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# FRA *today*



## AIR DECK OPERATIONS

**15** The History of FRA: 2000–2009

**30** FRA Thanks *Operation Flagship*  
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# Featured

## 18 AIR DECK OPERATIONS

U.S. Navy aircraft carriers are often compared to small cities, with 5,000 or so inhabitants living and working together to complete a common mission: taking lethal Naval airpower to the fight, wherever on the globe that may be. This month's feature highlights the able men and women of the USS *Dwight D. Eisenhower's* (CVN-69) Air Department. They play a vital role in ensuring Navy aircraft are safely and effectively launched and recovered.



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Joan E. Miller



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### LOYALTY, PROTECTION AND SERVICE

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

### ON THE COVER

In March of 2013, Vice Adm. Frank C. Pandolfe, commander of U.S. 6th Fleet, was greeted by sideboys as he arrived aboard the aircraft carrier USS *Dwight D. Eisenhower* (CVN-69). U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Lauren Booher.

## FRA's "Yard Period"



Lauren Armstrong

I HAD THE EXTREME privilege of visiting the *USS Dwight D. Eisenhower* (CVN-69) last month, while the ship was in the Norfolk Naval Shipyard undergoing routine refits and rehab. It was a personal thrill to experience the sheer enormity of a U.S. Navy aircraft carrier, meet some of the amazing crewmembers and gain a basic understanding of what it takes to get military aircraft off (and safely back on) the flight deck. Like any operation of that size, there is a phenomenal number of moving parts and logistical challenges, and I was terribly impressed with the professionalism and commitment of the crew. When the ship's in "the yard," the crew has to shoulder most of its usual responsibilities, manage their part of the repair and refit process, and do it all while operating out of less-than-optimum workspaces. It's all in a day's work for Navy sailors. It's simply what they do.

Although on a much smaller scale, FRA's National Headquarters (NHQ) building is also in a "yard period." Our "vessel" is undergoing some major refit operations and the "crew" (see photo below) continues its committed efforts to support our mission and our members — and usually with a smile. The capital improvements at NHQ are progressing smoothly and well, the first and second decks are taking shape and we're starting to see glimpses of what the new spaces will look like. We're grateful for the generous donations we've received to the Operation Flagship Refit campaign and are proud to recognize our donors (to date) on page 31.



### Your NHQ Crew

The FRA National Headquarters staff is onboard to serve you. Shown are (l to r, front row) Steve Cox, Bob Washington, Rod Kennedy, Shirley Moore, Erin Bertschinger, Chris Slawinski (kneeling), Maria Osby, Lauren Armstrong, Teresa Wiener, Penny Collins, Jimmy Short, Jayne Pritchett, Sami Al-Samawi, Misrak Zeleke, (back row) John Davis, Tom Snee, Stephen Tassin and Will Kohudic.

**Lauren Armstrong** is FRA's Director of Communications and serves as the Managing Editor of *FRA Today*. Please contact her at [lauren@fra.org](mailto:lauren@fra.org).

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VOLUME 93 NUMBER 10





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*The new face of time? Stauer's Compendium Hybrid fuses form and functionality for UNDER \$30! Read on...*

Innovation is the path to the future. Stauer takes that seriously. That's why we developed the **Compendium Hybrid**, a stunningly-designed hybrid chronograph with over one dozen analog and digital functions that is more versatile than any watch that we have ever engineered.

New technology usually starts out at astronomical prices and then comes down years later. We skipped that step to allow everyone the chance to experience this watch's brilliant fusion of technology and style. We originally priced the Stauer **Compendium Hybrid** at \$395 based on the market for advanced sports watches... but then stopped ourselves. Since this is no ordinary economy, we decided to offer the **Compendium Hybrid** at **92% off**. That means this new technological marvel can be yours for only \$29<sup>95</sup>!

**Welcome a new Digital Revolution.** With the release of the dynamic new **Compendium**, those boxy, plastic wrist calculators of the past have been replaced by this luxurious LCD chronograph that is sophisticated enough for a formal evening out, but rugged and tough enough to feel at home in a cockpit, camping expedition or covert mission.

The watch's extraordinary dial seamlessly blends an analog watch face with a stylish digital display. Three super-bright luminous hands keep time along the inner dial, while a trio of circular LCD windows track the hour, minutes and seconds. An eye-catching digital semi-circle animates in time with the second hand and shows the day of the week. The watch also features a rotating bezel, stopwatch and alarm functions and green electro-luminescence backlight.



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## Naval Aviation

**NAVAL AVIATION HAS ALWAYS** been of special interest to me, even though I served on destroyers. The “black-shoe” comparison to the aviation “brown shoes” and “aviation greens” always added a historical punch to my interest in naval warfare. With the exception of a short five-month assignment as a division yeoman at Ellyson Field, NAS Pensacola Crash Crew, most of my information came from books. That all changed for me in 1983, when I reported onboard *USS America* (CV-66).

Naval aviation has grown monumentally since its early days in 1912, when our Navy’s first aircraft carrier, the *USS Langley* (CV-1), was launched from the Mare Island Shipyard in California. CDR Ken Whiting (Whiting Field, NAS Pensacola) was its first commanding officer with Lt. Virgil Griffin being the first to fly off the *Langley*’s deck. Shortly thereafter, Lt. Gordon Ellyson (Ellyson Field, NAS Pensacola) was dubbed Aviator

#1 and a long line of others followed in his footsteps — in fixed-wing aircraft, helicopters and other aviation platforms, including those that have taken Americans into space. The early days of naval aviation began the “mission of fate,” where weapons delivered could replace the cost of life among our troops put ashore. Unmanned drones have picked up a portion of those missions, but our military personnel remain the most precious and most necessary component of the equation.

Military aviators, predominantly officers, know the value of their enlisted support team. Crew chiefs, mechanics, parachute riggers, fuel technicians and a wide variety of other critical specialists ensure both aircraft and aircrew have an equal number of takeoffs and landings. Training for these dedicated crewmembers is ongoing and evolves with each technological iteration. Since aviation’s early days, when enlisted aviation training took place at Park Field (later Naval Air Station

(NAS)/Naval Air Technical Training Command (NATTC) in Millington, Tenn.) and NAS Lakehurst, N.J., enlisted aircrews have honed their skills through intense training, hands-on experience and a strong commitment to excellence.

That commitment is evident in today’s aviation community. FRA recently sent our communications director, Lauren Armstrong, to the Norfolk Naval Shipyard to interview crewmembers aboard *USS Dwight D. Eisenhower* (CVN-69) while the vessel is undergoing a routine yard period. During the visit, “Ike’s” crewmembers shared their professionalism and pride — in their ship, their Navy and their nation.

Moving people, supplies, warfighting capabilities and humanitarian aid all over the world is what today’s Navy is all about, and its “air team” maximizes our nation’s ability to carry out those missions. Enlisted personnel and officers support and depend on each other, and share the accomplishments, and sometimes the frustrations, of modern day aviation operations.

My tour aboard *America* certainly was rewarding, challenging and professionally enhancing for me. The challenge to qualify on every “shirt” of the flight deck brought home to me the dedication required of, and demonstrated by, our sailors who daily manage those floating airports to get pilots and aircraft off the “pointing end” and recover them just past the “round-down.” We owe a great deal to our aviation community, from their ability to provide air protection to the simple delivery of mail bags over our fantails.

*Sail and Press on!*



Tom Snee

To honor those in all facets of aviation, I offer the stanza of the Navy Hymn dedicated to aviators:

Lord, guard and guide the men who fly  
Through the great spaces in the sky  
Be with them always, in the air  
In darkening storms and sunlight fair.  
Oh hear us when we lift our prayer  
For those in peril in the air.

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– Janet F.

Have you ever said to yourself "I'd love to get a computer, if only I could figure out how to use it." Well, you're not alone. Computers were supposed to make our lives simpler, but they've gotten so complicated that they are not worth the trouble. With all of the "pointing and clicking" and "dragging and dropping" you're lucky if you can figure out where you are. Plus, you are constantly worrying about viruses and freeze-ups. If this sounds familiar, we have great news for you. There is finally a computer that's designed for simplicity and ease of use. It's the WOW Computer, and it was designed with you in mind. This computer is easy-to-use, worry-free and literally puts

the world at your fingertips. From the moment you open the box, you'll realize how different the WOW Computer is. The components are all connected; all you do is plug it into an outlet and your high-speed Internet connection. Then you'll see the screen – it's now 22 inches. This is a completely new touch screen system, without the cluttered look of the normal computer screen. The "buttons" on the screen are easy to see and easy to understand. All you do is touch one of them, from the Web, Email, Calendar to Games– you name it... and a new screen opens up. It's so easy to use you won't have to ask your children or grandchildren for help. Until now, the very people who could benefit most from E-mail and the Internet are the ones that have had the hardest time accessing it. Now, thanks to the WOW Computer, countless older Americans are Discovering the wonderful world of the Internet every day. Isn't it time

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## Retiree vs. Veteran

What are the differences in benefits between “Retired Military” and “Retired Veteran”?

