

FRA *today*



page 18

- 24 FRA Education Foundation Announces 2104 Scholarship Recipients**
- 26 Candidates for FRA National Office**

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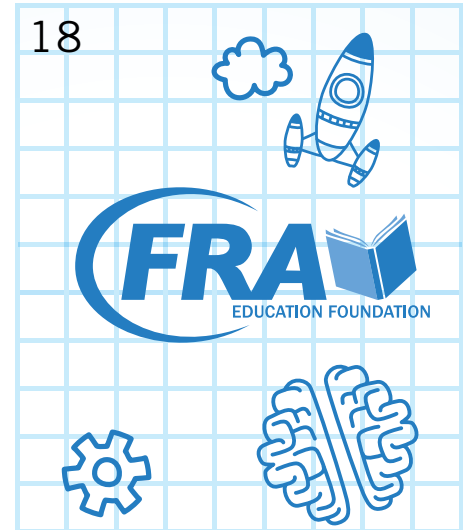
- 18 THE FRA EDUCATION FOUNDATION**
A long-standing advocate for military and veteran education benefits, FRA established its Education Foundation in 2009 to support the academic goals of its stakeholders and their families.

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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 OR CALL 800-FRA-1924.



ON THE COVER

The FRA Education Foundation is celebrating its fifth anniversary and continues a rich FRA tradition of supporting shipmates, their families and other members of the Sea Service family.

Forever a Student, Forever Young



Lauren Armstrong

MY GRANDFATHER, WHO CAME to this country from a small town in northern Italy when he was 10 years old, shared a nugget of wisdom that I've never forgotten. This uneducated man, with a thick accent and a dearth of professional skills, wistfully said, "An education is the one thing nobody can ever take away from you." He was an old man at the time, obviously speaking from the perspective of one who realized how very different his life would have been if he'd attained the elusive golden ticket to success.

This month's issue focuses on the FRA Education Foundation and proudly introduces this year's scholarship recipients. Penny Collins' *Membership Matters* column (page 14) highlights shipmates' efforts to support young people through FRA Youth Activities and the photos in the *News From the Branches* section (pages 34 and 35) include several winners of FRA's most recent Americanism Essay Contest. It's exciting to see these bright young faces and imagine the new adventures that lie before them.

I invite you to look again at those *News From the Branches* photos. Those freshly-scrubbed faces are right next to some wiser ones — shipmates who've spent decades as loyal members of the FRA. These seasoned Sailors, Marines and Coast Guardsmen may or may not have gone to college, but they gained a variety of skills and talents — an education in life — as they served their nation. Perhaps more importantly, they've used those lessons to support the Association and their communities. And in doing so, they've become mentors and educators themselves.

The FRA Education Foundation scholarships are truly gifts that keep on giving. Not only will these awards help make the recipients' academic dreams come true, they will hopefully inspire the awardees to pay it forward. Christara Holgreffe, a California State University nursing student, summed it up this way: "I am excited and grateful to find out that I have been selected as the recipient of your scholarship. One day I hope to help other students achieve their dreams, just as you have helped me."

Education is a lifelong pursuit that isn't limited to a classroom. With the entire world available to us with a few clicks, it's never been easier to learn something new. Take a free online course or listen to a free podcast. Subscribe to an online newsletter or visit your local library. Try a new recipe. The world really is an educational wonderland! Enjoy every lesson.

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

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- Publisher** Fleet Reserve Association
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- Contributing Photographer** Paul Gunther
- Design and Art Direction** FIREBRAND, Alexandria, VA www.firebrandstudios.com
- Design Director** Scott Rodgerson
- Production Manager** Sandy Jones

FRA TODAY (ISSN 1935-7192) IS PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY FRA, 125 N. WEST ST., ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314-2754. A MEMBER'S SUBSCRIPTION IS COVERED BY THE MEMBER'S ANNUAL DUES. PERIODICALS POSTAGE PAID AT ALEXANDRIA, VA AND ADDITIONAL OFFICES. PUBLICATION OF NON-SPONSORED ADVERTISING IN *FRA TODAY* DOES NOT CONSTITUTE AN ENDORSEMENT BY THE FRA OR ITS REPRESENTATIVES. **POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO: MEMBER SERVICES, FRA, 125 N. WEST ST., ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314-2754.** *FRA TODAY* IS PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF ALL CURRENT AND FORMER ENLISTED PERSONNEL OF THE U.S. NAVY, MARINE CORPS, AND COAST GUARD. ELIGIBLE NON-MEMBERS ARE NOT ENTITLED TO SUBSCRIPTION RATES. ESTABLISHED 1 NOVEMBER 1923. TITLE REGISTERED WITH U.S. PATENT OFFICE.

FRA ADMINISTRATIVE HEADQUARTERS: 125 N. WEST ST., ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314-2754 • PHONE: 703-683-1400, 800-FRA-1924 • FAX: 703-549-6610 • E-MAIL: FRATODAY@FRA.ORG • WWW.FRA.ORG

VOLUME 93 NUMBER 9





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Supporting Education

SEPTEMBER, AS WE ALL know, starts the new academic year for schools across our nation. Elementary, middle, and high schools, colleges and universities will be booming and students of all ages will start that age-old “back to school” routine. The classic images of bus stops, crossing guards and stacks of books still resonate, but each new generation of students perceives those images a bit differently. Chalk boards have been replaced with white boards and online homework postings; smart phones are performing the functions formerly handled by calculators and many students are submitting their homework and test answers via computer. Non-traditional forms of education in diversified fields of study are becoming the norm and advanced studies are being offered via computer from the comforts of our homes.

