

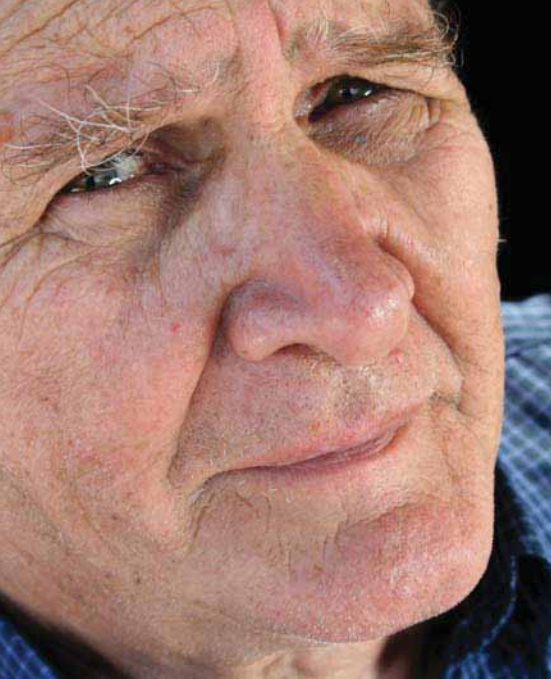
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FRA *today*



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Featured

18 TROUBLED WATERS

For nearly 30 years, those who lived and worked at the Marine Corps Base at Camp Lejeune, N.C., were unknowingly exposed to contaminants in their drinking water. The offending wells have been closed for more than 25 years, but many questions still remain.



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Teresa Norton



LOYALTY, PROTECTION AND SERVICE

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

ON THE COVER

There's little doubt that drinking contaminated water isn't healthy, but former residents and employees at Camp Lejeune are asking just how harmful their drinking water was.

Supporting FRA



Eileen Murphy

FRA'S SPRING FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN is going strong. Every donation is appreciated and put to great use. When you donate to FRA, your money is being invested wisely. Did you know that over 86 cents of every dollar goes directly to member services and programs?

There are many other ways to support FRA, as well. Recruiting members and encouraging current members to renew are two great ways to make sure FRA's member base stays strong — and that ensures the Association is heard on Capitol Hill. We strongly encourage becoming a Life Member, and showing your full support for FRA! As a Life Member, you'll receive the same benefits as annual members, plus the satisfaction of knowing that you're supporting FRA for a lifetime — and beyond. Surviving spouses of Life Members continue to receive *FRA Today* at no charge for as long as they like. Life Members also enjoy substantial savings versus the cost of renewing your membership annually — for example, purchasing a Life Membership when you're 50 is like prepaying for 13 years of membership with the rest of your life FREE!!

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- Assure your surviving spouse can receive *FRA Today* at no charge.
- Current members can convert to a Life Membership online at www.fra.org at time of renewal
- New members can join as Life Members online at anytime!

Questions about Life Membership can be directed to FRA's Director of Membership Development Penny Collins at penny@fra.org or 1-800-FRA-1924 ext 123.

Thank you for all you do in supporting this great association!

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

FRA today

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Jeffrey A. Gilmartin

FRA HAS BEEN ACTIVELY engaged in efforts to exclude the Department of Defense (DoD) from the automatic budget cuts (sequestration) that are slated to take place in January of 2013, when provisions of last year's Budget Control Act go into effect. These cuts would be in addition to the

substantial DoD budget reductions already identified through 2022 and would have an adverse affect on all facets of military service. As part of FRA's campaign to exclude DoD from the sequestration cuts, FRA National President Jeffrey Gilmartin wrote to leaders in the House and Senate, encouraging

them to find alternative solutions that would not impact recruiting, retention and military readiness. This letter was also included in information packets provided to members of Congress during the Board of Directors' recent Hill visits.

April 23, 2012

The Honorable John A. Boehner
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-221
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Boehner and Majority Leader Reid:

Members of the Fleet Reserve Association (FRA) are very concerned about the effects of "sequestration" on the Department of Defense in 2013 and beyond as mandated by the Budget Control Act of 2011. The Association noted Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta's recent comments that these cuts "would do catastrophic damage to our military, hollowing out the force and degrading its ability to protect the country." It is significant that defense spending totals 17 percent of the federal budget, yet 50 percent of the sequestration cuts are targeted for DoD.

The Department has already identified more than \$480 billion in budget cuts over the next 10 years and, unless Congress acts, provisions of the Budget Control Act mandate another \$500 billion to \$600 billion in cuts beginning in 2013. Cuts of this size endanger modernizing an aging fleet, lower personnel morale with the necessarily increased operational tempo, and reduce incentives vital to the recruitment and retention of our highly trained men and women.

Your attention to authorizing alternatives to sequestration with regard to defense spending is of utmost importance to our membership — and to sustaining military readiness and our national security.

Sincerely,

JEFFREY A. GILMARTIN
National President

JAG:aal

cc: The Hon. Nancy Pelosi
The Hon. Mitch McConnell
The Hon. Howard "Buck" McKeon
The Hon. Adam Smith
The Hon. Carl Levin
The Hon. John McCain

Military Etiquette on TV

As a follow-up to Chief Jim Sutherland's comment on military etiquette on TV, I suggest he write to the network carrying the program. In an early episode of JAG, they introduced a female commander to the series, but she did not have any gold braid on her cover (hat). I wrote to the network and several weeks later her cover contained gold braid.

John E. Everett

Stolen Valor

The April issue of *FRA Today* reported that the Supreme Court is hearing arguments on the "Stolen Valor Act." The [perpetrator] claimed it violated his constitutional rights to [be prosecuted for lying] about his service and awards. Also noted was [that the law] was declared unconstitutional by the Ninth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals.

However not noted was the fact that one of the senior Judges is also married to one of the senior members of the ACLU in California, always votes in favor of the ACLU, and refuses to recuse himself from the cases even though the laws have been approved by the state legislature, Congress, and the people of the states involved.

Too bad the People do not have the right of court martial!

Don Davidson

Tricare Feedback

What is missing in the media everywhere is that Tricare Standard beneficiaries have a \$150 deductible per person and then pay 25 percent of "allowable" charges up to \$3,000. Plus we pay all non-allowed charges.

It seems that the general public believes we get all this for free. This takes about 10–15 percent of my retirement to pay these costs and that's with after-tax dollars.

The general public needs to see the whole picture in order to get help on our side of these proposed cuts and increases.

Another item that's never mentioned in the media is the real reason for Tricare costs going from \$19 billion to \$50 billion in 10 years. It's because Congress instituted Tricare for Life (TFL) under the Department of Defense (DoD) instead of funding it separately. I would be willing to bet that the cost for military retirees under 65 years old is still about the same as prior to TFL.

Todd A. Richter

I find it appalling and unacceptable that Senator McCain should support ANY type of fee increases for Tricare, prescriptions, etc. be imposed on retirees, now or in the future. The fees suggested are burdened on those folks that can least afford them. Most are on very fixed incomes and COLAs do not begin to keep up with any of these increases. This looks like another attempt to force folks out of Tricare and into Walmart!

Keith Alexander

A Veteran's Plea To Congress

It is our government's obligation to take responsibility and be sympathetic to those veterans who are in need of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for health care and due process of disability claims. The American people need to query their members of Congress and ask why they won't help our veterans in need. We Vietnam veterans who are sick need the help of our Congress. Please do what is right.

WWII and Korean War veterans' life expectancy is longer than veterans of the Vietnam War because of Agent Orange/Dioxin exposure. We are not dying of old age; we are dying of diseases most men would not realize until a much older age. We could realize a better quality of life and maybe a longer life, if our legislators would make provision for us by simply passing H.R. 3612 and S.1629. Is life worth so little by continued delayed action on those bills?

It is not only about [veterans of] the Vietnam War, [but also] the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars. It is about the brave souls who died for America, those who came home, and those yet to come home — some with loss of limb, diseases, post-traumatic stress disorder, and, in some cases, facing the loss of a family, due to long [and frequent] deployments. Will the VA and our government be there for them?

John J. Bury

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.

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John Davis

Threats to Benefits

AS THIS ISSUE OF *FRA Today* goes to press, House and Senate Armed Services Committees are finalizing their respective versions of the FY 2013 Defense Authorization bill. The pace of legislative activity will increase as the election draws near and now is the time for FRA shipmates to contact their senators and representative and urge them to oppose excessive TRICARE fee increases for all retirees, exclude the Department of Defense (DoD) from punitive automatic budget cuts mandated by the Budget Control

Act of 2011 and resist the Administration's efforts to establish a commission to cut military retirement benefits.