*Matt O’Connell*

**FRA Response:** If a person serves 20 years (or more) in the military, he or she is eligible to “retire” and receive military retired pay. Additionally, military retirees are also eligible to enroll in the TRICARE healthcare system, which includes TRICARE for Life when they reach age 65. There are other benefits, including the use of military treatment facilities, commissaries and exchanges, and other facilities (such as bowling alleys, gyms, etc.) on military installations.

A veteran is someone who served in the military, regardless of the length of his or her service. If they were discharged honorably, veterans are eligible for benefits through the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). These benefits include VA healthcare, education assistance, hiring preference in many government agencies, and burial benefits, to name a few. There are some specialized criteria for some of these benefits; for example, veterans who were injured in the course of their military duties may be eligible for VA disability compensation and the level of education benefit may depend on how recently they left the service. There are also income limits (means testing) that may limit services available to vets who do not have service-connected health problems.

The term “retired veteran” isn’t heard very much. There are two distinct categories (military retirees and veterans): All military retirees are also veterans and, therefore, eligible for all associated VA benefits. However, not all veterans are retirees.

## Looking Ahead

My husband and I wanted to make sure you were aware of the date misprint on the cover of the September 2014 *FRA Today*. We were surprised to see that you were working on scholarships 90 years in advance! The misprint shows 2104 instead of 2014.

*Nadine L. Meade*

**FRA Response:** We like to think we’re forward thinking, but that’s REALLY getting ahead of ourselves!!! Good eyes and we appreciate you letting us know.

## FRA Education Foundation

Does the FRA Education Foundation scholarship program include great-grandchildren?

*Francis Taranto*

**FRA Response:** Yes, even though it does not specifically state it on the applications, the FRA Education Foundation, in those few instances where it applies, does accept applications from eligible great-grandchildren.

## Agent Orange

[In the discussion about VA benefits for those exposed to Agent Orange,] how about the helicopter crews that flew in-land for rescues or the rescue swimmers who went into the water on the coast to aid a downed pilot? These brave crews cannot prove boots on the ground, but even if you have an award (medal) that states you did this, the VA will not admit you were in contaminated air or water.

I made two rescues by entering the water to aid downed pilots and [received] an award as a rescue crew swimmer. I also was involved in a helicopter crash into the water, but the VA says that doesn’t count. I believe the people at the VA are not familiar with situations that occur in a war zone, [as they] claim my award was a temporary citation. Am I to assume the VA cannot read a DD-214? I have diabetes, Parkinson’s, night terrors, a spot on the brain and three spots on my lungs.

I read that the VA has cleared about 50% of its backlog. How much of it has been by denial?

*Charles W. Stecz Jr.*



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



# FRA wishes the U.S. Navy a Happy 239th Birthday!

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of patriotism by acclaimed artist Jody Bergsma with the embroidered words: *Proud Veteran*. Adding to the comfort and style, the jacket has two front pockets, knit cuffs and hem and roomy fit with contrast woven lining. Imported.

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**E27941**



John Davis

## Be Aware of Issues and Be Involved

**AS THIS ISSUE OF *FRA Today*** goes to print, FY 2014 is drawing to a close with many FY 2015 authorization and appropriations bills still pending. Congress is expected to pass a continuing resolution (CR) for the FY 2015 budget that began October 1, 2014. This CR will keep the government open until the final federal budget is approved. It now appears that the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) will have to wait until after the November elections. At press time, the House has passed its version of the FY 2015 NDAA and the Senate Armed Services Committee has completed work on its version. Once the full Senate passes its version of the measure, a conference committee will be appointed to resolve the differences between the House and Senate bills and the resulting legislation will be voted on by both chambers. If approved, it will be sent to the president to be signed into law or vetoed.

Legislative developments can occur rapidly. If you haven't already, please subscribe to FRA's weekly legislative e-newsletter, *NewsBytes*, to keep up with congressional

action that could have a dramatic impact on your pay and benefits. To sign up for *NewsBytes*, simply go to the FRA website ([www.fra.org](http://www.fra.org)) and log in. Click the "Edit" link next to Profile. On the next screen, check the box for "Subscribe to *NewsBytes*" and click "Submit" at the bottom of the page.

Members should also visit the FRA Action Center ([action.fra.org/action-center](http://action.fra.org/action-center)) to review current issues pending before Congress. Members' grassroots involvement has a direct influence on the Association's ability to effectively represent your concerns before Congress and other appropriate federal agencies. Please take the time to send a message to your elected officials about issues that are important to you. You are welcome to use one of the prewritten letters on the Action Center or compose your own. Also, don't forget to take advantage of some of the other resources in the Action Center such as the "Elected Officials," "Election," "Issues" and "Media" pages, all of which provide opportunities to learn and be involved.

### \$39.2M Prudential Deal With Military Families Gets OK'd

A Massachusetts federal judge recently gave preliminary approval to a \$39.2 million settlement in a consolidated class action suit alleging Prudential Insurance Co. of America failed to pay death benefits to military service members, veterans and their families under a group life insurance program.

The plaintiffs claimed that Prudential didn't pay lump sum death benefits under several group life insurance policies as required by law and instead provided military service members, veterans and other beneficiaries with an interest-bearing retained asset account. Prudential has denied any wrongdoing and claims its actions were authorized by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

The bulk of the proposed settlement will come in \$20.5 million of charitable donations over the next five years from Prudential to an organization that focuses on veteran or military causes of the company's choice. About \$8.4 million will go into a common fund escrow account to provide cash payments to beneficiaries. The settlement proposal also noted that \$9.7 million will go toward attorneys' fees.

### Communicate with Your Elected Officials

In order to help shipmates communicate with elected officials in support of FRA-led initiatives, the Association publishes a guidebook, "Communicate with Your Elected Officials," which contains suggestions for contacting your lawmakers by phone, mail, fax or e-mail. It also includes guidelines for composing, addressing and sending correspondence.

Printed with the generous support of GEICO, the handbook is an adjunct to FRA's online Action Center ([action.fra.org/action-center](http://action.fra.org/action-center)) and is part of FRA's ongoing campaign to encourage citizens to be active participants in the legislative process.

To reserve your free copy of "Communicate with Your Elected Officials" for the incoming 114th Congress, contact FRA at 1-800-FRA-1924 (ext. 108) or e-mail your request (and mailing address) to Maria at [Maria@fra.org](mailto:Maria@fra.org). Written requests can be sent to Fleet Reserve Association, Attn: Communicate, 125 N West Street, Alexandria, VA 22314-2754.



## DFAS Relaxes Password Restrictions

The Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) recently decided to undo some of the arduously challenging password requirements that were implemented last year:

Old requirements	New requirements
Must be 15 to 30 characters in length	Must be 9 to 30 characters in length
Contain at least two UPPERCASE letters	Contain at least one UPPERCASE letter
Contain at least two lowercase letters	Contain at least one lowercase letter
Contain at least two numbers (0-9)	Contain at least one number (0-9)
Contain at least two special characters	Contain at least one special character
Passwords will expire every 60 days	Passwords will expire every 150 days

DFAS officials listened to customer feedback regarding MyPay passwords and made these changes, while still ensuring the system meets the Department of Defense (DoD) security policies.

## U.S. Family Health Plan is Duplicative and Should be Eliminated

According to a Government Accountability Office (GAO) report that was released on July 31, 2014, the U.S. Family Health Plan (USFHP) is duplicative and should be eliminated. This health care program serves approximately 134,000 military family members and retirees, but there is significant overlap with TRICARE-managed care support contractors (MCSCs). Within the Department of Defense's (DoD) current military health system, USFHP offers military beneficiaries the same TRICARE Prime benefit that is offered by the regional MCSCs. For four of the six USFHP designated providers, 80 percent of their service includes areas where TRICARE Prime is available.

According to the report, USFHP costs DoD more than \$1 billion a year, and its unique nature restricts DoD from maximizing use of military hospitals and clinics. GAO official Debra Draper stated that USFHP's geographic overlap with existing TRICARE Prime regions makes it a target for elimination.

*The full text of the GAO report is available at: [www.gao.gov/assets/670/665151.pdf](http://www.gao.gov/assets/670/665151.pdf)*

## TRICARE Set to Cover Laboratory-Developed Tests

On August 15, 2014, TRICARE announced that it will cover certain laboratory-developed tests under the Defense Health Agency Evaluation of Non-United States Food and Drug Administration Approved Laboratory-Developed Tests Demonstration Project beginning in September 2014. TRICARE will also be allowed to cover approved laboratory-developed tests retroactively if the coverage guidelines for the specific test are met.

This means that beneficiaries can now file a claim with their regional TRICARE contractors to receive payment if the beneficiary has paid for a laboratory-developed test since January 1, 2013, and it is now included in the demonstration. Many of the covered tests are related to links between certain genes and specific health conditions, such as breast and lung cancer, cystic fibrosis, various syndromes and other health concerns.

