, PN1, USN	106
Harrington, Edward R, AOC, USN	042	Ray, Kenneth S, GMCM, USN	115
Heeder, Clayton A, YNC(SS), USN	020	Redding, Vee R, DTCS, USN	MAL
Heitman, Milton H, LCDR, USN	120	Reyes, Eligio A, ENC, USN	085
Helman, Gerald L, SKC, USN	106		



NAME	BRANCH
Richmond, Theodore R, ATC, USN	274
Ross, Jimmy, YNCM, USN	147
Roumeliotis, Harry, QM2, USN	269
Ryan, John T, EWC, USN	162
Saner, George J, PO1, USN	230
Sapp, Paul E, YN1, USCG, MAL	
Schwab, Richard J, CPO, USN	226
Segrest, James L, SKC, USN	022
Semler, Gary E, MMCM, USN	269
Skinner, Harold C, MCPO, USN	060
Solano, Art, USN	181
Somers, Joseph M, PHCS, USN	MAL
Spires, Ollie L, ACC, USN	MAL
Staupe, Stanley O, CTOC, USN	238
Steinwart, Donald L, CW02, USN	276
Stoeffler, Roland M, AMH1, USN	091
Strunk, Howard M, AMCS, USN	MAL
Thelen, Frank, CDR, USN	MAL
Vaughn, Horace D, Mr, USN	099
Vest, Jack, RDC, USN	175
Walker, Maurice C, ETC(SS), USN	MAL
Wallace, Robert, HMCM, USN	MAL
Wasman, Gerald J, HT2, USN	MAL
Weaver, Floyd H, MSGT, USMC	MAL
Weaver, Edward, LCDR, USN	MAL
Welzbacker, Peter, LCDR, USN	MAL
Whidden, Charles D, CPO, USCG	174
Whitaker, James K, AMS1, USN	091
Whittemore, Walter J, USN	MAL
Wilder, Larry E, AMCS, USN	MAL
Williams, Nancy, PO1, USN	MAL
Williams, Theodore S, GYSGT, USMC	182
Wilson, Clyde W, ETC, USN	008
Wood, Andrew C, BTC, USN	085
Woods, James B, STCM, USN	025
Yocom, Keith H, CSC, MAL	
Yonemura, George S, HMC, USN	MAL
Young, Merle, IC1, USN	MAL

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A Message from the South Central Regional President

IT IS HARD TO believe my term as Regional President South Central is half over. It has been a true learning experience and a most enjoyable one. Our region is large in area ranging from North Arkansas to South Louisiana and East Mississippi to West Texas. The members in our 12 Units are truly miracle workers. At this time I have visited over half of the Units and will visit the rest and my home Unit before the Regional Convention in August. As with other regions, we are all working to retain members. This is ongoing, as the problem is not going away. Please, when it comes time to renew, send your money in and be counted. In the past few months the names on the past due list have lessened. Let's hope this trend continues!

Our Auxiliary members step up and lend a hand wherever they are needed without a second thought. They give advice, comfort, money, aid and talents. Whatever you need, they give it! Even though a lot of our Units are small, they give their all for the LA FRA. Also some Units help judge essays every year with the Branches. The Units that are fortunate to have a base close contribute to the hospitals. Many collect toiletries, eyeglasses, card fronts and crafts, for local use or to be sent overseas. We fly our flags and urge family and friends to do the same.

If you are ever in the South Central Region, look up the nearest Branch or Unit and visit. You will be guaranteed a good time and the food is great! They will be glad to have you!

In closing, I would like to say the South Central Region has been blessed to have three National Officers in its region this year. National President, Gini Larson, Unit 94, Corpus Christi, TX, National Financial Secretary, Karen Smith, Unit 11, Lone Star, Ft. Worth, TX and National Chaplain, Bobbie Pugh, Unit 371, Baton Rouge, LA. We are proud of the job they and all our National Officers are doing!

The South Central Regional Convention will be held on August 15 thru 18, 2012, at the Crowne Plaza South Hotel in Fort Worth, TX. The address is 100 Altamesa East Boulevard, Fort Worth, 76134. Take exit 44 off I-35W. To make reservations by phone 817-293-3088: mention Fleet Reserve Association. To make reservations on line www.crowneplaza.com/fortworthsouth.

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Please remember our Troops in your prayers and hope they all get home soon! May God bless everyone!



CAROL MCATEE
Regional President South Central



Woolridge Park, Austin, Texas
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Veterans Day Ceremony
Laura Jimenez, Regional Secretary South Central, and Carol McAtee, Regional President South Central, laying a wreath at the mock tomb of the Unknown Soldier at a Veterans Day ceremony at the Texas Capitol.



Branch 201 member Carroll McAtee and Regional President South Central Carol McAtee at Veterans Day ceremony.

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