Shipmates should weigh in on these threats with their respective members of Congress via the FRA Action Center at www.fra.org. Healthcare, retired pay and other benefits are associated with fulfilling the nation's commitment to current and former service members, and also provide needed incentives to attract and retain qualified men and women to serve proudly in our nation's military.

House Armed Services Committee Marks Up Defense Authorization

Following the House Armed Services' Military Personnel Subcommittee's mark up of its portion of the House version of the FY 2013 Defense Authorization bill, the full Armed Services Committee finalized its version of the legislation on May 9. The subcommittee approved the measure (H.R. 4310), which does not include language to increase TRICARE fees or create a commission to study and propose changes to the current military retirement benefit. Although the battle to stop drastic TRICARE fee increases and harsh retirement benefit cuts is not over, this is a clear indication that FRA shipmates' voices are being heard on Capitol Hill. The subcommittee approved provisions to:

- Authorize a military pay increase of 1.7 percent and extend bonuses and special pay for our men and women in uniform;
- Limit end strength reductions for the active Army and Marine Corps;
- Provide new regulations and procedures for combating and prosecuting sexual assault within the military;

- Extend access to family housing for six months and commissary/exchange benefits for two years for troops who are involuntarily separated;
- Extend TRICARE benefits to members of the Selected Reserves who are involuntarily separated;
- Clarify that non-monetary contribution to healthcare benefits made by service members and their families through a 20-or-more-year career of military service represents pre-payment of healthcare premiums in retirement.

The Senate Armed Services' Personnel Subcommittee is scheduled to mark up the Senate's version of the bill in late May 2012. Once both chambers approve their respective versions of the Defense Authorization, a conference committee will be appointed to reconcile the differences between the House and Senate bills. The final bill is then sent to the House and the Senate for approval, after which, it will be sent onto the President for his approval or veto. Members are urged to use the FRA Action Center (www.fra.org) to share their views with lawmakers on these and other issues that impact their earned benefits.



FRA Storms Capitol Hill

Members of FRA's National Board of Directors (NBOD) and other Association leaders brought the enlisted perspective to Capitol Hill on April 26, 2012, as they visited their respective elected officials in Washington, D.C. These shipmates shared the Association's position on priority legislative issues with their senators and representatives, asking them to find alternatives to future DoD budget cuts mandated by the 2011 Budget Control Act, oppose the Administration's plan to drastically increase TRICARE fees and oppose efforts to amend/reduce military retirement benefits. FRA also asked lawmakers to take action to reduce the disability claims backlog at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and extend disability benefits to Blue Water veterans exposed to the Agent Orange herbicide while serving off the coast of Vietnam.

FRA Board members, shipmates and Auxiliary members also attended the Association's Pinnacle Award reception later that evening, where FRA honored California Representative Bob Filner, ranking member of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, for his tireless support for veterans.

FRA Briefs Coast Guard Retiree Council

FRA's Director of Legislative Programs John Davis and Phil Odom of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) recently briefed the Coast Guard Retiree Council on current legislative issues associated with retiree benefits. Top issues are proposed TRICARE fee increases, possible establishment of a retirement commission to potentially cut benefits, expanding concurrent receipt eligibility to include additional disabled retirees, and repeal of the Survivor Benefit Plan/Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (SBP/DIC) offset.

Penny Collins, FRA's director of Membership Development, is a member of the Coast Guard Retiree Council, which is co-chaired by retired Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard and former FRA National Chaplain Vince Patton and RADM Ronald Silva, USCG (Ret.). The council meets annually to ensure retirees' concerns are brought to the attention of USCG leadership and that members of the retired community are kept informed on key legislative initiatives.

Commissary Usage at Record Level

According to the Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA) more military members and their families are using their commissary benefit than at any time since FY 1997. There were more than 96 million transactions in FY 2011 indicating that this benefit is meeting the needs of its customers. Because commissaries sell at cost and negotiate the best possible prices for the products they sell, commissary shoppers saved almost \$2.8 billion on their purchases in FY 2011. In addition, coupon-friendly policies allowed shoppers to earn more than \$110 million in additional savings at the commissary, which has been consistently ranked in the top 10 for retailers that redeem the most coupons.

Spoofing E-mails NOT from DFAS

The Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) wants beneficiaries to know that there are e-mails being sent to individuals, including service members, military retirees, and civilian employees, which appear to be sent by a DFAS employee. Although the e-mail appears to come from DFAS and displays a dot-mil address, it is actually from a non-government e-mail account. This is an example of what's called "spoofing." The e-mails indicate that individuals receiving VA disability compensation can receive additional funds from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and ask recipients to send copies of their VA award letter, income tax returns, 1099-Rs, RAS statements, and a copy of their DD 214 to an address in Florida. DFAS warns beneficiaries NOT to follow the suggestions in the e-mail because providing personal information to a complete stranger could result in a financial loss.

Meeting on the Effects of DoD Sequestration

FRA recently attended a Capitol Hill meeting on the significant impact of mandatory spending reductions on the Department of Defense (DoD) if Congress does not act to halt these cuts by the end of the year. Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Gen. Martin Dempsey and other service leaders have expressed serious concerns about imposing another \$55 billion in DoD spending cuts in 2013, as required by the Budget Control Act of 2011. This would be in addition to the more than \$480 billion in cuts to Defense spending already planned over the next 10 years. FRA has expressed concern about this issue in letter from National President Jeff Gilmartin to House and Senate leadership, in its recent congressional testimony and in meetings with members of Congress and staff personnel.

Visit the FRA Action Center (www.fra.org) to share your concerns with your elected officials.

FRA Education Foundation Part of Combined Federal Campaign

FRA recently received notice from the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) that the FRA Education Foundation has been approved for inclusion in the National/International Part of the 2012 Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) Charity List (Code #80236). The CFC is the only authorized solicitation of employees in the Federal workplace on behalf of approved 501(c)3 charitable organizations and contributions earmarked for the Foundation will support future scholarship awards. This was a long-term goal associated with the establishment of the Foundation in 2009 and is the result of significant work to ensure compliance with various CFC requirements.

VETERANS ISSUES

GI Bill Protections

President Obama recently signed an executive order that will require institutions of higher learning to provide information about drop-out 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 personnel and veterans receiving educational benefits and a mechanism to refer the complaints to the appropriate government agency for investigation.

For more information on this story go to: www.consumerfinance.gov/students/knowbeforeyouowe/

HVAC Approves Bill to Consolidate Vet Programs

The House VA Committee recently approved the "Consolidating Veteran Employment Services for Improved Performance Act" (H.R. 4072), sponsored by HVAC Chairman Rep. Jeff Miller (Fla.). The bill seeks to transfer all veterans' job training, counseling and rehabilitation, as well as homeless reintegration programs from different agencies to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Other provisions of the bill include authorizing the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) at locations other than military installations in five states and adjusting the Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for veterans to the same percentage as the Consumer Price Index (CPI), eliminating the need for annual legislation beginning in 2014. The measure awaits action in the House Budget Committee.

OMB Excludes VA from Sequestration

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) announced that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) healthcare programs are exempt from automatic budget cuts (sequestration) scheduled to take effect on January 1, 2013. The announcement came in response to Rep. Jeff Miller (Fla.), who requested OMB's interpretation of the Budget Control Act of 2011.

Miller, who chairs the House VA Committee, introduced the "Protect VA Healthcare Act" (H.R. 3895) to ensure that VA healthcare programs are not impacted by the scheduled sequestration cuts. He is committed to advancing the legislation and said, "OMB did, however, leave the door open to other legal avenues to sequester VA, which is not acceptable." Shipmates are urged to use the FRA Action Center at www.fra.org to support the Chairman's bill (H.R. 3895) and its Senate companion measure (S. 2128), sponsored by Senator Jon Tester (Mont.).

VOW Act Website now Available

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) launched a website as part of the VOW to Hire Heroes Act. FRA supported this legislation, sponsored by House Veterans Affairs Committee Chairman Jeff Miller (Fla.), that was enacted into law last year (Public Law 112-56). The website provides comprehensive information on all aspects of the VOW Act to include details about the Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP), tax credits for employers, vocational rehabilitation services, the transition assistance program (TAP), and Department of Labor resources for veterans. Qualified veterans will be able to apply for the VRAP program, which offers a full year of retraining assistance directly from the website beginning on May 15, 2012.