Not since President Franklin D. Roosevelt has the need been so pressing for increased learning to transform the economic and social structure of the United States. Education paves the way to a higher boom of learning and contribution to our nation, regardless of the years of conflict in which our nation has been involved. The Servicemen’s Readjustment Act of 1944 (P.L. 78-346), commonly known as the G.I. Bill, provided payments of tuition and living expenses for WWII veterans to attend university, high school or vocational school, as well as low-cost mortgages and low-interest loans to start a business. Since then, education benefits available to service members and veterans have been updated to include the Veterans Education Assistance Program (VEAP), the Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB), Tuition Assistance (TA), the Post-9/11 GI Bill, and now Congress

is considering legislation (H.R. 357 and S.257) to provide in-state tuition at state universities and colleges for military students, regardless of the servicemember’s resident status in that state. Opportunities are also available to allow our active, Reserve and retired service men and women to transfer some of those benefits along to family members and there are avenues that allow service members to earn valuable education credits for the skills they’ve acquired during their military service.

**“We must never view
young people as empty
bottles to be filled, but
as candles to be lit.”**

—Robert Shaffer

As you’ll read in this month’s feature article on the FRA Education Foundation (which begins on page 18), promoting education is a long-standing tradition for FRA. I recently had the privilege to serve on a congressional panel supporting online education and other forms of distance and electronic learning. To paraphrase a quote from this panel, “Education should not be hindered because of administrative processing, but [should be advanced by] a transparency of acceptance by accredited institutions.” Our recent partnership with



Tom Snee

Excelsior College is a perfect example of meeting students “where they are — both academically and geographically.” Excelsior offers FRA shipmates and their spouses a discount when they pursue online degrees in business, health service, liberal arts, nursing, public service and technology. To learn more see page 33 or visit www.excelsior.edu/web/partners/fleet-reserve-association.

Promoting the FRA Education Foundation and its generous scholarship program is a great way to raise awareness of our good work in the education arena. Although applicants don’t have to be affiliated with the FRA, those who are FRA shipmates, their spouses, children and grandchildren are eligible to apply for a broader range of scholarships.

FRA’s Americanism Essay Contest is another great way to support education and the Association at the same time. Promoting the Essay Contest provides another opportunity to engage with local school administrators and teachers, and raise awareness of our great organization within the local community. This year’s theme is “*Why I am Proud to be an American*” and I challenge all shipmates and branches to add one more school to this outreach effort. Use it as an opportunity to tell others who we are, and show support for the contest theme and for our country.

We can make a difference in our respective cities, towns and regions by getting involved. Let’s make a difference to our servicemen, our schools and our shipmates by telling the FRA Story. *Press On!*

Tom Snee is FRA’s National Executive Director and can be reached at NEDFRA@fra.org.

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MAD Cats

I enjoyed the article “Lighter than Air” in the February 2014 issue of *FRA Today*. The enclosed photo was taken near Gibraltar during WWII where I was in VP-63, the “Mad Cats.” It was the first squadron to have “MAD” gear. They would work at night to clear the strait of German U-Boats and we would work in the daytime.



Martin Crider



Agent Orange Concerns

I'm concerned about the lack of action on the “blue water” sailors issue as related to Agent Orange exposure in Vietnam. It has been YEARS kicking around Congress. Are you and the do-nothing Congress waiting for the rest of us to die so you won't have to worry about it any longer? My brother has already died and I have been treated for prostate cancer. I realize that the VA probably doesn't want several thousand more Agent Orange-related cases to deal with, but that is too bad. The government doesn't mind sending the military into harm's way, but it sure likes to look the other way when problems like Agent Orange exposure show up years later.

Ernest Stevens

FRA Response: We're glad to report that we are making progress on the Agent Orange/Blue Water Navy issue. Both the House and Senate versions of the 2015 Defense Authorization bills (H.R. 4435/S. 2410) include an identical provision that directs the Joint Services Record Center (JSRC) to do a comprehensive search to determine which ship's crews are eligible under current law for presumption coverage for exposure to Agent Orange. Currently the veteran filing a disability claim must provide proof that his ship entered a harbor or inland waterway. If enacted, JSRC will create a definitive list of ships and eligibility dates. This will allow many veterans to be able to receive benefits that have been denied in the past. FRA is also working to expand presumption for crew who served off the coast of Vietnam.

TRICARE Prime Access

After reading about the return of TRICARE Prime to some service areas, we thought it would be great to get our son (a full-time college student) back into the program. After spending about 45 minutes on the phone with TRICARE South, I was advised that my son is within the 100-mile [from a military treatment facility] requirement for coverage, but our doctors don't meet the 40-mile requirement. So, it seems that only half the problem has been fixed. Rather than have our son travel 35 miles to a doctor [who meets the distance requirement], we will leave him on TRICARE Standard coverage. This allows him to travel only five miles to see [the doctor who's been treating him].

Please understand that my problem is not with your article, but with Washington. I was grateful for your article. Maybe when we retirees realize that only half the problem is fixed, we will become more proactive and support your efforts on our behalf.