TRICARE will maintain and publish a list of approved tests, and will continually update it as new tests are reviewed and approved for coverage. You can visit the covered services section of the TRICARE website ([www.tricare.mil/ldt](http://www.tricare.mil/ldt)) to see the full list of which tests are covered, and which are eligible for retroactive reimbursement. Most tests must be preauthorized by the regional contractor before they can be covered and must be offered by an authorized provider. Information is also available by calling your regional TRICARE contractor:

- North Region: Health Net Federal Services, LLC, 1-877-TRICARE (1-877-874-2273)
- South Region: Humana Military, 1-800-444-5445
- West Region: UnitedHealthcare Military & Veterans, 1-877-988-WEST (1-877-988-9378)

## Legislative Update: Doc Fix

The threat of significant cuts to reimbursement rates for physicians seeing Medicare and TRICARE patients was delayed earlier this year from April 1, 2014, to April 1, 2015. Efforts to identify and enact a permanent solution have dragged on for several years, with Congress approving only temporary fixes due to cost.

FRA strongly supports a permanent solution (the "Doc Fix") that establishes sufficient reimbursement rates to ensure beneficiaries have continued access to quality medical care. The Association supports the "SGR Repeal and Medicare Provider Payment Modernization Act" (H.R. 4015), which will make the "Doc Fix" permanent by repealing the antiquated Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR) formula and replacing it with a fair, stable, simplified system of physician payments for Medicare and TRICARE programs. This legislation passed the House earlier this year and is awaiting consideration in the Senate. Shipmates are urged to use the FRA Action Center ([action.fra.org/action-center](http://action.fra.org/action-center)) to ask their senators to approve this important legislation.

## Military Retirees Turning 65

Military retirees turning 65 should understand the differences between Medicare and TRICARE. TRICARE and Medicare are separate programs. Medicare is health insurance for people age 65 and older, as well as for people under age 65 who qualify for Social Security disability insurance. TRICARE for Life (TFL) is TRICARE's Medicare-wraparound coverage and is available to all Medicare-eligible TRICARE beneficiaries. In order to be covered by TFL, beneficiaries must have Medicare Part A (hospitalization) and Part B (medically necessary services like doctors' services, outpatient care, home health services, and other medical services) coverage.

For TFL beneficiaries, Medicare is the primary insurance and TFL acts as the secondary insurance, minimizing out-of-pocket expenses. There is no enrollment fee or paperwork associated with TFL; however beneficiaries must sign up for Medicare part B as soon as they become eligible to avoid late-enrollment penalties. There is a monthly premium for Part B coverage, based on income. For more information regarding Medicare enrollment, call 1-800-633-4227 or visit [www.tricare.mil/tfl/](http://www.tricare.mil/tfl/).

## ACTIVE DUTY/RESERVE ISSUES

**President Obama Sets Military Pay Raise at One Percent for 2015**

President Obama sent a letter to Congress in early September, notifying lawmakers that he will cap military pay increases at one percent for next year. That would be 0.8 percent lower than private sector wage growth of 1.8 percent. The president can implement the pay raise unilaterally

through an executive order, as he did with a one-percent rate increase last year. As it has for the past 14 years, FRA continues to fight hard to get Congress to reduce the gap between private sector and military pay, and keep military pay raises at least in line with civilian pay growth.

**CFPB Shuts Down Fee Scam, Secures Debt Relief for Bilked Service Members**

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) recently put an end to a service member fee scam and shut down a predatory lending firm in an effort to protect service members and their families.

The CFPB stopped a fee scam run by USA Discounters, Ltd., a company that operates a chain of retail stores near military bases and offers financing for purchases. USA Discounters tricked thousands of service members into paying fees for legal protections the service members already had and for certain services the company failed to provide. The CFPB has obtained more than \$350,000 in refunds for service members harmed by this scam.

USA Discounters, Ltd. retail stores sell furniture, electronics, bedding, and appliances. Most of the company's stores are located within a few miles of military bases, and use standardized contracts tailored for active duty service members. These contracts require service members to pay a \$5 fee to be represented in any lawsuits filed under the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA) that provides certain legal protections to active duty service members. In fact, these fees helped USA Discounters to sue service members.

The CFPB's consent order requires USA Discounters, Ltd. to:

- No longer market these contracts and stop charging the fee;
- Make full restitution to all eligible consumers for the \$5 fee, plus interest; and
- Pay a \$50,000 penalty to the CFPB's Civil Penalty Fund.

*The full text of the CFPB's Consent Order is available at: [http://files.consumerfinance.gov/f/201408\\_cfpb\\_consent-order\\_usa-discounters.pdf](http://files.consumerfinance.gov/f/201408_cfpb_consent-order_usa-discounters.pdf)*

The CFPB and 13 state attorney generals also obtained approximately \$92 million in debt relief recently from Colfax Capital Corporation and Culver Capital, LLC, collectively known as "Rome Finance," for about 17,000 service members and other consumers harmed by the company's predatory lending scheme. Rome Finance lured consumers with the promise of no money down and instant financing, and then masked expensive finance charges by artificially inflating the disclosed price of the consumer goods being sold. Rome Finance also withheld information on billing statements and illegally collected on loans that were void. Rome Finance and two of its owners are permanently banned from consumer lending.

These companies offered credit to consumers purchasing computers, video game consoles, televisions and other products. The products were typically sold at mall kiosks near military bases and, in some cases, Rome Finance was the initial creditor. In other instances, Rome Finance provided indirect financing by agreeing to buy the financing contracts from merchants who sold the goods.

Service members and other consumers would fill out a credit application at the kiosk and, if approved, sign financing agreements that did not accurately disclose the amounts they would ultimately have to pay. These contracts generated millions for Rome Finance while burdening consumers with excessive debt. The CFPB in its consent order found that Rome Finance:

- Provided inaccurate credit information that prevented consumers from making an informed decision about their credit;
- Failed to include certain disclosures in billing statements required by law; and
- Was not licensed to provide consumer lending in any state and charged annual percentage rates higher than some states allowed.

To address these violations, the CFPB's consent order requires Rome Finance to:

- Provide approximately \$92 million in debt relief;
- Update credit reporting agencies and notify service members and other consumers of debt status;
- Pay redress to compensate affected consumers for the amount of excess finance charges they paid;
- Cooperate with service members and other consumers who seek to vacate judgments against consumers relating to the financing agreements; and
- Rome Finance and two of its owners, Ronald Wilson and William Collins, are permanently banned from conducting any business in the field of consumer lending.

*The full text of the CFPB's Consent Order will be available at: [files.consumerfinance.gov/f/201407\\_cfpb\\_consent-order\\_rome-finance.pdf](http://files.consumerfinance.gov/f/201407_cfpb_consent-order_rome-finance.pdf)*



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01-19763-001-E27941

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## VETERANS ISSUES

## Obama Announces Efforts Targeted to Veterans' Mental Health

President Obama recently announced new initiatives intended to improve mental health treatment and support for service members and veterans.

### Other changes that were announced include:

- A new recruiting campaign to fill shortages of doctors and nurses at VA hospitals. "Recruiting is job one right now."
- Automatically enrolling military personnel receiving mental health care in the Department of Defense system into mental health treatment programs administered by the VA, and better ways of coordinating their medical records.
- New efforts to better understand traumatic brain injuries (TBI), including a \$34.4 million VA suicide prevention study involving 1,800 veterans at 29 VA hospitals, and more suicide prevention training for military and VA personnel.
- A related initiative includes partnership with five national banks to help veterans get lower-rate VA mortgages. The partnership cuts red tape where possible and establishes concrete steps to reduce the burden on service members by having participating mortgage servicers proactively identify, notify and assist in enrolling eligible service members.

The FRA Legislative Team is National Executive Director Tom Snee, Director of Legislative Programs John Davis, Assistant Director of Legislative Programs Stephen Tassin and National Veterans Service Officer Chris Slawinski.

## VA Takes Next Step to Modernize Scheduling System

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced plans to issue a request for proposal (RFP) for a new medical appointment scheduling system in an effort to replace its current system, which is antiquated. The new system will improve access to care for veterans by providing medical schedulers with cutting-edge, management-based scheduling software.

"VA chose a full- and open-competitive strategy to acquire a 'commercial, off-the-shelf' scheduling system," said Stephen Warren, VA's Chief Information Officer. "We want a system that is user-friendly and tailored specifically for our veterans."

Even though VA has plans to replace the existing system, efforts are underway to make the current system easier to use for schedulers and veterans. This update is scheduled to begin rollout in January 2015. The VA is also developing mobile applications to allow veterans to directly request certain types of primary care and mental health appointments from the smartphone or tablets.

As part of the current RFP preparation process, VA is working with FRA and other veteran service organizations (VSOs) to incorporate the groups' feedback on requirements important to veterans. VA's VSO partners are currently reviewing user experience and business process documentation, and VA will continue to consult with VSOs as it works toward publishing its acquisition solicitation.