For more information go to www.benefits.va.gov/VOW/

Report Critical of VA Mental Health Care

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Inspector General (IG) released a critical report that contradicts VA claims that 95 percent of new patients seeking mental health services received full evaluations for care within the required 14 day period. According to the report, only 49 percent of these veterans were seen within 14 days, and the average wait time was 50 days. The Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee (SVAC) discussed the report during a recent hearing and SVAC Chairwoman Patty Murray (Wash.) called the findings deeply disturbing and directed the VA to revamp its scheduling system and get serious about hiring mental health professionals.

For a copy of the IG report visit www.va.gov/oig/pubs/VAOIG-12-00900-168.pdf

The VA is adding approximately 1,600 mental health clinicians and nearly 300 support staff to its existing workforce to meet the growing needs of service members returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. Since 2007, VA has seen a 35 percent increase in the number of veterans receiving mental health services, and a 41 percent increase in mental health staff. Improved access to care for all veterans, including those who bear the invisible scars of service, is a top FRA priority and was referenced in recent congressional testimony before the House and Senate VA Committees.

VA's ongoing comprehensive review of mental health operations indicated that some VA facilities require more mental health staff to serve the growing needs of veterans and the department is moving quickly to address this top priority. VA will allocate funds from the current budget to all 21 Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISNs) across the country this month to begin recruitment immediately.

Since 2007, VA has seen a 35 percent increase in the number of veterans receiving mental health services, and a 41 percent increase in mental health staff. FRA references the need for improved access to care for all veterans, including those who bear the invisible scars of service, in its congressional testimony before the House and Senate VA Committees and in interactions with lawmakers and staff.

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HVAC Approves Child Custody Protections

The House Veterans Affairs Committee (HVAC) approved the FRA-supported "Servicemember Family Protection Act" (H.R. 4201), sponsored by Representatives Michael Turner (Ohio) and Rob Andrews (N.J.). The bill seeks to amend the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA) by protecting child custody arrangements for parents who are deployed in support of a contingency operation. According to bill language, 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, unless there is clear and convincing evidence that it is in the child's best interest. The measure also prohibits any court from considering a member's past or future absences due to deployments in determining child custody disputes.

Prior to HVAC approval, Turner and Andrews issued a letter to Defense Secretary Leon Panetta, requesting his support in the fight to protect the child custody rights of our men and women in uniform. The lawmakers were joined by every member of the House Armed Services Committee (HASC) in supporting the request.

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

Are Military Voters Disenfranchised?

An estimated 120,000 active duty service members never received the absentee ballots they requested in the 2010 elections. FRA was instrumental in advancing the Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment (MOVE) Act to address this concern, but problems still exist. As the 2012 presidential election draws near, the Association is conducting an online survey to gauge the experiences of military absentee voters. **All current and former service members and their spouses are invited to participate in this brief survey at www.fra.org/survey.** Survey results will be shared with lawmakers to strengthen FRA's call for further improvements to the absentee voting process.

ACTIVE DUTY/RESERVE ISSUES

Bill to Strengthen Protections for Service Members and Reservists

Senator Patty Murray (Wash.), who chairs the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, introduced legislation (S. 2299) in response to reports that the rights of veterans and service members are being violated. The "Servicemembers' Rights Enforcement Improvement Act" seeks to strengthen the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) and the Servicemembers' Civil Relief Act (SCRA).



USERRA secures Reserve Component employment rights during periods of military service and prohibits employer discrimination based upon military service. If enacted, the bill would:

- Enable the Attorney General to investigate and file suit against a pattern or practice of USERRA violations by a state or private employer;
- Allow the United States to serve as a named plaintiff in USERRA suits and to issue civil investigative demands for relevant documentary material; and
- Provide the Special Counsel with authority to subpoena relevant testimony and documents from federal employees and agencies.

The bill also clarifies SCRA provisions by:

- Strengthening the protections that prevent judgments against servicemembers when they cannot appear in court because of military service;
- Broadening the authority of the Attorney General to investigate allegations of SCRA violations; and
- Spelling out the rights of service members to bring a private lawsuit to assert their SCRA rights.

Over the past year, the House Veterans Affairs Committee held hearings on banks that violated SCRA by charging higher-than-allowed mortgage interest rates and foreclosing on deployed service members' homes. Members are urged to use the FRA Action Center (www.fra.org) and ask their senators to support this legislation.

Roth TSP for Active Duty Coming in May

Members of the uniformed services and federal civilian employees now have the option to contribute after-tax dollars into the Roth Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) for the first time on May 7, 2012. Contributions to the Roth TSP are made from earnings after taxes have been paid and are not taxable when withdrawn. Account earnings can also be withdrawn tax-free, as long as certain IRS requirements are met.

Service members should note that money already in a traditional TSP account cannot be converted to a Roth TSP account. Service members should discuss investment options with a qualified tax or financial advisor for information pertaining to their specific tax situation. For additional information about Roth TSP go to TSP.gov.

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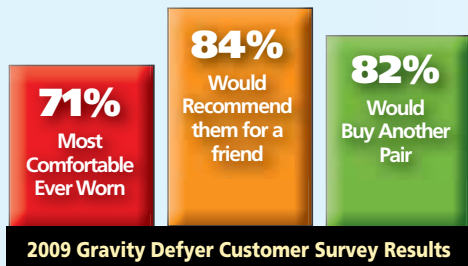
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FRA Hosts Vets4Warriors Meeting

The FRA National Headquarters hosted a briefing by the staff of the Vets4Warriors program for Military Coalition organizations. Implemented on December 13, 2011, the program is a peer-support helpline for current and former service members. This 24/7 helpline provides easy access to well-trained veteran peers who are prepared to offer support and referrals to relevant local resources. The program provides assistance for:

- VA benefits, including education programs;
- Legal assistance;
- Substance abuse programs;
- Health care resources and information; and
- Financial assistance.

Visit Vets 4 Warriors at www.vets4warriors.com for more information.

Senate Steering Committee Discusses Veterans Employment

FRA National Executive Director (NED) Joe Barnes and representatives from 15 other military/veteran organizations and corporations participated in a roundtable discussion with the Senate Democratic Steering and Outreach Committee in May. The Committee is chaired by Senator Mark Begich (Alaska), who welcomed Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (Nev.), Majority Whip Richard Durbin (Ill.), Chairwoman of the Senate VA Committee Patty Murray (Wash.) and 13 other senators to the meeting. The agenda included discussion of employment and career development opportunities for veterans and their families. NED Barnes stressed that helping veterans should be considered part of the cost of defending the nation, and that military training and skills should be considered by employers on the same level as college credits. Barnes also noted the disconnect between the military and the American public and that less than one percent of the population is shouldering 100 percent of the responsibility for our nation's defense.

Several national employers reported on their efforts to hire and train veterans, including Boeing; Schneider National, Inc.; USAA, and ReconRobotics, Inc.

Lautenberg to Introduce TRICARE Legislation

Senator Frank Lautenberg (N.J.) has pledged to introduce legislation that would protect TRICARE beneficiaries from excessive and unfair enrollment fee increases and significant hikes in pharmacy co-pays. The Military Health Care Protection Act of 2012 will emphasize that military service is unlike civilian occupations and associated healthcare benefits are earned through 20 or more years of arduous service and sacrifice.

FRA strongly supports Senator Lautenberg's efforts, which have been ongoing since 2007 when he introduced similar legislation and amendments to curb TRICARE fee increases. His previous efforts included bill language that would have limited such increases to no more than the Consumer Price Index (CPI), which is the basis for annual cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) for military retired pay, Social Security and VA benefits.

FRA Supports Parity for USCG Personnel

As a long-standing advocate for U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) personnel, the Fleet Reserve Association (FRA) submitted a written statement in conjunction with a May 9th hearing of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security. FRA asked subcommittee members to provide adequate funding to ensure the Coast Guard can effectively perform its missions and provide pay, healthcare and other benefits and quality-of-life programs for USCG personnel on a par with those enjoyed by Department of Defense (DoD) personnel.

Pay and benefit parity for USCG personnel is an ongoing concern for the Association and FRA is troubled by programs and benefits that are authorized for USCG members, but not adequately funded. The service is often faced with the difficult decision to reduce or eliminate authorized benefits or cut other programs to pay for them.

FRA's top legislative priority for 2012 is to ensure adequate funding for military healthcare programs, including the Coast Guard Health Care Fund, to meet readiness needs and ensure access to quality care for all beneficiaries. The Association opposes proposals to increase TRICARE fees in FY 2013 over and above the 13-percent increase already being levied on USCG retirees enrolled in TRICARE Prime. FRA also expressed concern about low reimbursement rates that deter physicians from accepting TRICARE-covered patients, making it particularly difficult for USCG personnel living in remote areas to find healthcare providers.