Jim Maxheimer

FRA Response: The law grants authority to the Secretary of Defense to “determine whether to maintain a TRICARE network of providers in an area that is between 40 and 100 miles of a military medical treatment facility.” DoD restricted reenrollment to those who live within 100 miles of a current or former military treatment facility, but beneficiaries must see a primary care provider who practices within 40 miles of an existing base.

Shipmates are encouraged to visit the FRA Action Center at action.fra.org/action-center and weigh in regularly on issues that impact military and veteran benefits.

Preparing for the Future

Great and very helpful article “Preparing for Your Financial Future,” in the June 2014 issue of *FRA Today*. My wife and I went over all eight points, which helped us be more prepared than we were before reading this article.

Steve Dougherty



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

Senate Action on NDAA is Delayed

WHEN CONGRESS ADJOURNED FOR its summer recess, only the House had passed its version of the FY 2015 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA-H.R. 4435). When senators return on September 8, 2014, they will only have 10 days of session before the start of the new fiscal year (October 1, 2014). There already are over 140 floor amendments filed for consideration, and many more will be filed when the Senate returns. Several anticipated amendments impacting FRA membership include reducing the proposed pharmacy co-pay increase for retirees, concurrent receipt improvements, increasing active duty pay by 1.8 percent (instead of the one percent increase requested by the White House and in the current bill), elimination of the Survivor Benefit Plan/Dependency

Indemnity Compensation (SBP/DIC) offset, and early retirement credit for frequently mobilized reservists. After the Senate passes its bill, the House and Senate will appoint a conference committee to resolve the differences between the two measures. The conferees will write a bill that can pass both chambers and be signed into law by the President.

Members are strongly urged to use the FRA Action Center to ask their senators to support floor amendments that will repeal provisions in the current bill to dramatically increase pharmacy co-pays for retirees, reduce the FY 2015 active duty pay increase, and increase out-of-pocket housing costs for active duty personnel. The Action Center is located on FRA's website at action.fra.org.

VETERANS AND RETIREE ISSUES

Honor Flight Bill Passes House

The House of Representatives recently passed the "Honor Flight Act" (H.R. 4812), a bill sponsored by Rep. Cedric Richmond (La.). The bill would codify the process by which the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) provides expedited and dignified passenger screening services for veterans traveling to visit war memorials built and dedicated to honor their service in Washington, D.C. Expedited screening services will save veterans time and show them their proper respect and appreciation.

"The measure seeks to pay a debt of gratitude to a group of Americans who were willing to make the ultimate sacrifice to ensure that we are able to enjoy the freedoms that we have today," said Rep. Richmond. "Although we may never be able to fully repay our veterans for their bravery, our national memorials bring into focus their lasting contribution and their impact on American history. It just makes sense that they are treated with the reverence and gratitude they deserve when visiting memorials erected in their honor."

Retirement and Pay Commission Releases Interim Report

The Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission (MCRMC) recently released an interim report. While the 358-page interim report does not make any recommendations for changes to benefits, it does document the commission's understanding of the overall current military compensation and benefit programs; relevant laws, regulations, and policies; associated appropriated federal funding; and historical background for the uniformed services' compensation and benefit programs.

The MCRMC stated that while compensation funding has increased substantially over the last two decades, the increase is mostly due to inflation (particularly medical inflation) and 13 years of war. The MCRMC also found that while compensation funding has increased, it has remained consistently around 30 percent of the DoD budget. The MCRMC did note that Reserve compensation deserves special attention for reform since the status has changed from a strategic reserve to an operational reserve that is mobilized and deployed frequently.

The 2013 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) established a nine-member commission to review military compensation and retirement programs and make recommendations for their modernization to the President and Congress in February 2015.

FRA has consistently expressed serious concerns about cost-driven efforts to "reform" pay and benefits, and contends that the current pay and benefit package is key to recruiting, retaining and sustaining military readiness. The Association provided a written statement to the Commission expressing FRA concerns; that statement, dated December 20, 2013, is available on the FRA website. FRA DLP John Davis has met with MCRMC Commissioners and staff to provide an enlisted perspective on pay and benefit changes. FRA will continue to closely monitor the activities and deliberations of the Commission. Shipmates can read the interim report at www.mcrrmc.gov/index.php/reports.

VETERANS AND RETIREE ISSUES

Bipartisan VA Reform Agreement

FRA NED Thomas Snee attended a bill-signing ceremony on August 7 to watch as President Obama signed into law House- and Senate-passed legislation (Conference Committee report for H.R. 3230) to reform the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The legislation includes:

- Requiring the VA to offer non-VA care to any veteran enrolled in the VA health care system as of September 1, 2014, or who is a newly discharged combat veteran, if such veteran is unable to secure an appointment within 30 days or resides more than 40 miles from the nearest VA medical facility;
- Extending the pilot program to provide rehabilitation services to veterans with complex-mild traumatic brain injury (TBI);
- Improving care for veterans experiencing military sexual trauma;
- Allowing the VA Secretary to expedite the firing of senior VA managers who are accused of mismanagement;
- Hiring more physicians, other medical staff, and improving VA infrastructure;
- Providing in-state tuition to veterans and eligible dependents using the Post 9/11 GI Bill;
- Providing Post 9/11 GI Bill benefits to spouses of service members who died in the line of duty;
- Establishing a Congressional Commission on Care to evaluate access to care throughout the VA health care system; and
- Authorizing 27 major facility leases in 18 states and Puerto Rico.