VA's acquisition process will comply with recently established legislative requirements related to the department's scheduling software.

## DoD Willing to Reconsider Discharges of Vietnam Vets with PTSD

The Defense Department (DoD) recently announced it has agreed to reconsider other-than-honorable discharges for thousands of Vietnam-era veterans who may have suffered from combat-related post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Many were dishonorably discharged in an era before PTSD became a diagnosable condition.

The Pentagon said veterans from the Vietnam era and other past wars with other-than-honorable discharges will be given "liberal consideration" if they seek to correct their military records and provide some evidence of a PTSD diagnosis that existed at the time of their service.

Upgraded discharges could result in the restoration of some benefits, such as disability pay, separation pay or GI Bill benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)—benefits that are typically denied to veterans who receive other-than-honorable discharges. Health care in the VA system, however, is typically provided to veterans regardless of their discharge status.

*For more information on this issue, go to: [www.defense.gov/news/OSD009883-14.pdf](http://www.defense.gov/news/OSD009883-14.pdf)*

## Congressional Caucus for Military and Veteran Caregivers

Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (Calif.), Senator John McCain (Ariz.), Senator Jack Reed (R.I.) and Chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee Jeff Miller (Fla.) started a new bipartisan congressional caucus to lead efforts in addressing the challenges facing the 5.5 million volunteers who provide care to America's wounded warriors.

These family members and loved ones shoulder the responsibility of bathing, feeding, dressing, managing medication and injections, and arranging for rehabilitation, all while many are raising a family. A recent RAND study commissioned by the Elizabeth Dole Foundation estimates the services they provide save our nation \$13.6 billion annually, yet these caregivers too often pay a high personal price, suffering physical and emotional stress and illnesses; difficulty maintaining employment; financial, legal and family strains; and isolation. The "Hidden Heroes Congressional Caucus" for Military and Veteran Caregivers, co-chaired by Pelosi, McCain, Reed and Miller, will raise awareness and develop legislation in support of the millions of military and veteran caregivers tending to their ill and injured warriors at home.



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

Reported by J. Page

Chicago: Board-certified physician Dr. S. Cherukuri has done it once again with his newest invention of a medical grade **ALL DIGITAL affordable hearing aid**.

This new digital hearing aid is packed with all the features of \$3,000 competitors at a mere fraction of the cost. **Now, most people with hearing loss are able to enjoy crystal clear, natural sound—in a crowd, on the phone, in the wind—without suffering through “whistling” and annoying background noise.**

## New Digital Hearing Aid Outperforms Expensive Competitors

This sleek, lightweight, fully programmed hearing aid is the outgrowth of the digital revolution that is changing our world. While demand for “all things digital” caused most prices to plunge (consider DVD players and computers, which originally sold for thousands of dollars and today can be purchased for less than \$100), yet the cost of a digital medical hearing aid remained out of reach.

Dr. Cherukuri knew that many of his patients would benefit but couldn't afford the expense of these new digital hearing aids. Generally they are *not* covered by Medicare and most private health insurance.



Nearly  
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### SAME FEATURES AS EXPENSIVE HEARING AID COMPETITORS

- ✓ Mini Behind-The-Ear hearing aid with thin tubing for a nearly invisible profile
- ✓ Advanced noise reduction to make speech clearer
- ✓ Feedback Cancellation eliminates whistling
- ✓ Wide dynamic range compression makes soft sounds audible and loud sounds comfortable
- ✓ Telecoil setting for use with compatible phones, and looped environments like churches
- ✓ 3 programs and volume dial to accommodate most common types of hearing loss even in challenging listening environments

The doctor evaluated all the high priced digital hearing aids on the market, broke them down to their base components, and then created his own affordable version—called the MDHearingAid® **AIR** for its virtually invisible, lightweight appearance.

### Affordable Digital Technology

Using advanced digital technology, the MDHearingAid® **AIR** automatically adjusts to your listening environment—prioritizing speech and de-emphasizing background noise. Experience all of the sounds you've been missing at a price you can afford. **This doctor designed and approved hearing aid comes with a full year's supply of long-life batteries. It delivers crisp, clear sound all day long and the soft flexible ear buds are so comfortable you won't realize you're wearing them.**

### Try It Yourself At Home

#### With Our 45 Day Risk-Free Trial

Of course, hearing is believing and we invite you to try it for yourself with our RISK-FREE 45-day home trial. If you are not completely satisfied, simply return it within that time period for a full refund of your purchase price.

## Can a hearing aid delay or prevent dementia?

A study by Johns Hopkins and National Institute on Aging researchers suggests older individuals with hearing loss are significantly more likely to develop dementia over time than those who retain their hearing. They suggest that an intervention—such as a hearing aid—could delay or prevent dementia by improving hearing!

### “Satisfied Buyers Agree AIR Is Best Digital Value!”

*“I am hearing things I didn't know I was missing. Really amazing. I'm wearing them all the time”* —Linda Irving, Indiana

*“Almost work too well. I am a teacher and hearing much better now”* —Lillian Barden, California

*“I have used many expensive hearing aids, some over \$5,000. The Airs have greatly improved my enjoyment of life”* —Som Y., Michigan

*“I would definitely recommend them to my patients with hearing loss”* —Amy S., Audiologist, Munster, Indiana



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# The History of FRA 2000-2009

2000

FRA releases study on career enlisted pay scales and recommends additional pay reform for mid-career and senior enlisted personnel.



1

1

2001

TRICARE for Life (TFL) becomes effective on 1 October, providing rich medical and pharmacy benefits to military retirees over age 65.

2002

The FY 2003 NDAA authorizes combat-related special compensation (CRSC) for disabled retirees wounded in combat — a significant first step toward full concurrent receipt of military retired pay and VA disability compensation.

2003

Concurrent receipt payments are authorized for military retirees whose service-connected disability ratings are 50 percent or higher. CRSC eligibility is also expanded to cover certain retirees with 10 to 40 percent disability ratings.

2



2004

The Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) is reformed to eliminate the offset experienced by survivors when they become eligible for Social Security benefits.

2

2006

FRA's monthly membership magazine, *Naval Affairs*, becomes *FRA Today*.

3

2007

FRA is named a full member of the Veterans Day National Committee.



3

4

2008

The Post-9/11 GI Bill is enacted, improving education benefits for service members serving since September 11, 2001, extending the benefit to VEAP-era personnel who previously had no education benefits, and allowing the benefit to be transferred to spouses and children.

4



2009

FRA establishes the FRA Education Foundation to expand its already-generous scholarship program.



## Recruiting

**THERE ARE MANY WAYS** to promote the FRA in your local community and raise awareness among prospective members about the value of membership. Branches and individual shipmates can make a difference by: 1) Promoting the FRA within the community by engaging with community leaders and participating in local activities, 2) When an opportunity becomes available, volunteering to assist veterans, families or the youth in the community, 3) If your branch is located near a military facility, making FRA's presence known to enlisted leaders, public affairs folks and others within that base structure.

Here are some examples of how strong recruiters are making a difference in our Association:

Shipmate Selma Carrow, Secretary of Branch 183 (Interlachen, Fla.), explained that her shipmates interact with members of other military organizations like the VFW, American Legion and AmVets who have sea service members and explain the purpose of the FRA. They also approach men and women with military stickers on their vehicles and talk about the FRA. On an annual basis and upon request from the branches, FRA national headquarters provides an address list of former members from the last three years in the requester's zip code, which can be used to contact these members. An announcement will be distributed in December about the mailing list and the branches can respond to obtain the address information. I am pleased to announce that Branch 183 had no loss in membership during the 2013-14 membership year and will receive FRA's 100% Award ribbon at the 87th FRA National Convention in Corpus Christi, Texas.

While on vacation in August, I

visited Branch 46 (Honolulu, Hawaii). This large facility in the Pearl Harbor area is surrounded by a large contingent of military personnel. Branch President Julian "JJ" Wynn shared some of the recruiting strategies that helped them to increase their membership by a net gain of 14 members during the 2013-14 year. According to Shipmate JJ, the best source of members for their branch is the Pearl Harbor Naval Base. While they greatly benefit from the constant rotation of active-duty personnel, the prior military personnel who work in the naval shipyard and for the naval facilities present a solid opportunity for recruitment of new long-term members. Not all branches are near military installations, but those that are have limitless opportunities to engage with base enlisted leadership, public affairs personnel and community support centers to offer FRA's assistance to service members and their families.

Many local veteran and military organizations, as well as certain motorcycle and other social clubs, offer opportunities for "cross-pollination." When a member from one of these groups joins the FRA, they can spread the word within their other affiliated groups. In an effort to maintain and attract more members, Branch 46 offers its facilities to these groups to hold their meetings and charity events.