FRA noted the 4,013 USCG family housing units that are, on average, more than 40 years old. "The costs of maintaining and recapitalizing these units are compounding and funds are not available to keep pace with essential maintenance and replacement

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Penny Collins

Recruiting Efforts

THERE ARE MANY WAYS to recruit new members into the FRA and all are based on a positive attitude and an understanding of the Association's mission, goals and purpose. FRA is unique in its advocacy for enlisted members of the U.S. Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard, and its congressional charter also sets us apart from many other military and veteran service organizations. Each FRA shipmate also has a unique perspective and set of experiences based on their military service and involvement with the Association. Sharing your own membership experiences and relating them to a prospective member's background is a great way to pique their interest.

Shipmate Thomas W. Bulger from Branch 104 in Tacoma, Wash., uses FRA's exclusive membership requirement to discuss the Association's distinctive legislative work with new prospects. He explains the requirement of one day of enlisted USN, USMC or USCG service and also talks about FRA's most recent legislative accomplishments on behalf of our members, using *FRA Today* and *FRA NewsBytes*, our free weekly e-mail update, to stay informed. In addition, he outlines activities going on

in his branch, such as social events, community service projects, and committee work that may be attractive to the prospective member. Branch 104 qualifies for FRA's 100% Award for the 2011–2012 membership year.

Observing the telltale signs of a potential member can pay recruiting dividends, explains Shipmate Frank Gates who is a member of, and excellent recruiter for, Branch 293, Elizabeth City, N.C. When Shipmate Frank is out and about, he looks for military hats, shirts, jackets, license plates, tattoos, military style haircuts, base stickers on vehicles or any other indicator of a person's military service. If he has any inkling someone is a Sea Service veteran, Frank asks them if they have a few minutes to talk about their military service. He listens to what they have to say and engages in conversation about military pay, health care, benefits, and quality-of-life programs. This provides a natural lead-in to a discussion about joining the FRA. This technique is successful for Shipmate Gates, Branch 293 and the FRA as a whole.

Because he recruited a significant number of new members, Gates received a paid Life Membership for his efforts. All current FRA members are eligible to receive collectable pins, letters of appreciation and cash from the Association for their recruiting endeavors, and many branches offer additional recruiting incentives. For example, Wolverine Branch 298 in Grand Rapids, Mich., offers a rebate of dues to new

members when they attend their first branch meeting. Kempsville Branch 99 in Virginia Beach, Va., has a raffle drawing for members who've recruited new shipmates throughout the month, awarding prizes that have been donated by community businesses, such as restaurants and stores.

Another way to attract new members is through community outreach and partnerships. If a branch has a relationship with a local high school's Navy or Marine Corps Junior ROTC program, take the opportunity to co-host a Sea Service Veteran's Appreciation meeting at the school. Invite representatives from the local Employment, Veterans Affairs, and Social Security offices to discuss veterans' benefits, and consider including representatives from the local and state legislative offices. Partner with medical organizations to conduct free health screenings for the veterans. Promoting such events through local news, social media, TV, radio, flyers and posters generates interest and provides positive exposure for the FRA. Making a difference in your community is a great way to encourage others to join our Association. These types of events also provide an opportunity to partner and network with other veteran service organizations, which can lead to referrals for future FRA shipmates.

Attracting new members to the FRA is easier if you utilize your network of friends and fellow veterans; share the important work FRA does for its members, and plan and participate in activities associated with FRA's mission and cardinal principles of Loyalty, Protection and Service.

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.



RPEC Darryl F. McKinley, Jr. and Branch 293 President James A. Grumbles present a Gold Life Membership Card to Shipmate Frank Gates (right) in recognition of his outstanding recruiting efforts.

Troubled Waters

In the mid-1980s, several wells that supplied drinking water to the Marine Corps Base at Camp Lejeune, N.C., were found to contain varying levels of volatile organic compounds. In 1984 and 1985, testing revealed that ten drinking water wells on the base were impacted and base officials shut down the wells. Further testing showed that the contaminants from off- and on-base sources may have been fouling the water since as early as 1957, which means that an estimated one million Camp Lejeune Marines, employees and residents were exposed to these chemicals over the course of nearly three decades.





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Since the problem was discovered, the Marine Corps and the Department of the Navy, with the assistance of the National Research Council (NRC) and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), have been working to determine the effects these chemicals may have had on members of the Marine Corps family who lived, worked and/or were conceived at the base from 1957 to 1985, when the last offending well was taken out of service. After more than 25 years, there are still many unanswered questions.

HISTORY

The first inklings of a problem came to light in 1979, when the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) established guidelines to test drinking water for the presence of trihalomethanes (TTHM), disinfection byproducts from water chlorination. Testing began at Camp Lejeune in 1980 and specific monitoring for TTHMs began in late 1982. By November of 1983, the base was in full compliance with applicable TTHM requirements.

During these tests, water samples were taken from the base's Hadnot Point and New River water treatment plants, as well as various other points in the water distribution system. In the summer of 1982, it was determined that testing results were influenced by chemicals other than TTHM, specifically volatile organic compounds (VOC) tetrachloroethylene (also known as perchloroethylene or PCE, a dry-cleaning solvent) and trichloroethylene (TCE, a metal degreasing agent), as well as benzene (a chemical found in gasoline and other fuels). There were no regulatory standards for these

Photo by Lance Cpl. Wayne Edmiston



chemicals at the time, but Camp Lejeune continued sampling the water to ensure compliance with TTHM regulations and searched the water treatment plants for potential sources of the VOCs. It was later determined these chemicals originated from operations on the base, as well as from a dry cleaner adjacent to Camp Lejeune. It is important to note that Camp Lejeune's water systems met all Safe Drinking Water Act requirements during this time and are currently tested more often than required to ensure the base's water continues to meet all governmental standards.

During this same period, Camp Lejeune was also accelerating its Naval Assessment and Control of Installation Pollutants (NACIP) Program to identify areas of the base that required cleanup. The initial NACIP assessment study, published in 1983, led to sampling of the individual wells supplying water to the base. These test results were the first to establish a direct link between the wells and the VOCs in the drinking water. Once it was determined that the wells were contaminated, the base promptly shut them down in late 1984 and early 1985.

RESEARCH

Testing has been going on since the problem was first discovered and, since the late 1990s, numerous scientific studies have been conducted to determine what impact the contaminated water had on those working and

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living at Camp Lejeune. Scientific sources agree that PCE, TCE and benzene have negative impacts on human health. PCE has been shown to cause tumors in rats and mice and, according to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), may “reasonably be anticipated to be a carcinogen.” Exposure to high levels of TCE over long periods of time has been linked to cancer and the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) has determined that TCE is “probably carcinogenic to humans.” Drinking large amounts or small amounts of TCE over long periods of time may also be related to liver damage and impaired fetal development, although the extent of these effects remains unclear. Benzene causes harmful effects on the bone marrow, can cause a decrease in red blood cells and DHHS has determined that benzene causes cancer in humans.

Although a link between the chemicals and cancer has been established, it cannot automatically be assumed

that the water at Camp Lejeune is the cause of any or all cancers experienced by past residents. The effects of exposure to any chemical depend on when the exposure occurred (during pregnancy, infancy or adolescence, for instance), the level and length of exposure (how much and for how long), and the way in which exposure happened (by inhaling or ingesting the toxin, for example). Personal traits and habits may also play a role in determining the effects of exposure. Not everyone exposed to TCE, PCE or benzene will develop cancer, and not all cancers experienced by the Camp Lejeune population are the result of exposure to contaminated water.

And therein lies the rub. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) won't classify cancers and other health problems of Camp Lejeune veterans as the result of the contaminated water (and therefore service-connected) until a definitive link can be established. And proving a clear connection is difficult and time-consuming.

Finding Those Who Were Impacted

In order to conduct research and provide information to those who may have been affected by the contaminated wells, the Marine Corps has conducted substantial outreach efforts in recent years.

When the wells were closed in 1984 and 1985, the Marine Corps notified current residents of the water problem through public notices and articles in the local media. The Corps expanded its effort to contact former Camp Lejeune residents and employees who may have been impacted when TCE, PCE and benzene were added to the list of regulated chemicals in 1989 and 1992 as part of the Safe Water Act.

Although the Marine Corps began working with the Agency for Toxic Substance and Disease Registry (ASTDR) in the early 1990s to develop a Public Health Assessment of Camp Lejeune, it wasn't until 1999 that a mass-media campaign was put in place to locate participants

for its scientific studies. Critics believe the Marine Corps could, and should, have done more to notify former residents and employees much sooner.