The final bill will cost nearly \$17 billion over 10 years with \$5 billion in offsets, making it less expensive than previous VA reform legislation passed by the House and Senate. The Association believes that taking care of veterans is a part of the cost of defending the nation. FRA stresses that no veteran who is eligible for health care services from the VA should be forced to wait too long or travel too far to get medical treatment and services earned through his or her service. FRA welcomes bipartisan cooperation in finding a solution but is concerned how this reform might impact military treatment facilities (MTF). Members can read more about the legislation in Tom Philpott's July 31, 2014 *Military Update* column available at www.fra.org.

Senate Confirms New VA Secretary

The Senate voted unanimously (97-0) to confirm Robert McDonald, President Obama's nominee to serve as Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). He was nominated by the President on June 30, 2014, and unanimously approved by the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee (SVAC) the following week. The new VA Secretary pledged to transform the struggling agency, saying that "systematic failures" must be addressed. McDonald graduated West Point in 1975 and served as a paratrooper in the Army's 82nd Airborne Division. In 1980, McDonald left the Army as a captain for a 33-year career at Procter & Gamble, including serving as CEO from 2009 to 2011.

McDonald, age 61, said that taking care of veterans is personal for him. His father served in the Army Air Corps after World War II, and his wife's father was shot down over Europe and survived harsh treatment as a prisoner of war. Another relative was exposed to Agent Orange in Vietnam and receives care from the VA. McDonald also has a nephew who is in the Air Force, and deployed in the Middle East. McDonald replaces Acting VA Secretary Sloan Gibson, who headed the agency starting in early June. Eric Shinseki, Obama's first VA secretary, resigned on May 30, 2014, when a scandal erupted over wait times for veterans to see a doctor.

VA Opens Burn Pit Registry

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has initiated a new burn pit registry to report exposures to airborne hazards such as smoke from burn pits, oil-well fires, and other pollutants or exposures encountered during Desert Shield/Storm and Post-9/11 deployments. The registry is required to accurately document whether such exposure harmed or caused other illnesses or diseases. VA officials acknowledge that troops may suffer from illnesses related to environmental exposures, and has established a surveillance program for service members exposed to the known carcinogen hexavalent chromium from a water treatment facility near Basra in 2003. However, the VA also said there is not yet enough scientific evidence to prove that exposure to burn pits causes long-term health problems. Shipmates can log on to the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry at: <https://veteran.mobilehealth.va.gov/AHBurnPitRegistry/index.html#page/home>.

Congressional Caucus for Veteran Caregivers

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (Calif.), Senator John McCain (Ariz.), Senator Jack Reed (R.I.), and Chairman of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee (HVAC) Jeff Miller (Fla.) started a new bipartisan "Hidden Heroes Congressional Caucus" to address the challenges facing the 5.5 million volunteer caregivers to America's wounded warriors.

These family members and loved ones shoulder the responsibility of bathing, feeding, dressing, managing medication and injections, arranging for rehabilitation, all while most 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 price, suffering physical and emotional stress and illnesses; difficulty maintaining employment; financial, legal and family strains; and isolation.

VETERANS AND RETIREE ISSUES

VA and TRICARE Dental Information

The VA has recently implemented a national dental insurance program for individuals enrolled in VA health care and in the CHAMPVA program. Premium rates will vary depending on your geographic region and the plan option you select. Three options are available: basic, enhanced and comprehensive. These plans range from about \$8 for basic up to about \$27 for comprehensive.



Photo by mllsjsj/istockphoto

Veterans will not be getting dental care performed by the VA, but veterans must be signed up with the VA for health care to be eligible for the dental insurance plan. This is the first time that the VA has assisted veterans with dental care except for those veterans who are rated at 100 percent service-connected disability, have a service-connected disability for a dental injury, or are on the VA Vocational Rehab program.

More information can be found by going to Delta Dental at: www.deltadentalvadip.org.

The Defense Health Agency (DHA) also recently released an eight-page newsletter for TRICARE Dental Program (TDP) enrollees. This publication includes articles about preventing dental decay through fluoride use, going green with TRICARE benefit updates via e-mail, understanding dental anesthesia options, dental terminology 101, MetLife network dentists, preventing cavities with dental sealants, understanding your explanation of dental benefits, dealing with sensitive teeth, getting dental care when traveling, and medications that can affect oral health. A Kids' Dental Health Fun Page is also included.

To download a copy of this newsletter, go to: <http://go.usa.gov/k9xY>.

IG Claims One-Third of Finalized Claims Inaccurate

The House Veterans Affairs Committee (HVAC) held a hearing to review the VA's progress in achieving the goal of ending its disability compensation claims backlog by 2015 and exploring claims of whistleblower retaliation and "cooking the books" within VBA. At the hearing, Allison Hickey, VA Under Secretary for Benefits, insisted that the claims backlog has been significantly reduced. The VA has set a goal of processing all disability claims within 125 days with 98 percent accuracy and says the disability claims backlog has been reduced by 55 percent, from more than 600,000 pending claims pending beyond 125 days early last year to 275,000 claims today. HVAC Chairman Jeff Miller (Fla.) and Assistant Inspector General for the VA Linda Halliday said they don't believe the VA's reported statistics.