Shipmate JJ also notes that shared common interests between veterans are an excellent way to start a conversation about the FRA. When people connect on multiple levels or activities, those connections can ultimately lead to a better foundation when developing friendships and camaraderie. For example, if an FRA shipmate participates in an activity where eligible non-members are involved, there is



Penny Collins

a better chance a non-member will decide to join because of his or her friendship and affiliation with the FRA shipmate. Partnering with other organizations to sponsor events such as service birthday celebrations, youth activities, poker tournaments, cribbage leagues, dart and pool leagues, etc., also creates opportunities to foster and strengthen a common bond and highlight the benefits of FRA membership. In addition, Branch 46 distributes copies of the FRA's legislative agenda to prospective members along with copies of *FRA Today* magazine and FRA stickers. They also receive information from Hawaii's Office of Veterans Services and the Oahu Veterans' Council, which is passed to the branch members.

Branch 24 (Annapolis, Md.) organized its first annual Veterans' Open House at their facility in an effort to provide information to prospective members in the local area for branch, unit, and club membership. Partners and sponsors (including Navy Federal Credit Union, Annapolis Veterans' Center, First Command Financial Planning, Buffalo Soldier products, and publishers of childrens' and veterans' books) were present at the event, which attracted veterans from around the region and was very successful in recruiting new members.

Recruiting is for every member of the FRA, not just a few. If all of us recruited one member a year, our membership would grow tremendously, which would make our voice on Capitol Hill even louder. Keep the memberships moving forward!

---

**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.



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- ✓ **Worry Free Enjoyment** - Thanks to Jacuzzi's Limited Lifetime Warranty.
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**ince September of 2013, the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN-69) has been residing at the Norfolk Naval Shipyard, undergoing its scheduled Docking Planned Incremental Availability (DPIA). During its yard period, this complex weapons system is undergoing routine maintenance and upgrades so that it can perform its flexible mission capabilities effectively. Enlisted personnel graciously met with FRA to highlight the distinctive and significant roles each division of the ship's Air Department plays in flight operations.**

# AIR DECK OPERATIONS

***The Eisenhower, like all U.S. Naval aircraft carriers, is a floating military base, where virtually all military operations are performed within the confines of the enormous ship. A carrier's primary function is to transport short-range aircraft around the world, providing military airpower wherever it's needed to defend freedom. It's the carrier's Air Department that is responsible for making sure those aircraft are safely fueled, maintained, launched, recovered and ready for action.***

Not surprisingly, the center of activity is the ship's flight deck, the flat surface where the warbirds take off and land. This work environment is arguably one of the most exhilarating, loudest and most dangerous in the world. When flight operations are in full swing, planes can be launched and recovered at a feverish pace, in relatively tight quarters, and one careless step could send a plane, pilot or crewmember overboard. The plane's jet engines are so powerful they can suck a sailor into the engine or blast someone overboard. Highly combustible fuels and ordnance add to the day-to-day danger. The catapult that hurls the planes from the flight deck during takeoffs and the arresting cables that can stop a landing plane with its

engines in afterburner create another set of threats to life and limb. It's hard work, focus is critical and every crewmember plays a unique role in carrier flight operations.

Those unique roles are reflected in the colored jerseys worn by flight crews. Those who "handle" the planes on the flight deck wear yellow; those who work in the hangar bay, where planes are stored and maintained, wear blue. Green jerseys identify crewmembers who maintain and operate the catapults and arresting gear. Those responsible for fuels, the "Grape Apes," wear purple; medical personnel wear white, while those handling ordnance wear red. At a glance, each crew member can determine what role their fellow sailors play in this well-orchestrated operation.

"I was deployed twice on the USS *Enterprise* (CVN-65) as part of the staff and I can tell you I wasn't as attentive to the crew as I should have been, until I saw flight operations," says *Eisenhower's* Command Master Chief Shay Langejans. "Working the flight deck is a 12-hours-on/12-hours-off shift, and it's hard, intense work. It's not for the faint of heart and it's a young man's game, but I can tell you, there's an unreal level of pride in those [colored] shirts."

"Everyone here works very hard and 20-hour days aren't unusual," explains Master Chief Bruce Smith, Air Department Lead Master Chief for the *Ike*, as she's affectionately called. "Our operational tempo is very high. There's no requirement for crew rest like pilots have, but we do staggered shifts to ensure our crews are



ready. Flight-to-flight is usually an 18-hour period and then there are night ops.”

“Everyone plays a unique part in flight deck functions and it’s incredibly rewarding to work with a group of sailors and shape them into a cohesive unit. Working on the flight deck is the most dangerous job in the world,” echoes ABHC (AW/SW) Maurk Burks, who is the lead chief petty officer for V-1 division aboard the *Eisenhower*. “You have to love what you do and work together, or you won’t survive.”

## “Yellowjackets”

V-1 personnel are predominantly aircraft handlers, who are sometimes called “Yellowjackets” because of their identifying yellow jerseys. They are responsible for moving the aircraft on the flight deck and their responsibility extends to the tow trucks and other equipment that relates to moving the planes any time they aren’t under their own power. V-1 crews also ensure aircraft are chocked and chained down on the deck to ensure they don’t slide around, or overboard, in rough seas and also make certain the flight deck is free of foreign object debris (or FOD) and ready for flight operations.

The aircraft’s movements are managed by “the Handler,” a lieutenant commander (O-4) or above who monitors and directs all aircraft movement on the flight deck and in the hangar bay. During flight ops, the Handler can often be found in Flight Deck Control, in the tower that overlooks the flight deck, where he makes use of a scale mock-up of the flight deck and hangar bay, called the “Ouiji board.” Using scale models of the aircraft onboard, the Handler can orchestrate which planes need to be where for the most efficient and effective flight operations. A digital depiction is also available on a big-screen monitor, but the Ouiji board has proven its reliability and is never compromised by power outages.

“The flight deck is divided into three sections,” explains Burks, whose assignment to the *Ike* is his third carrier tour. “Fly 1 is the bow to the waist; the waist to the island is Fly 2 and the island to the fantail is Fly 3. This allows for better management of personnel and operations. There’s a morning brief, where we plan for the events of the day. An event is the launch and recovery [of a package of aircraft] and we might have up to eight events on a normal day. Sometimes the events overlap. For example, we might have five or six aircraft take off and then another group of 10 aircraft follows, but we might recover all 15 at once.”



U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Justin R. Wesley

The *Ike* is capable of handling a variety of aircraft, according to Burks: F-18 Hornets and FA-18 Super Hornets (fighters), E-2 Hawkeyes (reconnaissance and airborne command and control), C-2s to transport personnel or cargo, HS-60 helicopters and radar-jamming EA6-B Prowlers that are soon to be replaced by EA-18G Growlers.

Safety is an absolute priority everywhere on the ship, but particularly on the flight deck. A red-and-white stripe painted on flight deck provides a safety boundary; all personnel must stay behind this “foul line” during launch and recovery ops to ensure their own safety and protect the aircraft. When accidents happen, V-1 personnel are also responsible for clearing the landing area as rapidly as possible so that operations can continue.

“We can’t have planes run out of fuel waiting for us to handle an on-deck emergency so they can land,” clarifies Burks. “V-1 is responsible for the crash and salvage van, which is on deck and ready to fight fires or salvage aircraft that are damaged. There are smaller weapons elevators that are used to transport ordnance to the flight deck, but they are also used in emergencies to transport injured personnel to the flight deck to be med-evac’d [medically evacuated].”

## Catapult and Arresting Gear

Launching and recovering aircraft on a carrier requires some very specialized equipment and V-2 Division is specifically responsible for the flight deck catapult and arresting gear. V-2 is the largest “V” on the ship, with approximately 250 assigned crewmembers.

“As you can imagine, this division is extremely maintenance intensive and our Maintenance Support Center manages somewhere between 4,000 and 7,000 tools and 150,000 different parts,” describes ABEC Mark Lindell. “We can’t conduct maintenance while the flight deck is in use, so we have to be manned for flight ops, with extra personnel to do night maintenance.”



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In order for fixed-wing aircraft to get off the ground, lift must be generated with a flow of air over the wing surface. The ship itself can help facilitate this air movement by moving through the water, but the biggest thrust comes from the carrier's four catapults that slingshot the plane forward at tremendous speed. These steam-powered catapults can hurl a 45,000-pound plane from a standing stop to 165 miles per hour in two seconds! That's particularly astounding when you consider the carrier's "runway" is only 1,092 feet long. (Without a catapult, an F-18 requires 1,500 to 2,600 feet of airbase runway to safely take off, depending on weather conditions and jet weight and performance.)

Each catapult consists of two pistons inside enormous cylinders that sit side-by-side below the flight deck. Each piston has a lug on its tip that projects through the top of the cylinder and up through the flight deck, where the lug is attached to a shuttle. This shuttle is then attached to the plane's front wheels, or nose gear, with a towbar. A holdback bar, which is built into the nose gear of F-14 and F-18 jets or can be a separate bar for other aircraft, is attached between the back of the nose gear and the shuttle. When these bars are in place and a deflector has been raised to protect personnel and equipment from the blast of the jet engines, final checks are made and the catapult officer, or "shooter," prepares the catapult for launch.