Congress mandated more significant outreach efforts as part of the 2007 National Defense Authorization Act and the Marine Corps responded by establishing a website (www.marines.mil/clwater), a national registry for those possibly affected and a more robust plan for notifying those who lived and worked at Camp Lejeune from 1957 to 1987. The Corps also activated the Camp Lejeune Water Study Call Center that offered a toll-free number (877-261-9782) to answer questions related to the water contamination and facilitate participation in the registry.

In 2008, the Corps sent an estimated 150,000 letters to former Marines who lived or worked on the base prior to 1987, using address information provided by the Internal Revenue Service.

The Marine Corps acquired additional addresses of nearly 50,000 potentially affected individuals from the Defense Manpower Data Center, and sent letters to them, as well, encouraging recipients to join the registry online or by contacting the call center.

The Marine Corps has invested more than \$3 million in its coordinated media outreach campaign, including posters displayed at all U.S.-based commissaries, print articles and purchased advertising in military-oriented publications, television and radio spots, video interviews and a variety of other appeals all encouraging potentially affected individuals to join the registry. There are currently more than 160,000 names in the registry and the Corps continues its efforts to contact as many affected individuals as possible.

To add your name to the Camp Lejeune Historic Water Registry, visit www.marines.mil/clwater or call 877-261-9782.

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- Johnnie E., Ellijay, Ga

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In fact, a National Research Council (NRC) study in 2009 says the question may never be resolved. In a June 2009 press release, NRC said:

Evidence exists that people who lived or worked at Camp Lejeune Marine Base in North Carolina between the 1950s and 1985 were exposed to the industrial solvents trichloroethylene (TCE) or perchloroethylene (PCE) in their water supply, but **strong scientific evidence is not available to determine whether health problems among those exposed are due to the contaminants**, says a new report from the National Research Council. The report adds that **further research will unlikely provide definitive information on whether exposure resulted in adverse health effects in most cases.** (Emphasis added)

The NRC went on to suggest that policy changes or administrative actions to resolve concerns related to the historic water issue “should not be deferred pending new or potential health studies.”

As new technologies and testing capabilities emerge, there is renewed hope that the matter can be scientifically determined, one way or another. Despite NRC’s contention that further research is futile, ATSDR believes its efforts can provide useful information.

“Based on the recommendations in the 2009 NRC report, ATSDR made modifications to our approaches and obtained more exposure information,” explains Vivi Abrams, Health Communications Specialist for ATSDR and the National Center for Environmental Health (NCEH). “Based on this information and the advice of independent expert panels, ATSDR concluded that our water modeling and epidemiological studies at Lejeune should continue and would be useful. ATSDR should not, and indeed would not, conduct health studies if they were not expected to advance science and yield results helpful to the people who were affected by environmental contamination.”

ATSDR is using water-modeling techniques and historical reconstruction in an effort to quantify the concentration of the chemicals that existed in the Camp Lejeune water and compute the level and duration of exposure for people who lived or worked on the base before 1985. Prior study results will be reanalyzed when this information is available. The new exposure information

will also be used in ATSDR’s four Lejeune-related health studies, which explore Selected Birth Defects and Childhood Cancers (results due 2012), Adverse Reproductive Outcomes (results due 2012), Causes of Death (results due 2012) and a Health Survey (results due 2014).

Data for the Health Study is being gathered from former active duty personnel who were stationed at Camp Lejeune between April 1975 and December 1985, civilian employees who worked at the base between October 1972 and December 1985 and those who registered with the Marine Corps (see sidebar on page 22) prior to June 30, 2011. The study also includes data from Marines and civilians who served at Camp Pendleton, Calif., who are similar to those who worked at Camp Lejeune, except for their exposure to chemicals in drinking water. The Camp Pendleton data will provide a comparison to the information gathered from those who served at Camp Lejeune.

To learn more about this and other ATSDR health studies, visit or call toll-free 888-422-8737.

WAITING FOR RESULTS

Among the thousands who are anxiously awaiting the results of these studies are two Marines who ardently believe the contaminated water at Camp Lejeune is directly responsible for their or their loved ones’ cancers. Navy veteran Mike Partain and Master Sergeant Jerry Ensminger, USMC (Ret.), are unapologetic in their calls for the Marine Corps to stand accountable for the consequences of the contaminated water.

Mike Partain was diagnosed with breast cancer, a rare affliction for males, in April of 2007. Less than one percent of the 230,000 annual breast cancer diagnoses are in men and, of those who contract the disease, most are in their 60s and 70s. Male breast cancer is also strongly associated with hereditary factors. Partain was 39 at the time of his diagnosis and has no genetic links to breast cancer. He was, however, conceived, carried and born at Camp Lejeune during his father’s assignment to the base from April 1967 to May 1968.

“The entire time my mother was pregnant with me,” says Partain, “she was provided water that was highly contaminated with volatile organic compounds.”

In a November 28, 2011, article in the *Tampa Bay Times* (“Hike in Camp Lejeune male breast cancer cases expected”), Partain cites 73 other cases of male breast cancer among men who lived or worked at Camp Lejeune. The article appeared shortly after ATSDR confirmed that 184 male Marine Corps veterans with a history of breast cancer had been identified by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). According to Partain, the numbers constitute the largest male breast cancer cluster ever identified.

“At nine cases, this was incredible,” he said. “At 29, it became an eyebrow-raiser. At 40, that was confirmation. Now it’s 70 ... or more. To me, the public needs to take notice.”

There is hesitation about declaring the cases a cluster until further research has been done. At this time, ATSDR is looking at the available data and considering different study designs to explore a possible link between male breast cancer and Camp Lejeune.

Regardless of future studies, it’s clear in Partain’s mind. “How many men do you have to find with breast cancer to accept that the water poisoned us?” he asks. “How many bodies do you have to stack up? People should be enraged by this.”

Jerry Ensminger lost his nine-year-old daughter to childhood leukemia in September of 1985. Janey was the only one of Ensminger’s four children to be conceived, carried or born at Camp Lejeune. Like Partain, there is no family history of childhood cancer and, after years of looking for answers, Ensminger came to what he believes is the only logical conclusion: Janey’s illness and subsequent death are the direct result of harmful chemicals in the water at Camp Lejeune.

Ensminger’s efforts to understand the cause of his daughter’s disease put him at odds with the Marine Corps, an institution to which he’d pledged his eternal faith. His fight to find answers has been documented in an Academy-Award nominated film, *Semper Fi: Always Faithful*, and he is also the driving force behind the Janey Ensminger Act (H.R. 1742), legislation that would presume a service connection for veterans’ benefits for illnesses associated with contaminants found in the Camp Lejeune water supply. Introduced by North Carolina Representative Brad Miller, the bill also seeks VA-provided healthcare, medical services and nursing

home care for family members who resided at Camp Lejeune or were in utero during the contamination period and are now manifesting health problems related to exposure to the contaminants.

Similar legislation has also been introduced in the Senate. The Caring for Camp Lejeune Veterans Act (S. 277), introduced by North Carolina Senator Richard Burr, seeks benefits for Camp Lejeune veterans and family members similar to those outlined in the House measure. A controversial aspect of the bill is a funding plan opposed by FRA, including the consolidation of all commissary and exchange operations to pay for the hospital and nursing home care and other medical services that would be provided by the VA.

Burr is the ranking member of the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee and, along with Committee Chair Sen. Patty Murray (Wash.) and their counterparts in the House, Rep. Jeff Miller (Fla., chairman) and Rep. Bob Filner (Calif., ranking member), recently sent a letter asking President Obama to weigh in and help those affected receive care and benefits. The April 20, 2012, letter says, in part, “There is enough scientific evidence already that warrants giving the benefit of the doubt to those who need help now.”



CLAIMS OF CONSPIRACY

Ensminger, Partain and others who are searching for answers are working in partnership with The Few, The Proud, The Forgotten, a community and website (www.tftptf.com) for those impacted by the Camp Lejeune water problem. The group's purpose is to protect the rights of those who served and lived at the base during the period of contamination. In addition to its efforts to connect possible victims with one another, the group has also constructed its own documented timeline associated with exposure to the contaminated water.

Jerry Ensminger has been particularly outspoken in his claims that the Corps has purposefully withheld information and/or provided misinformation to agencies involved with discovering the answers he seeks.

The ATSDR is a federal public health agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that has been charged by Congress to assess health hazards at environmental cleanup sites such as Camp Lejeune. The Department of the Navy (DoN) and the Marine Corps (USMC) support the ATSDR by providing data, information and funding. Although the Corps has been cleared of similar allegations in numerous inquiries into its handling of the historic water problem, Ensminger questions how ATSDR and other investigating agencies can be unbiased when they are working for the entity being scrutinized.