Hickey indicated that VA completed a record 1.2 million disability rating claims in 2013, and that the agency is on track to complete more than 1.3 million rating claims this year and pay a total of \$67 billion in benefits. Hickey also said that more than 90 percent of the claims are being processed electronically. The IG office also reports that over a two-month period, nearly one-third of the adjudicated claims were inaccurate.

House Panel Probes VA Cover-Up while VA Requests Monthly Meetings with Local VSOs

The House Veterans' Affairs Committee (HVAC) held a hearing regarding the cover-up of excessive wait times at veterans' hospitals. The hearing focused its attention on federal employees who stepped forward to expose fraud, sometimes jeopardizing their careers to do so. The committee also heard testimony from the Office of Special Counsel (OSC), who provided appalling examples of patient neglect after hospitalization—indicating that substandard care is more than a waiting-list problem. As reported in the August 2014 issue of *FRA Today*, senior management at the VA has been accused of retaliating against whistleblowers and is being investigated by OSC.

In related news, Acting Secretary of Veterans Affairs Sloan Gibson recently met with representatives from FRA and 25 other Military and Veterans Service Organizations (MSOs and VSOs) to confirm his commitment to addressing systemic problems in accessing VA health care. During the meeting, he updated the representatives on the VA's work with the Office of Special Counsel (OSC) to restore veterans' trust in the system and on VA's progress in reaching out to get veterans into clinics and off waiting lists. He told MSO and VSO representatives that he looks forward to working with them to better serve veterans. He also has directed all VA Medical Center leadership to hold monthly meetings with VSOs and community partners.

New VA Secretary Announces Town Hall Events Across the Nation

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert A. McDonald has directed all Veterans Affairs (VA) health-care and benefits facilities to hold town hall events by the end of September to improve communication with, and hear directly from, veterans nationwide.

"Caring for veterans is a calling, and our first commitment is to provide veterans and their families the timely, quality care and benefits they have earned and deserve through their service to our nation," said Secretary McDonald. "As we seek continual improvement and to rebuild trust among veterans, it is critical that we continue to listen to and learn directly from those who use our system."

Secretary McDonald has informed the Under Secretaries of Health and Benefits that each VA medical center and regional office should hold at least one town hall meeting with veterans by the end of September. Meetings are designed to allow feedback from veterans, family members and other beneficiaries. Each facility will also welcome input from congressional stakeholders, veteran service organizations, non-governmental organizations, and other community partners. Details of events in each location will be forthcoming from local facilities.

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ACTIVE DUTY AND RESERVE ISSUES

TRICARE Increases Access to Qualified Mental Health Counselors

The Defense Health Agency (DHA) recently announced that TRICARE beneficiaries can now choose between two qualified mental health counselor types: independently practicing TRICARE Certified Mental Health Counselors (TCMHC) and Supervised Mental Health Counselors (SMHC).

TRICARE will authorize TCMHCs as independent providers who meet specific qualification criteria. They must have a master's degree from a mental health counseling program accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Education Programs (CACREP) and pass the National Clinical Mental Health Counseling Examination (NCMHCE) by Jan. 1, 2017. TCMHCs can independently treat TRICARE beneficiaries as well as oversee SMHCs. SMHCs will continue to practice under the referral and supervision of TRICARE-authorized physicians while getting the required 3,000 hours of post-master's clinical practice to become a TCMHC.

Some beneficiaries may worry they won't be able to continue seeing their current mental health care provider under this new guidance. "This does not have to be a concern," says Patricia G. Moseley, Ph.D., military child and family behavioral health senior policy analyst at the Defense Health Agency. "Providers have an extended time period to gain the necessary credentials to become authorized for independent practice under TRICARE, if they aren't already. This rule gives providers more time to meet the requirements and allows beneficiaries to keep their current supervised mental health counselors."

The Defense Health Agency is tasked with making military medicine stronger, better and more relevant for the future. This change moves us one step closer to the goal of ensuring the availability of well-qualified, independent providers for our beneficiaries. For more information about TRICARE mental health coverage, visit www.tricare.mil/mentalhealth.

SecDef Orders Military Health Care Review

Secretary of Defense (SecDef) Chuck Hagel recently ordered a comprehensive review of the Department of Defense (DoD) health care system. The 90-day review will be led by Deputy Secretary of Defense Bob Work, with the assistance of the acting under secretary of defense for personnel and readiness and the assistant secretary of defense for health affairs, and the direct participation of the secretaries of the military departments and the service chiefs. In addition, Secretary Hagel has asked Deputy Secretary Work to solicit the perspectives of outside experts in the areas of patient safety and quality care. The review will focus on the following core areas: access to health care, safety of care, and quality of care. The final report was to be delivered to him no later than September 29, 2014.

FRA Discusses Awards and Decorations with DoD

FRA's Assistant Director of Legislative Programs Stephen Tassin participated in a conference call headed by the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) to discuss combat and valor awards. The goal was to determine if the program adequately recognizes all levels of combat valor, and if award processes and authorities are properly aligned with the joint nature of warfare. Among the items discussed were the question of whether service members with PTSD and TBI should be awarded the Purple Heart, and how to best recognize service members who use remote technology to directly impact combat operations.