Part of those preparations include personnel in the water break room, who constantly monitor the pressure in the cylinders during catapult operations. In contrast, no personnel are allowed in the launch valve room during takeoffs; where the steam generates pressure up to 2,500 psi and massive gears present imminent danger.

ABE1 Tyler Mungle describes the central charging panel, which provides information on the state of operations the catapults are in at any given moment, as "virtually fail-proof. It has lighted indicators that alert the operators to any problems," says Mungle. "The values generated by the capacity selector valve, or CSV, are determined by the type and weight of each plane and the current wind conditions. When the proper pressure is reached in the cylinders, the holdback bar is released and the shuttle

pushes the plane down the flight deck at maximum speed to create maximum lift."

V-2 crewmembers, who predominantly wear green jerseys, are also responsible for the arresting gear that can stop a 27-ton aircraft coming in at 150 miles per hour, with its engines roaring, in less than 500 feet. Each plane is equipped with a tailhook — a large and aptly named hook that's attached to the plane's tail — which is lowered as the plane approaches the carrier for landing. The objective is for the pilot to land the plane in such a way that its tailhook catches one of four arresting cables that are stretched across the flight deck. Pilots aim for the third wire, which allows for the safest landing and most effective stop.

Each cable is woven from high-tensile steel wire and is attached at both ends to hydraulic cylinders below deck. As the tailhook catches the cable, the cable is pulled from the cylinder and the hydraulic system absorbs the plane's immense kinetic energy to bring it to a stop.

"Pilots throttle up on landing, so they can go around and make another landing attempt if they miss the cable, but increasing speed also facilitates a smooth run-out of the cable," explains Chief Lindell. "If the pilot applies brakes, it causes the plane and the cable to bounce, which causes wear and tear on the cable and the plane."

The cables, which sit two to five inches off the deck so the aircraft can roll over them during launch, are retracted back into the cylinders after each landing. Once hooked and released by the pilot, the 340 feet of cable can be retracted in 18 to 20 seconds, making the arresting gear ready for the next recovery.

There are four cable "engines" for daily use, plus an additional one for use with the emergency web that can catch an airplane in the event of tailhook failure or other problem that would prevent the use of the arresting cables. These engines are maintained and operated by a crew of 40 to 45 V-2 personnel working in the arresting room below the flight deck.

"To safely land a plane on a carrier, it's critical for the pilot to approach the flight deck at just the right angle. V-2 personnel are also responsible for the Visual Landing Aids, or VLAs, that help the pilot stay on the proper glide slope," continues Lindell. "There must be a minimum of 25 knots of wind over the flight deck for landings, which means the ship is moving in three axes during recoveries. There are gyroscopes that adjust the VLAs for list, roll and heave of the ship."

V-2 is also responsible for flight-deck lighting, including the infrared lights that provide illumination, but conceal the ship's position from the enemy, and keeping the "69" on





the tower lit, which is a point of pride for the entire crew.

"We're also responsible for video recordings of each launch and recovery," says VLA IC3 Luke Simmons. "We record everything that happens on the flight deck — takeoffs, landings, emergencies — and the recordings are saved for several days. They can be used to assist investigations of emergencies and are also used for training purposes."

## The Hangar Bay

When the aircraft aren't on the flight deck or in the air, they're down below in the hangar bay. There are four giant elevators on board that take the aircraft between the flight deck and the hangar bay, and each one is approximately 970 square feet — with the capability to move two planes and a helicopter in a single lift.

Although the hangar is a gigantic space, it's tight quarters when up to 60 aircraft are stored there. "Aircraft are often parked and moved with only inches of space between them," describes ABH2 Vladimir Stadnik, who works in Bay 2 of the three-bay hangar. "It requires great care and skill in moving these behemoths without damaging one another or the ship."

Aircraft are arranged in the hangar according to operational requirements, so as to minimize unnecessary movements. "For example, if we know a plane is going to require several days' worth of maintenance work, we'll park it back in a corner. It's crucial to park the aircraft where they're needed and it takes an experienced deck petty officer to orchestrate it," Stadnik continues.

During daytime flight operations, the crew might only make four or five aircraft shifts, but they are very intense, taking only three to five minutes to make it happen.

"When the elevators are down [at the hangar level], the ship cannot maneuver, so it's important for us to work quickly and effectively," he explains. "It takes a minimum of six people to move a plane on or off the elevator, but we use seven in the bay. During normal day ops, we might have ten people moving it to get the job done more quickly. We have to make sure we get everything off the elevator ... the chains, the personnel in the cockpit, etc., and there's an elevator operator who makes sure everything is clear before it goes up or comes down."

According to Stadnik, the pace of night operations in V-3 is faster and requires more aircraft movements. "Night shift aircraft movements begin at 2300 and go until 0400 or 0500. We respot the flight deck in preparation for the next day's events and might move 10 or 20 birds, but we



U.S. Navy photo by Seaman Brian Wilbur

aren't so rushed. There are literally only inches of separation and it's a very intricate operation. We usually have our most experienced personnel working at night and we also have to be more careful in the dark."

Petty Officer Stadnik also explained the need for flexibility. "Each deployment is different. For example, sometimes we have more helicopters, which changes the scale of things. New technology is great, but sometimes it takes up more space. In 2016, we're expecting to get new EA-18G Growler aircraft, which will replace the EA-6B Prowlers. The Growler is about the same size as an F-18 Super Hornet, so we'll have to develop new ways to fit them into the existing space."

When a carrier deploys, the pilots, planes and maintenance crews are assigned as part of the Air Wing and, although not part of the ship's permanent company, they have very specific assignments with regard to the maintenance and operation of the aircraft. V-3 personnel work closely with the air wing personnel to ensure aircraft maintenance is performed safely and meets the ship's standards.

"The air wing maintainers do all the hands-on work on the aircraft, but they coordinate with us so we can accommodate their needs to the best extent possible," continues Stadnik. "The standards of operation vary from ship to ship, so we all have to work together to make sure all work complies with the Eisenhower's specific safety standards. V-3 crews also act as safety observers or as part of the fire party."

The hangar bays also serve as an MWR [Morale, Welfare and Recreation] facility for the crew, providing space for basketball and other activities that allow shipmates to burn off some extra energy and enjoy their limited down time.

"There are no days off at sea and we work 12 hours a day, seven days a week. We develop a sort of rhythm, but sometimes we need a break," says Stadnik. "Our previous captain designated Sunday Fun Days for the crew and we'd set up basketball courts and corn-hole tournaments in the hangar bays. It was more work for the V-3 team, but it's really important for the crew."

Stadnik's collateral duties include responsibilities as the career counselor for the 72 sailors assigned to V-3



Division, handling reenlistments and managing undesignated sailors. He's also taking college courses and is consistently working to improve himself and his team.

"We do a lot of training to better ourselves as warfighters," he smiles. "There are always new people who need to be trained, as well as new equipment or technologies to learn. We've got to mentor these new sailors. We have to train those who will take our place when we leave."

## Fuel Equals Power

ABFC Nytricia Maybeth is the lead chief petty officer for V-4, the Ike's fuels division. She's one of only five Navy females serving in this capacity and is justifiably proud of her and her team's critical role in keeping the birds aloft.

"I originally joined the Navy to be a rescue swimmer, but I really didn't understand all the physical requirements that demanded," she chuckles. "I was offered an opportunity to train in fuels and, once I came aboard a ship, I was asking myself why I joined the Navy to pump gas! But once I came to understand how important this work is, I came to love it. I'm now responsible for 3.3 million gallons of gas and that's a lot of power."

Speaking not only of the level of responsibility, but also V-4's role in supplying fuel to power the aircraft, it is, indeed, a lot of power!

"Being in fuels isn't just pumping gas. Our job is to take dirty fuel and make it clean like water," she explains. "We have to know the purification and distribution equipment inside and out, how to operate it, how to take it apart, repair it and put it back together. Our job is to launch birds and, without gas, there's no flying."

Fuel handlers' jerseys and a lot of their equipment are purple. For example, the fuel lines that run through the ship are all painted purple, which helps distinguish them from pipes and hoses that carry water, steam and other fluids throughout the massive vessel.

"When fuel comes aboard ship, it's got a lot of impurities in it ... soot, dirt, sand, etc." Maybeth describes the purple lines that run fore and aft, and side to side, as "the 'veins' that carry the lifeblood from the tanks in the belly of the ship to the pump rooms, where the centrifugal pumps, or 'hearts,' spin out about 80 percent of those impurities. [The impurities are sent to a contamination tank.] A sample of the fuel is sent to an onboard lab, where it is analyzed. The fuel then goes through a filtering process and another sample is tested to ensure it is CCB — clean,



U.S. Navy photo by MC/SN Sabrina Fine

clear and bright — for use in the aircraft. There are 187 shipboard tanks for the clean fuel and they are kept full at all times. When we get the call that fuel is needed topside, we have five minutes to make it happen."