Most recently, Ensminger testified before Congress and addressed efforts to suppress portions of ATSDR's most recent findings. As stated in the report, the DoN and USMC requested information about the current location of active drinking water infrastructure be redacted from the ATSDR report on the flow of Camp Lejeune groundwater and the distribution of drinking water. This so-called "Chapter B" provides the foundation for understanding how contaminants in groundwater migrated to wells and were delivered to water distribution systems. Ensminger says this is an example of "the polluter dictating to the investigating agency what they can and cannot use" and cited experts who say the redacted information "will greatly diminish [the report's] scientific value/credibility."

ATSDR says otherwise. The agency says outside scientists who reviewed the report prior to its public release had access to the redacted data. ATSDR says it

acknowledged the DoN request, because it recognizes the department's authority and responsibility for ensuring the security of the military installation. "The security concerns that were acknowledged in this case did not affect ATSDR's ability to come to meaningful scientific conclusions about past exposures and health, or to publish its conclusions," says Abrams. "ATSDR's top priority is protecting public health. The redactions were limited to the current locations of active drinking water system infrastructure, and did not affect our estimates of past exposures from drinking water information."

The Marine Corps has adamantly denied any effort to influence the outcome of the scientific studies. And in the most recent USMC publication related to Camp Lejeune Historic Drinking Water (published in March 2012), Commandant of the Marine Corps James Amos reiterates his and Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus' commitment to "finding a responsible solution to this challenging and complex situation. Keeping faith with our Marines, Sailors, and families is a priority of mine that includes the continued welfare of all who live and work aboard Marine Corps installations."

WHAT'S NEXT?

While the scientific community continues to study the levels of exposure at Camp Lejeune, those impacted must wait. And although the process is slow and arduous, science may be the best — indeed, perhaps the only — way to determine an appropriate response to those affected by the contaminated water.

"Hundreds of thousands of service men and women, their dependents, and civil servants who drank contaminated water deserve our best efforts to answer questions about their past exposures and current health," says Abrams. "We believe the best way to fully understand the consequences of heavily contaminated drinking water at Camp Lejeune is to complete the necessary epidemiologic studies that are currently underway."



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

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requirements,” explained Joe Barnes, FRA’s national executive director. “DoD privatized approximately 85 percent of its homes using public-private venture (PPV) authorities, however, the Coast Guard is unable to leverage the same equity.” Based on the limited number and substandard quality of the USCG’s current housing inventory, most personnel collect Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) to pay for private off-base quarters. (FRA supports reform of DoD housing standards that also affect USCG personnel, particularly mid- and senior-level enlisted members.)

Availability and accessibility to quality, affordable child care is also a major concern. The Coast Guard operates nine child development centers, but many USCG families must rely on subsidies to pay for more costly private-sector care. FRA asked subcommittee members to support the Coast Guard’s efforts to assist with child care costs, particularly in remote, high-cost areas, where USCG personnel are often stationed.



Many USCG families rely on subsidies to pay for child care.

FRA’s statement also references the Association’s support for the proposed 1.7-percent pay hike for active duty service members in FY 2013 and the Administration’s call to reduce USCG end strength, without a corresponding

reduction in Coast Guard operational requirements. The Association asked the panel to ensure funding is available to adequately man the service to meet significant operational demands.

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

Take Action!

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

Communicate!

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U.S. Naval Armed Guard

AS THE STORM CLOUDS of WWII began to gather, the U.S. recognized the need to protect the merchant vessels that would be called upon to move vast cargos of war-fighting men and materials across enemy-infested waters. A shortage of Navy escort vessels meant these unarmed merchant ships would be easy targets for enemy submarines and surface ships, as well as enemy fighters and bomber aircraft. As the U.S. had done during World War I, it was determined that a Naval Armed Guard should be established to provide defensive firepower to merchant ships traveling alone or in convoys.

Despite provisions of the 1936 Neutrality Act that prohibited merchant ships from being armed, the U.S. Navy organized and began training an Armed Guard to provide gun crews for these vessels in October 1941. By mid-November, Congress repealed the Neutrality Act and U.S. Naval Armed Guard gun crews began reporting for duty aboard the nation's 1,375 merchant marine ships.

According to the Navy's "History of the Armed Guard Afloat, World War II," the war could not have been won without the invaluable contribution of the merchant fleet and crews. As these merchant vessels fulfilled "their greatest role in history, [the war gave] the men who defended these ships against submarines and planes a mission of supreme importance ... [Their] story of triumph over difficulties, of heroism, devotion to duty, sacrifice and courage ... deserves to be told."

When the Armed Guard first began, there were few trained guards. Armed Guard training for officers and enlisted personnel began after basic training and included assignment to one of three Armed Guard Schools, where they learned to fire anti-aircraft guns at land-based ranges as well as from firing ships. Manpower shortages were addressed by accelerating the training program and sometimes assigning a petty officer to lead the gun crews on smaller ships operating in less dangerous areas. Many of the men who came from all walks of life to serve in the Naval Armed Guard had never been near the ocean and within a few short months were engaging the enemy in water-borne mortal combat.

Because it took time to train men for Armed Guard service, smaller Navy crew sizes were common in the early stages. According to the U.S. Merchant Marine Association (USMM.org), as late as August 1942, some ships had no Armed Guard aboard at all and those that were armed sometimes had as few as two Armed Guards aboard. By the end of the war, a typical Armed Guard crew consisted of 28 men, usually one officer, 24 gunners and two or three radiomen or signalmen to handle communications. By 1945, more than 144,900 men had served on over 6,236 American and Allied ships.

Being assigned to the Armed Guard was hazardous duty, at best, particularly during the early days of WWII. Arming the ships was also a slow process as the merchant ships were usually among the last to receive updated equipment. Some ships even carried painted telephone poles to resemble the barrels of large deck guns in an effort to make the enemy believe they were more heavily armed than they were. It took until early 1945 before the Navy could overcome the shortage of firepower, but every effort was made to provide the best protection possible.



Picture of the Armed Guard crew of MV CAPE MATAPAN, date unknown. CAPE MATAPAN was a class C1-A cargo ship.



Hospital Corpsmen (AAoNHC)

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

National Chief Petty Officer's Association

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

US Navy GCA/ATC

Sept. 12–16, 2012, Branson, Mo.
Contact Kent Fairchild, 796 S.
Lemoore Ave., Lemoore, CA 93245,
2chiefkent6186@att.net.

USS AMERICA (CV/CVA-66) Reunion

Sept. 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)

Oct. 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)

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

USS Casa Grande (LSD-13)

Oct. 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)

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

USS Harry E. Yarnell (DLG/CG17)

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

USS Hoel (DDG-13)

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

USS Ingersoll (DD-652/DD-990)

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

USS Kretchmer (DE/DER-329)

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

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Members of the Naval Armed Guard would sometimes train the merchant seamen in the use of weapons, but the relationship between the two segments of the crew wasn't always harmonious. Discord was sometimes evident between the Navy crewmembers and the more highly paid and less disciplined merchant crew members, with trouble most often arising when the ship master and/or Armed Guard officer demonstrated poor leadership and couldn't maintain proper order on the ship. The relationships and level of respect for the Armed Guard certainly improved when crew members experienced the life-or-death combat situations that occurred regularly.

The Naval Armed Guard racked up some impressive statistics during their WWII service. They served on every ocean and carried men, munitions and supplies all over the globe to secure victory. Merchant ships joined Army and Navy transports to move more than seven million Army personnel and more than 145,000 civilians overseas during the war, as well as the nearly 4.25 million personnel who were returned to the U.S. The Naval Armed Guard defended these merchant ships and the Army transports. The value of these lives, as well as the cargo defended cannot be estimated, but the ships protected by the Armed Guard cost more than \$22 billion to build and operate. By August of 1946, 8,033 individual Armed Guards had received decorations or commendations, including five Navy Crosses, two Legion of Merit, 75 Silver Stars, 24 Navy and Marine Corps Medals and 54 Bronze Stars. But these honors were not without a price. Of the nearly 145,000 Armed Guards who served, 1,683 were killed and 127 were classified as missing-in-action.

The U.S. Naval Armed Guard ensured the safe arrival of precious cargo, upon which the future of our nation ... and of the world ... depended. FRA salutes the courageous and valiant actions of these unsung heroes.

RMC Jeff Horvath

He was assigned to 6th Fleet Staff, Gaeta IT. Please contact DPC John Dixon at chiefjd@comcast.net or by phone at 202-732-7639.