All associations that participated agreed that the services need guidance to ensure they are on the same page when granting awards to service members. Awards with a "V" device should have higher placement than those without a "V" device. The decision was made that the Purple Heart should not be awarded to service members with Post Traumatic Stress Depression (PTSD) since it is a disorder, not an injury. It should, however, be awarded to those with traumatic brain injury (TBI). Service members who use remote technology to directly impact combat operations should not be given special awards for their duty, but should be recognized using the current award system.

Keep Informed with FRA's Mobile App

FRA's mobile app is now available for iPhone/iPad and Android devices. It gives you easy access to FRA news and legislative alerts, events, branch locator, the Action Center, and more, wherever you go. Need information about the National Convention or directions to a branch? It's all at your fingertips. The FRA mobile app contains the same information you find on our website, but optimized for viewing on small screens. You can even log in to the secure section to edit your personal information, renew your membership, and more. Download it today!

iPhone/iPad users will easily find the FRA app in the App store. Go to the Search page, type FRA in the box and click Search. As of this writing, we are the third app you will see in the results.

Android users can find our app in similar fashion in the Google Play store, though currently it takes some time to locate. Rather than send you on a search in the Google Play store, we have also developed a link that takes you right to the FRA Android app. To use it, use the link below in your Android phone or tablet to go straight to our new app: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.fra>



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Youth Activities

YOUTH ACTIVITIES ARE an important segment of our Association's work and can be a key element in our recruiting efforts, especially for the next generation. School is back in session, making it a great time to contact teachers and administrators about assisting with established programs like NJROTC, Sea Cadets, scouting and any other youth activity that will promote the FRA. It is also a great time to distribute posters and encourage area students to participate in FRA's Americanism Essay Contest and the FRA Education Foundation's scholarship program. Many of our branches have been involved in various youth-oriented activities for a long time and know the value of mentoring young people. Let's take a look at some of the programs.

Shipmate Tom Vatter, of Branch 93 (Patuxent River, Md.), reports a great love for youth activities. Branch 93 has been supporting youth programs since the branch was established in 1947, including Cub Scout Pack 413 (since 1947) and Boy Scout Troop 413 (since 1950). It is a tremendous honor to assist these young future leaders of America. Branch 93 also sponsors a Little League Baseball team by paying for uniforms, equipment and registration, as well as a youth football team in the community. Additionally, the branch sponsors an Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) girls' basketball team, which has done well in both state and regional championships. And lest you think the branch only supports extra-curricular events, Branch 93 shipmates award \$1,500 in scholarship funds to deserving high school students headed to college.

When asked how these youth activities are funded, Shipmate Vatter explained, "We do a *lot* of fund raising." Branch 93 sponsors a variety of



Tori Slawinski at the All American Soap Box Derby National Race, Washington, D.C., July 2014.

social events such as breakfasts and dinners to raise funds, as well as raffles and golf tournaments. They budget about \$4,550 each year to support youth activities in their community. What better way to show FRA support in the community through outreach and public relations than to mentor and provide leadership to youth programs?

Shipmate Anthony Jackson is the new secretary for Branch 6 (Baltimore, Md.). He is a Life Member of FRA and retired as a Gunnery Sergeant from the USCMR. Shipmate Tony, as he is affectionately called, is also a black belt in sho-rin-ryu martial arts under Grand Master Riley Hawkins in Baltimore City, Md., and has assisted in teaching martial arts to children at the Avengers Karate Club since 1984. He is an active member and executive officer of the Riley Hawkins Avengers Foundation Incorporated, which is a non-profit association in the inner city that offers free martial arts instruction



Penny Collins

to students. As part of the program, the Foundation also offers tutoring in an onsite computer lab, meals including breakfast, lunch and dinner, and field trips to participate in martial arts demonstrations and tournaments. Shipmate Jackson pays for some of the resources out of his pocket to assist the students. As a mentor, Shipmate Tony assists students with low self-esteem and a lack of confidence, building them into outstanding citizens with good character. At the East Coast Regional Convention in Williamsburg, Va. this past June, Shipmate Tony was selected as the Shipmate of the Year for Youth Activities representing the East Coast Region. His nomination for this coveted award will be forwarded on to be considered at FRA 87th National Convention in Corpus Christi, Texas, for top honors. Good luck to Shipmate Jackson!

Have you ever been to a soap box derby? The Fleet Reserve contingency

continued on page 16

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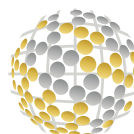
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Membership Matters continued from page 14

in Annapolis, Md., which includes Branch 24, Auxiliary Unit 24 and the Fleet Reserve Club, has been supporting the soap box derby for a number of years. PRPEC Don Hoover has been instrumental in promoting this youth activity, which gives youngsters an opportunity to show their skills in racing non-mechanical vehicles. At the 2014 Greater Washington, D.C. Soap Box Derby held in Washington, D.C., in June, PRPEC Chris Slawinski's daughter, Victoria, won first place in the Stock Division. Because of her win, Tori was eligible to compete in the All American Soap Box Derby Race in Akron, Ohio this past July. Tori did not place in the nationals, but she and Shipmate Chris had an awesome time, and met new friends from all over the world ... and the FRA emblem was front-and-center throughout the whole adventure. Congratulations to Tori for her win in Washington, D.C., and for the opportunity to participate in the national race in Ohio. For more



The Branch 6 (Baltimore, Md.) annual cookout was attended by students and instructors from the Riley Hawkins Avengers Karate Club, as well as RPEC Jim Campbell and RPEC-Elect John Willis.

information about the soap box derby program and where races are held, visit www.aasbd.org.