JP-5, the kerosene-based diesel fuel used in the aircraft, is highly explosive, says Maybeth. "Some folks don't like working in the pump room because it is so far down below and we're really sitting on a floating bomb. There are pros and cons to working in fuels, and you need to master your job before you start operations down here."

V-4 is also responsible for ensuring the fuel goes where it's needed, when it's needed. There's a large console, or "brain" in Maybeth's human analogy, that helps direct and manage the fuel flow.

"Orchestrating the distribution of the fuel to various parts of the ship is like a symphony and the console operators are the conductors," she continues. "We have to make sure the fuel goes where we want it. The console operators are in communication with the tower and flight deck, and use hand signals to communicate what's needed with the pump room operators."

Grape Apes also oversee the replenishment of fuel supplies, both ashore and at sea. "Transferring fuel while underway is one of the most dangerous jobs we do," elaborates Maybeth. "We have two floating ships and we have to transfer one to two million gallons of fuel from one to the other without a spill. We're really sitting targets while this process is going on, so we work to make it happen as quickly as possible."

## Peripheral, but Imperative

The V-0 and V-5 divisions don't work directly with the launching and recovery of aircraft, but their role in the air department is critical to mission accomplishment.

*continued on page 30*

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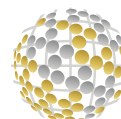
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His last known duty station was USS Moale (DD-693) in 1968. Please contact GMGC James White, USN (Ret.) at 478-781-1864 or via e-mail at [rhetta64@cox.net](mailto:rhetta64@cox.net)

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## FRA Operation Flagship Refit Deck Log

The Deck Log salutes those who have contributed to the improvement of the FRA Museum Refit, to date. Your generosity and dedication will help to realize the vision of an association museum that truly pays tribute to the spirit of Loyalty, Protection and Service that characterizes our shipmates.

### Museum Refit Recognition Plaque

**\$500 (or more)**

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Taylor J. Dean  
Ramond F. Sullivan  
David H. White

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George H. Lord, II  
James L. Murrell

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James B. Fromel  
George E. Olsen  
Paul E. Schimming  
Susan L. Skeens

### Plankowner

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Robert T. Beddome  
Andrew E. Benjock, Sr.  
Warren Dautrich  
Lilton W. Davis, Jr.  
Emmanuel S. Fernandez  
Junior A. Foster  
Robert J. Gallagher  
Franklin C. Gates  
Theodore Geisinger  
Louis V. George II

Kelly L. Grigsby  
Donald R. Henderson  
Herman L. Holman  
Stephen Keleti  
Robert W. McMahon  
Samuel G. Owens  
Lloyd J. Ozab, Jr.  
Stanley M. Peterson  
Rene Pinter  
Barth A. Risher  
William C. Rudolph  
James J. Thomas  
Robert C. Wood

The work on the museum is ongoing (you can see some photos of our office renovation on our Facebook page, [www.fra.org/fb](http://www.fra.org/fb)) and we still have a ways to go.

FEATURE continued from page 24

V-0 personnel, predominantly yeomen, handle the administrative aspects of Air Department ops. They are also assigned additional duties in the control tower, helping the air boss spot planes.

"Even though we have a lot of technology available to us, most of our recoveries are by sight — a human being with a pair of binoculars," explains Burks.

V-5 crews work to maintain the ship's systems that are critical to safe and effective flight deck operations.

"V-5 is comprised of about 30 Sailors who are responsible for ensuring damage control, fire stations, watertight doors and the like are in good operating order and ready for any situation," says V-5 Lead Chief Petty Officer Lindell. "We use the 3M maintenance management system to ensure the 9,000 pieces of equipment aboard are all in top shape. While *Eisenhower's* in the yard, we're doing things like removing hatches and doors, painting them and replacing them throughout the ship. Some of the work being done during this yard period is being performed by contractors and civilian employees of the Norfolk Naval Shipyard, while other work is done by ship's crew. She'll be ready to return to the fleet when the work is finished."

## Loving What We Do

Working as part of the *Ike's* Air Department is a privilege and honor for most of the sailors assigned there. And nobody aboard takes their work for granted.

"Without the men and women who serve in the Air Department, we simply couldn't do what we're here to do," says Command Master Chief Langejans. "We don't pay these folks enough money. The Navy offers big bonuses for our people who work with nukes, and I respect that, but I have to believe what flight deck crews do is equally dangerous. There should be special duty pay for these sailors."

Master Chief Smith, who's serving his seventh tour aboard an aircraft carrier, agrees. "It's very hard work and our sailors have to be at the top of their game to get the job done," he concludes. "You can't understate the danger and need to give it your all, but if you love what you're doing, it comes easy."



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



NAME	BRANCH	NAME	BRANCH
Gannon, John H, CDR/MSC, USN	MAL	Pack, Edward H, MS1(SS), USN	MAL
Gardner, Ross K, AGCS, USN	013	Pintagro, Joseph J, PO1, USN	023
George, Lawrence C, EMCS, USN	068	Pizont, George C, YNC, USN	057
Greene, Guy H, ADR1, USN	298		
Hansen, Jack Z, BTC, USN	230	Richey, Russell S, ETC(SS), USN	MAL
Harbin, Alfred Elroy, PFC, USMC	295	Roe, Peter G, MU1, USN	086
Hardy, John F, AKC, USN	MAL	Rohrer, Roy F, PO2, USN	145
Harvey, Lorenzo T, SKC, USN	257	Rosenberry, Richard G, POC, USN	040
Hauschild, Larry B, AFCM, USN	MAL	Ryan, Lewis E, RMC, USN	264
<b>Hoffecker, George W, ADRC, USN</b>	<b>137</b>	Saali, Donald L, MRC, USN	269
Hogue, Arlie G, MM2, USN	068	Schmitt, Rudolph H, ENDC(SS), USN	175
Holloway, Billy D, PHC, USN	105	Schneider, Theodore, EMCM, USN	162
Hutchins, Elmer S, LT, USN	MAL	Schoener, Harry, YN3, USN	261
Hylander, Jan C, ENC, USN	264	<b>Schriver, James J, ADRC, USN</b>	<b>101</b>
Jordy, Luther H, ETC, USN	207	Shaul, Roy F, MSGT, USMC	MAL
Jozwiak, James J, USN	264	Shrieves, Robert, FTCM, USN	MAL
Kemp, William, ADR1(AC), USN	MAL	Smith, Charlie E, TMCS, USN	307
Kepner, Kenneth K, ADJ1, USN	274	Smith, Billy E, CSC, USN	159
Killius, Franz J, BTCS, USN	060	Snyder, Bernard W, POC, USN	MAL
Kinsey, David S, PO1, USN	MAL	Spainhouer, Freddie P, ISCM, USN	011
<b>Lambert, Julius L, GM1, USN</b>	<b>MAL</b>	Spratt, Curtis L, MM1, USN	MAL
Leboutillier, P G, ADC, USN	136	Stafford, John W, ADJC, USN	MAL
Lee, Marion, BTCM, USN	098	Stocker, Paul, PO3, USN	170
Manalo, Mario D, SK1, USN	171	Sutton, Carlton G, EMCM, USN	MAL
Maurer, Conrad, PO1, USN	124	Swendra, George E, AFCM, USN	MAL
Maynard, A B, SSGT, USMC	089	Tanner, Fred, USCG	293
McAndrew, John J, QMCS, USN	MAL	Tietgen, Dennis, YNC, USN	276
McDade, Michael B, MU2, USN	MAL	Torpey, George B, GMMC, USN	MAL
McDow, Tomie, AKC, USN	026	Tweedy, James L, HMC, USN	170
McNeill, William D, HMC, USN	254	<b>Valladares, Ramon P, ENCS, USN</b>	<b>MAL</b>
McNutt, Clarence C., MO3, USN	118	Vess, Rolland W, GYSGT, USMC	207
<b>Mitchell, William E, ADC, USN</b>	<b>MAL</b>	Wagner, Leroy J, YN1, USN	194
Mohrey, A H, GYSGT, USMC	106	Warren, John, CWO2, USN	183
Moody, David C, SCPO, USN	022	Wells, Carl E, ST1, USN	284
<b>Morris, Harold F, ADJC, USN</b>	<b>089</b>	Werth, Marshall L, YN1, USN	161
Newman, Raymond E, HMC, USN	161	Wheeling, Carl Nichol, YNCS, USN	289
<b>Nichols, Richard L, CDR, USN</b>	<b>316</b>	White, William E, ETC, USN	346
<b>PRPEC, Osmundson, Donald J, ADC, USN</b>	<b>093</b>	Williams, James E, AC1, USN	022
Osterman, Richard L., LT, USN	254	Yerkes, Herbert J, RMC, USN	060