ALL NAVY RESERVISTS who served aboard the USS Yorktown (CV/CVA/ CVS-10), 1943–1970.

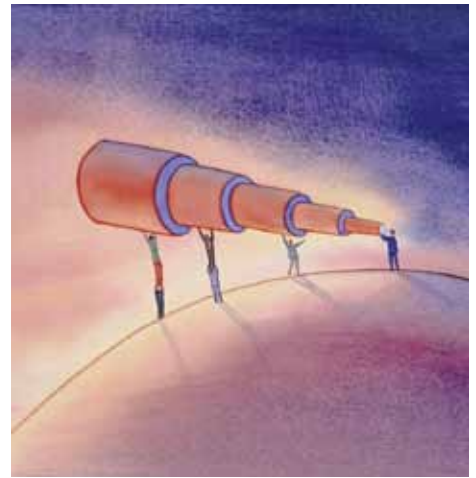
CV-10 is now a Naval Museum in Charleston, S.C., and I'm trying to locate all former crew members. Please contact George A. Brubaker at 609 Pine Street, Reinbeck, IA 50669, gtbru1@reinbeck.net or 319-788-2809.

USS Saratoga (CV-60) Crew

1975 to February 1978, in the S-3 division. Also anyone from Orlando Navy Training Center (Boot Camp), 1972 Company 163. Please contact Michael L. Kirk, 83 Fairway Drive, Mt. Vernon, OH 43050, 740-397-2045 or (c) 740-417-0620.

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



REUNIONS continued from page 29

USS Leary (DD/DDR 879)

Sept. 19–23, 2012, Warwick, R.I. Contact Richard Englander, 2745 Harvest Drive Sarasota, FL 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)

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

USS McMorris (DE-1036)

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

USS Midway Veterans Association

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

USS Norris (DD/DDE-859)

Sept. 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

Sept. 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)

Sept. 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)

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

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

Oct. 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)

Sept. 24–29, 2012, Little Rock, Ark. Contact Ed Hymer, 1114 Elm Ave., Norwalk, IA 50211, 515-981-3006, ednmeq@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 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 Washoe County (LST-1165)

Aug. 29–Sept. 2, 2012, Seattle, Wash. Contact Dennis Steenbergen, 303-470-1187, dsteenbergen1165@gmail.com.

USS Westchester County (LST-1167)

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

USS Wiltsie (DD-716)

Sept. 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

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

VQ-1, VQ-2, VQ-5, VQ-6

Sept. 14–16, 2012, San Diego, Calif. Contact Mike Chicvara, 623-240-0749, amcsret@cox.net.

VR-22 Reunion Group

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

WAVES National

Sept. 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.

FRA Recognizes Outstanding Recruiting and Retention Efforts

During the 2012–12 membership year, many shipmates assisted with recruiting others to join as new members or reinstate their membership. The membership year ended on March 31, 2012. There were 31 branches who achieved gains and had no loss in membership. They will be recognized at FRA’s 85th National Convention in Reno, Nev. We would like to recognize the top ten branches for their efforts in recruiting the largest number of members. They were:

Branch	Location	Members
103	Yokosuka, Japan	133
289	Imperial Beach, Calif.	130
024	Annapolis, Md.	109
293	Elizabeth City, N.C.	107
091	Jacksonville, Fla.	87
046	Honolulu, Hawaii	80
269	Goose Creek, S.C.	75
099	Virginia Beach, Va.	74
020	Groton, Conn.	65
371	Baton Rouge, La.	46

The Association conducts a drawing each year, which offers all shipmates who recruit new members an opportunity to win a recruiting prize. The prize consists of extended membership in the FRA or cash equivalent if they are life members. The results of the drawing and winning shipmates are as follows:

Place	Name	Branch	Location
First	Dale P. Kaiser	27	Detroit, Mich.
Second	PRPSC Donald Larson	94	Corpus Christi, Texas
Third	PRPSW Agustive A. Hermes, Jr.	61	Chula Vista, Calif.
Fourth	Richard Deal	290	Mayport, Fla.
Fifth	PNC Patrick H. LeClaire	192	Fallon, Nev.
Sixth	Ralph S. Feedback	147	Sanford, Fla.
Seventh	Bradford S. Lukens	289	Imperial Beach, Calif.
Eighth	George Brown	97	Whidbey Island, Wash.
Ninth	PRPSE Frank A. Smith	210	Milton, Fla.
Tenth	PRPNW Thomas W. Flanik	174	Sequim, Wash.

Congratulations to the winners!

BRANCH 202 COLUMBIA, S.C.

Jalen Burrell took first place honors at both the branch and regional level of FRA's Americanism Essay Contest this year. He was honored at a ceremony at Indian Land (S.C.) High School, where he is a 12th grade student. Shown (l to r) are Auxiliary PRPSE Fran Hoadley, PRPSE Ron Hoadley, Burrell, his mother Tanya Debblay-Burrell, Congressman Mick Mulvaney (S.C.) and Indian Land HS Principal David Shamble. Jalen also received a U.S. flag that had been flown over the Capitol Building.



BRANCH 315 JOPLIN, MO.

Shipmate Clem Lakey (center) was recognized for his 40 years of continuous FRA service by Branch President Jimmie Ridenour (left) and Secretary Charles Head.



BRANCH 91 JACKSONVILLE, FLA.

SERV and Branch President James Robbins (right) presented a 40-year continuous membership pin to Shipmate Larry Bair (left).



BRANCH 174 SEQUIM, WASH.

PRPNW Tom Flanik and Shipmate Jake Fish, both FRA veterans' service officers, presented a veterans' benefits brief at a local assisted living center. More than 30 veterans and their dependents attended the two-hour meeting. In addition to providing information and helping veterans file claims for benefits, Shipmates Flanik and Fish exemplify FRA's efforts to inform the veterans' community.



BRANCH 298 GRAND RAPIDS, MICH.

FRA continues to be well represented in Grand Rapids and Kent County, Mich. 2010 Kent County Veteran of the Year and PRPNC Marty Posekany (right) presents the 2011 Kent County Veteran of the Year award to Branch President Jan Roy (center), while American Legion Past State Commander Jerry Dennis looks on.



BRANCH 59 CHEYENNE, WYO.

When MM2 Kristen R. Trefren took her re-enlistment oath in the Rotunda of the Wyoming State Capital, several of her FRA shipmates were on hand for the event. All eight of the Naval Operational Support Center Cheyenne (NOSC) staff are now members of the branch. Shown (l to r) are (top row) William (Tony) Linton, Mark Landrie, (middle row) Jim Henderson, Lugene Hawkins, Amanda Smith, (front row) Jim Marshall, LCDR Chad Tidwell (NOSC Commanding Officer), Nicole Barousse, Trefren and Bill Green.



BRANCH 72 FALL RIVER, MASS.

RPNEng Phillip Justin congratulates Shipmate Mozart J. Turenne (left) for his 40 years of continuous FRA membership.



BRANCH 162 GRETNA, LA.

FRA congratulates Americanism Essay Contest winners from Belle Chasse High School. Shown (l to r) are Blair Neilsen (teacher), Shipmate Robert Kinghorn, Terry Esteve, Brianna Riley, Jace Austin and Doug Schilling (teacher). Not shown is Brittany Creel.



BRANCH 182 BETHESDA, MD.

Shipmate Danny Snare accepted his 40-year Continuous Membership Pin from Branch President D. Keith Kaider.

BRANCH 113 STOCKTON, CALIF.

Shipmate Anthony J. Sandoval (center) was recognized for his 40 years of continuous FRA membership by Past Branch President Zeb D Motley and President Richard M. Carpino.



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.