Branch participation in youth activities is a stepping stone to promoting awareness of FRA. As the new school year begins, consider how you

and your branch can be involved in programs for the future leaders and branch members of FRA.

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.

On & Off continued from page 12

How did Your Legislators Vote on COLA Cut?

FRA weighs in on a number of legislative initiatives that affect military pay and benefits, including the 113th Congress' efforts to cut annual cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) for military retirees under the age of 62. Thanks to the outstanding grassroots support of FRA shipmates, the cut was repealed, but we thought readers might be interested in learning how their individual senators and representatives voted on instituting the cuts and then later repealing them.

The initial provision (Section 403) to cut the annual COLA by one percent for military retirees under age 62 (effective December 1, 2015) was part of the Bipartisan Budget Act (H.J.Res. 59), which set overall discretionary spending limits for fiscal years 2014 and 2015. The bill passed the House (332-94) on Dec. 12, 2013, passed the Senate (64-36) on Dec. 18 and was signed into law on December 26, 2013.

To see how your U.S. Representative voted on the COLA cut, visit: www.fra.org/HouseCOLACut.

To see how your U.S. Senators voted on the COLA cut, visit: www.fra.org/SenateCOLACut.

The COLA cuts elicited strong opposition from FRA and other veterans' organizations, which pressured members of Congress to repeal the measure. In February of 2014, the law was successfully repealed (S. 25) for service members who joined the military before January 1, 2014.

To see how your U.S. Representative voted on the repeal, visit: www.fra.org/HouseCOLACutRepeal

To see how your U.S. Senators voted on the repeal, visit: www.fra.org/SenateCOLACutRepeal

FRA thanks the thousands of shipmates who called and/or used the FRA Action Center (at www.fra.org) to urge legislators to repeal this onerous legislation.

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.



The History of FRA 1990-1999

1 1991

The Association dedicates its new National Headquarters at 125 N. West Street in Alexandria, Va.

2 1991

FRA presents the Homecoming statue to the U.S. Navy Memorial.

1996

FRA becomes federally chartered as part of the FY 1997 National Defense Authorization Act (Public Law 104-201).

3 1996

Representative G.V. "Sonny" Montgomery (Miss.) is the first recipient of FRA's highest honor, the Pinnacle Award.

1996

FRA unveils its presence on the World Wide Web, offering legislative, membership and administrative information to shipmates.

4 1997

With support from FRA National Headquarters, Shipmate Garrette W. Peck III is finally awarded the Silver Star and Purple Heart for actions as a Lance Corporal with the Ninth Marines in Vietnam.

1999

FRA's campaign to repeal the military's REDUX retirement plan pays dividends. The FY 2000 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) allows service members to accept the High-3 retirement plan or elect the REDUX plan and receive a \$30,000 lump sum Career Status Bonus. The measure also contains significant active duty pay raises and housing allowances, all of which are FRA-endorsed initiatives.



(Left to right) National Executive Secretary Norm Pearson, National President Bill Combs, Chairman of the National Building Committee Robert Bacharach and National Financial Secretary George Kaye cut the ribbon on FRA's new National Headquarters Building. (FRA photo by Vince Cuthie)

2



(Left to right) RPNE Earl Norman, NFS Bill Hemmingway, NP Wally Baker, PNP Pete Ross, NES Bob Nolan, PNP Bill Combs, PNP Chuck McIntyre and RPEC Tommy Tommila proudly present the Homecoming to the U.S. Navy Memorial. (FRA photo by Vince Cuthie)

3



(Left to right) FRA's first Pinnacle Award recipient, Sonny Montgomery, poses with FRA National President Bob Fudge and National Executive Secretary Chuck Calkins. (FRA photo by Vince Cuthie)

4



(Left to right) FRA National Executive Director Chuck Calkins, Major General Joseph D. Stewart, Garrette W. Peck III, PFC Garrette W. Peck IV and FRA National President Bob Beese. (FRA photo by Vince Cuthie)



THE FRA



EDUCATION FOUNDATION

September conjures up a wide variety of back-to-school images ... school buses, new shoes and backpacks, the start of football season and retail advertisements featuring stacks and stacks of school supplies. Whether you are a student yourself, have children or grandchildren who are heading off to school this fall, or just have vivid memories of your own school days, there's a high probability that September triggers some unique visions of "school."

With the start of the traditional academic year, it seems only appropriate that September also mark the beginning of the Fleet Reserve Association (FRA) Education Foundation scholarship year. As part of FRA's long-standing tradition, this issue of *FRA Today* honors the Foundation's scholarship recipients for 2014 and announces the release of applications for the 2015 awards. Since its establishment in 2009, the Foundation seeks various ways to partner with military and education professionals to promote lifelong learning opportunities and help scholars reach their educational, professional and personal goals.