NAME	BRANCH
Albergo, Michael V, SGT, USMC	024
Ansley, James H, GMTCS, USN	089
Bacon, Raymond L, PN1, USN	268
Berg, Terrill G, RMCS, USN	MAL
Blackburn, Charles P, ADR2, USN	217
Blansett, Charles, ADC, USN	159
Bostic, Patrick E, AOC, USN	091
Branson, Spencer G, TMC, USN	284
Brown, Ronald D, USN	120
Brunk, Orville W, MCPO, USN	MAL
Burgess, Henry, YNC, USN	MAL
Caimol, Alfonso M, SD2, USN	084
Campbell, Bruce T, MRC, USN	MAL
Carlton, Charles E, SKC, USN	267
Clark, Ralph G, SMC, USN	206
Crader, Harold, PO2, USN	257
Cressey, Richard N, SKC, USN	MAL
Dahler, Lloyd, ACCS, USN	MAL
Dalton, Arthur T, CUCM, USN	120
Defoe, Melvin B, PO1, USN	MAL
Domingo, Nestor B, YNCS, USCG	MAL
Doyle, James P, LT, USN	MAL
Duffy, Mary U, YNCS, USN	042
Eagan, Harold G, YNCS, USN	316
Elefante, Ernesto, CPO, USN	094
Ertzberger, Wade H, SHCS, USN	MAL
Evans, Lee, CPO, USN	MAL
Farris, William David, MAJ, USMC	046
Franco, Pasquale J, HM3, USN	MAL

Names in **red** indicate 50 year continuous members.  
Name in **bold** indicate a Past National Officer



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**BRANCH 382 BOISE, IDAHO**

Branch officers pose following their installation ceremony. Shown (l to r) are President Ken Nungesser, RPNW and installing officer Dan Holloway, Board of Directors members Bill Hall and PRPNW Hazel Betencourt, Secretary/Treasurer Keith Cotrell, Board of Directors member Jack Rhodes and Branch Vice President Roger Christopher.

**BRANCH 57 SOUTH JERSEY, N.J.**

Shipmate Jack Adams, a WWII veteran, accepts his 60-year FRA membership from Branch President Shipmate Bob Baltozer, as Jack's wife, Ann, looks on. Jack and Ann, who joined the Auxiliary of the FRA in 1966, are both still actively involved in their community.



**BRANCH 293 ELIZABETH CITY, N.C.**

Shipmate Frank Gates (right) congratulates AMT3 Kyle Slater on his selection as Enlisted Person of the Quarter at USCG Air Station, Elizabeth City. In addition to the certificate, Slater also received a complimentary one-year membership in FRA.



**BRANCH 166 VIRGINIA BEACH, VA.**

Jr. Past Branch President Thomas A. Cecil presents a \$400 check to Ms. Barnes (left) and Ms. Peckham (right) of the Providence Evangelical Friends Church Youth Group to aid their youth group rehab of homes in Cherokee, N.C., as Branch President Sha'ron D. Martin looks on.



**BRANCH 22 PENSACOLA, FLA.**

Branch President Bob Hall (left) presents Shipmate Don McLain (right) with his FRA 50-Year Continuous Member pin, certificate, and FRA platinum 50-PLUS member card at the "home warming" social for the new branch home.



**BRANCH 99 VIRGINIA BEACH, VA.**

Shipmate Cosme Ranay (right) was one of several shipmates honored for long-standing membership in the FRA. Then-Branch President Paul Davis (left) congratulated Raney on his 25-year membership, as well as Shipmates Donald Degroot (20 years), Fred Nootnagel (45 years) and Robert Titus (35 years). Congratulations, Shipmates!!

**BRANCH 72 FALL RIVER, MASS.**

Branch 72 President Edward T.W. Bailey Sr. congratulates Shipmate Richard "Stony" Stone, age 83, on his 60 years of continuous FRA membership! Shown (l to r) are Shipmates Bill Brodrick, Larry Beirola, Stone, Bailey and Allen Given, along with other friends who were on hand to join in the celebration.



**BRANCH 194 KNOXVILLE, TENN.**

PSPSE Bobby Smith and Branch Chaplain Greg McKinney carry the Branch's banner in the Annual Knoxville Veterans Day Parade, while Secretary/Treasurer Bobby Northcutt follows behind. Shipmates Charles Flenniken and Don Collins bring up the rear in the white car with door signs on each side.



**BRANCH 8 VALLEJO, CALIF.**

Past National Chaplain Ben Yost delivering a "Farewell Prayer" for Shipmate Bruce Buckingham prior to his ashes being scattered on the San Francisco Bay.

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

Past National President Don Mucheck recognized for his 40 years of continuous FRA membership by PRPSE and Branch President Fred Bolz.



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



## Message from the South Central Regional President

**THE PRESIDENTIAL YEAR 2014** is fast coming to a close and it certainly has been a year to remember. Membership is on everyone's mind. We have experienced a few small miracles such as new members from the Coast Guard along with a few Gulf War vets. In one month, one unit that was considering giving up their charter acquired four new members and two reinstated ones. Quite a few of our members are in their nineties, but do their best to participate in everything because their enthusiasm and love of their LA FRA family have not faltered.

One of our branches is hard at work trying to establish a unit and hopefully it will happen on the next Regional President's watch. Two of our units have merged, allowing them to cover a larger area and be of help to more of our service members, veterans and their families. All of our other units support and work with the military and civilian groups in our communities, i.e., USO, NAS Fort Worth, Coast Guard Stations, VFW, American Legion, Navy League, Marine Corps League, Toys for Tots, Fisher House, Patriot Guard, VA hospitals and clinics, nursing homes, military retirement homes, Honor Flight and many more by volunteering hours and goods.

A couple of months ago, a Marine died. He was a Vietnam veteran, a hero who earned awards and medals for his bravery and valor in battle. HE DIED ALONE! No one claimed his body. A young girl working at the funeral home that received his body, who wasn't born until after the Vietnam Conflict, decided it simply wasn't right. He could not go on to his maker without someone caring. She made a few calls to some people, who made a few more calls to some other people, who wrote e-mails to many people in the community. One of these e-mails fell into the hands of the South Central Regional Presidents of the FRA and LA FRA, who contacted the Patriot Guard. When the memorial time and date were set, a flag line was established in front of the funeral home. Veterans from the community, representatives from all the military organizations, including a good number from Branch and Unit 201 (Austin, Texas) and the Marine Corps conducted the service. Captain Joseph Gwatney crossed over to the command of the Supreme Commander with his FAMILY by his side.

August brought HOT weather and the South Central Regional Convention back to Shreveport, LA. This year's Welcome Aboard Party theme was 1940s Red, White and Blue. A number of the guests dressed the part. Although most of us were youngsters in the 40s (see Ruth and Vern Fuller at right), we still had many stories to tell about the World War II and our parents and grandparents. All seemed to have a good time.

Now we are looking forward to traveling to Corpus Christi for our National Conventions. SEE YOU THERE!!!



**JOAN E. MILLER**  
*South Central Regional President*



**Unit 201, Austin, Texas.** RPSC Joan Miller and the Patriot Guard in flag line honoring Marine Corps Capt. Joseph Gwatney.



**Unit 282, Little Rock, Ark.** Ruth Fuller, with husband Vern (Branch 282) in the 1940s.

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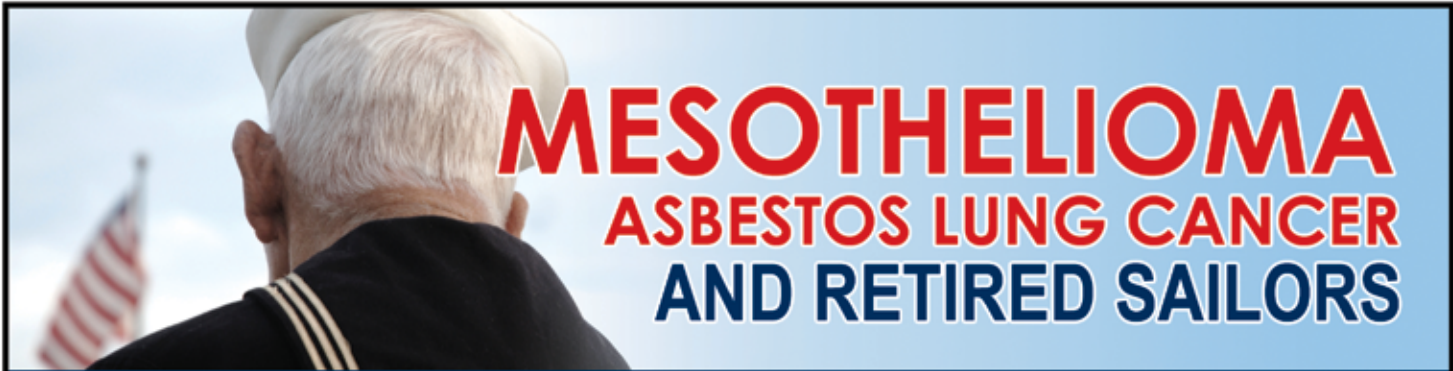
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