NAME	BRANCH	NAME	BRANCH
Andres, Neil E, CT3, USN	MAL	Goodman, Sam, CPO, USN	274
Anthony, John W, SK1, USNR	234	Grale, Arthur W, MMC, USN	342
Archer, Theodore R, AMEC, USN	291	Grant, Stephen E, FC2, USN	024
Arthur, William, AOC, USN	MAL	Grogg, Ralph L, POC, USN	289
Banks, George J, BTC, USN	MAL	Guckes, John L, AKC, USN	013
Barnwell, Billy J, MM1, USN	186	Harbison, Leroy E, ADJC, USN	097
Barrett, Ramon D, SKCS, USN	342	Harkness, Kenneth C, HT1, USN	040
Berard, Roger G, MKC, USCG	072	Hass, Carl R, DK1, USN	MAL
Bisbee, Richard, ICC(SW), USN	022	Holcomb, Preston T, BTC, USN	201
Bond, Howard A, SKCS, USN	MAL	Howerton, Albert L, SWC, USN	334
Borruso, John, SK3, USN	226	Hughes, Thomas V, ADJC, USN	022
Bradstreet, Paul R, SKCM, USN	269	Hull, Gray B, RM1, USN	022
Breedlove, Earl L, ENCS, USN	230	Hummer, Douglas D, ADJC, USN	186
Brown, Robert L, SCPO, USN	MAL	Jackson, James B, CSC, USN	175
Bumgarner, Robert L, RMCM, USN	216	Johnson, Richard R, BMC, USN	238
Buonaruo, Samuel F, BMC, USN	124	Joy, Ernest E, YNCS, USN	377
Burgdorf, Thomas J., ATC, USN	MAL	Kennedy, Carl E, YNC, USN	028
Butler, Richard N, AVCM, USN	187	Kennedy, Bobby E, HM1, USN	040
Caldwell, Harlen V., EM3, USN	170	Kessler, Thomas E, MSGT, USMC	MAL
Cerezo, Emilio, MS2, USN	MAL	Kirby, James C, FTMC, USN	295
Charles, Jack M, ADJC, USN	MAL	Knabe, William E, BMC, USN	057
Chebetar, Frank A, OSC, USN	099	La Riviere, Frank H., RMC, USN	MAL
Chronister, Terry L, RM1, USN	106	Lee, Thomas M, NCCS(SS), USN	316
Clarkson, Robert W, PO1, USN	022	Lewis, Charles R, RMC, USN	MAL
Clendening, James H., USN	174	Madsen, Charles R, AMCS, USN	MAL
Cook, David N, CAPT, USN	MAL	Mahoney, James F, SHC, USN	099
Cooper, Clarence G, QMCS, USN	MAL	Makuch, Casimir E, AOC, USN	092
Corbitt, Rosalind C, DP1, USN	099	McCormick, Edward N, BMCM, USN	029
Counts, Charles E, SK1, USN	296	McCoy, James B, ENC, USN	281
Crowell, Edgar C, MGYSGT, USMC	MAL	McLain, John, MRC, USN	MAL
Cunningham, Frederick, HTC, USN	MAL	McSorley, Raymond E, HMC, USN	061
Davenport, Elvin L, CPO, USN	161	Mekailek, Francis E, ADRC, USN	MAL
Deem, Herman R, MMCS, USN	MAL	Mercer, Walter J, FTGC, USN	204
Dobbs, Charles, SMC, USN	MAL	Merwin, David H, BMC, USN	254
Dombrowski, Adolf, ENC, USN	061	Miozza, Paul V, YNC, USN	177
Doyle, Harlon F., CWO4, USN	005	Mitschke, Raymond A, EMC, USN	009
Driesen, Simon M, DKCS, USN	168	Monahan, Eugene C, SH1, USN	042
Elliott, James T, BTCM, USN	MAL	Morley, Frederick R., GN2, USCG	275
Ellison, Claude H, SKC, USN	299	Noble, John A, AD1, USN	109
Encino, Ernest G, O3E, USN	203	Nordquist, Richard M, CTACS, USN	MAL
Epley, Millard B, EQCM, USN	MAL	Partin, Jerry W, GMG1, USN	194
Erickson, Robert E, ABCS, USN	136	Payne, Earl L, YNCM, USN	181
Falk, Frank R, ATCS, USN	MAL	Petska, James, GYSGT, USMC	313
Fannin, Richard C, YN1(SS), USN	099	Plummer, Daniel D, MSGT, USMC	175
Feldt, Laurel G., BM1, USN	182	Pollard, David L, ADRC, USN	097
Fogelstrom, Warren R, STG1, USN	MAL	Portnell, Jerry F., PO2, USN	328
Foley, Robert, PO1, USN	MAL	Reckner, Arthur M, DK1, USN	MAL
Forbush, Alan A, CPO, USN	175	Richardson, Ray J, AMSC, USN	089
Foster, Rufus E, CPO, USN	MAL	Riedlinger, Fred, GMGC, USN	060
Gaylord, George R, ENCS, USN	282	Ritter, Douglas D, CSCS, USN	MAL
Gear, Fred I, POCS, USN	MAL	Roberts, Leon J, L1C, USN	260
Gibbs, Edison D, GMCM, USN	267	Rowe, Marion E, ADRC, USN	094
Gooden, Richard A, BM1, USN	MAL		



NAME	BRANCH
Rowell, William J, CPO, USN	374
Sala, Robert D, FTMC, USN	053
Schienberg, Joe, RM2C, USN	077
Sciara, Joseph F, BMC, USN	003
Sellers, William S, SKC(SS), USN	MAL
Sendling, Donald L, GMGC, USN	MAL
Sharp, Bill W, LCDR, USN	147
Shaw, Conrad, LCDR, USN	269
Short, Darrel A, EWC, USN	040
PRPSW, Smedley, Charles F, YNC, USN	070
Smith, Richard F, YN1, USNR	126
Spangler, William L, YNC, USN	147
Stabile, Robert L, GMMC, USN	289
Steele, Berwyn G, PO1, USN	241
Stephens, Judson, YNC, USN	012
Stout, Kenneth D, BMC, USN	043
Sturgis, Arthur, PO1, USN	MAL
Stusnick, John J, CAPT, USN	MAL
Taft, Joseph L, TMC, USN	MAL
Teems, Clyde, YNC, USN	MAL
Thompson, Gerald E, CSCM, USN	060
Tullos, James R, ATC, USN	278
Vestal, Robert, USN	MAL
Vincent, Harry W, ADC, USN	057
Vlasek, Paul J, ADRC, USN	238
Wallace, Charles D, CTTCM, USN	182
Wheelhouse, Clifton P, CSCS, USN	060
Wilson, Lee E, BMC, USN	027
Winston, John A, BM1, USN	MAL
Yarrington, Perry B, HMCM, USN	022
Youderian, John A, HMC, USN	053
Zeiner, Robert David, YNCS, 207	
Ziemer, Ernest, ADC, USN	124
Zuest, Paul, HMCM, USN	MAL

Names in red indicate 50 year continuous members.



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A Message from the North Central Regional President

THIS YEAR IS HALF over; we are in the process of installing our unit officers and looking forward to the second half of the year being even more productive than the first.

The North Central Region has continued to work diligently to promote the values of our organization. After visiting with the secretaries and/or presidents of the units, I am reminded of the awesome privilege it is to be in this position. It is inspiring to hear of the many worthwhile projects and organizations that are being benefited by our contributions.

All of the units donate to the veterans' homes at Christmas time and most all of them have parties for children's homes. There are those that put together backpacks for needy schoolchildren and toiletry bags for the homeless. Some collect the fronts of greeting cards for St. Jude's Hospital. There is the Teddy Bear Project that supplies the police force with teddy bears for frightened children they encounter on the job. Schools and school children are helped by donations of clothing and other needed items in underprivileged areas of the region.

Many donate to homeless and battered women's shelters, to food banks and community-based operations for the needy. Others help out the Meals on Wheels organization and make quilts for the Ronald McDonald House. Many volunteer at veteran's homes, nursing homes and hospitals. They also donate blood platelets and needed articles of clothing, and toiletries.

Every North Central unit is working in some way to help those in their community, our country and our armed forces, both active and inactive. They are striving to make this world a better place.

Please continue to support our National President Gini Larson's Project, *The Susan G. Komen for the Cure* and *the Prostate Cancer Foundation*. These are most worthy causes, and I think it would be hard to find anyone who has not been touched by these diseases in some way. Let's all help stamp them out!

The North Central Regional Convention will be held August 23-26, 2012, at Hilton Grand Rapids Airport, 4747 28th St SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49512. Phone 616-957-0100 for reservations. Rooms are \$82. Chairman Marty Posekany can be reached at 616-225-9264.

It is such a joy and an honor to serve as Regional President of the North Central Region. God bless us, one and all!



TERESA A. NORTON
Regional President North Central



Unit 241, Air Capital, Wichita Visit
Unit 241 President Carol Frauenfelder, RPNC Teresa Norton and Auxiliary Member Thelma Silver



North Central Region Mid-Year 2012
Left to Right: PRPNC Helen Hall, Unit 136 Secretary Marilyn Krick, and Nova Combs of Unit 315.



FRA RPNC Charles (Chuck) Neureuther and Auxiliary RPNC Teresa Norton



Unit 267, Greater St. Louis Visit
Left to right: Barbara Ahee, Unit Secretary Betty Schonhorst, NES Doris Fri, RPNC Teresa Norton, V. Taylor, Unit President Betty Curran, Unit Vice President Shirley Ferrington and Barb Skates.

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1935 - 2008

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