This year's launch also coincides with the beginning of the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC), and we're happy to announce that the FRA Education Foundation is again participating. The CFC is the only authorized solicitation of federal employees on behalf of approved 501(c)3 charitable organizations. As an approved CFC charity (Code #80236), the Foundation makes its information available to all military personnel and civilian federal employees, which will expand awareness of our program, hopefully increase support for our scholarship fund and generate more applications for Foundation awards.

Rooted in the Navy Scholarship Program

The FRA Education Foundation is an outgrowth of the FRA Scholarship Program, which began decades ago. The program's origin remains a little fuzzy, but all agree that FRA's involvement in supporting scholars started with our participation in the Navy's scholarship program.

"Back in the early 1980s, the Bureau of Naval Personnel (BUPERS) offered a booklet that listed 20 or 30 scholarships offered by various organizations, including FRA," recalls Past National President (PNP) George Kaye, who served as the Association's National Financial Secretary (NFS) from 1981 to 1997. "Those interested in applying for the various scholarships would request the forms from BUPERS, fill them out and return them to BUPERS. FRA and the organizations also advertised their scholarship offerings and listed the BUPERS address as the contact. BUPERS established a deadline and sent all the submitted applications to the respective organizations, who would then select their own recipients."

The exact date is unknown, but at some point, the Navy terminated its program and FRA picked up the banner and continued to offer scholarships to its members for their families.

"We offered two scholarships at that time," says Kaye, "the Fleet Reserve Association Scholarship and the Schuyler Pyle Scholarship [named for FRA's National Financial Secretary — 1945 to 1962]. The amount of the scholarships at that time was small, but during my tenure as NFS, we received donations for specific scholarships. The first was the Stanley A. Doran Scholarship and then others followed. Each donation spelled out specific criteria for the award. The Robert W. Nolan [former National Executive Secretary], Joseph R. Baranski [former National Treasurer] and Glenn F. Glezen [former NFS] Scholarships were established in honor

of these FRA leaders as a 'thank you for your service' and are funded by FRA's budget."

The program continued to grow, offering more and larger scholarships to deserving students. In 2000, FRA awarded \$37,141 to 16 students. By 2008, annual awards had increased to \$104,000 and the program benefitted 28 students.

"The FRA Education Foundation was established in 2009 in an effort to further expand awareness of, and participation in, FRA's scholarship program," explains Joe Barnes, president of the Foundation and FRA's former National Executive Director (NED). "Providing awards to deserving applicants is consistent with our mission and founding principles. As a 501(c)3, we are able to apply to participate in the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC). To make that possible, a foundation had to be established and a resolution (NBR 41-08) was approved by the Board of Directors and ratified by delegates to our 2009 national convention."

FRA oversees the Foundation, which is a totally separate entity. It has its own governing documents, a separate board of directors, a distinctive IRS designation and its finances are maintained in separate accounts. FRA is classified as a 501(c)19 organization and cannot participate in the CFC. As a 501(c)3 organization, the Foundation can accept contributions, which are considered charitable contributions for tax purposes.

"FRA Standing Rule 14 addresses the establishment of the Foundation and the relationship of the Foundation with the FRA Board of Directors and the overall organization. It also references leadership and IRS reporting requirements and other issues," elaborates Barnes. "There is currently a five-member Foundation Board, on which I have the privilege to serve as president. FRA's Finance Officer Steve Cox is the treasurer, PNP Larry Boudreaux is secretary, and PNP Gary Blackburn and PNP George Hyland serve as board members. Advisors are NED Tom Snee, Shipmates Harry Kantrovich and Jim Mathieu and Honorary Shipmate Jim Webb.

"Participation in the CFC is a big deal," Barnes continues. "The Foundation must apply annually and each application is reviewed to ensure compliance with CFC requirements. In addition to the expanded visibility and support it offers the Foundation and our scholarship program, it's also a recognition that we've met or exceeded the CFC's stringent standards for participation. We're very proud of that."



"The work of former NHQ staff members Finance Officer Paul Rigby, Shipmate Vince Cuthie and Admin Director Alicia Landis is noteworthy and significant to the growth and success of the scholarship program and the establishment of the Foundation," adds Barnes.

Eligibility and Applications

FRA's scholarship program has traditionally been limited to FRA members, their spouses, children and grandchildren who are pursuing college degrees. The establishment of the Foundation has also expanded the scope of our audience to include non-members who are affiliated with the Navy, Marine Corps or Coast Guard through their own service or that of a spouse, parent or grandparent. This change is associated with CFC participation, allows a broader range of external supporters and also has a recruiting and retention benefit. Although anyone who has a connection to the Sea Services can apply for FRA Foundation scholarships, FRA shipmates and their family members qualify for a broader range of scholarships, several of which are funded through member legacy donations.

Some awards, particularly those funded through private donations and established trusts, have very specific eligibility criteria. Some require FRA membership; some are designated for graduate students, while others are limited to students pursuing undergraduate degrees. The Colonel Hazel Elizabeth Benn, USMC, Scholarship Fund has the most specific criteria, providing \$2,000 scholarships for unmarried, dependent children of persons who served or are now serving in the United States Navy as enlisted medical personnel assigned to and serving with the U.S. Marine Corps. (Applicants need not be affiliated with FRA to be considered.)

The Benn Scholarship was established by Colonel Benn's estate to honor the memory of one of the first active-duty female Marines selected for the permanent rank of colonel. Benn became Head of the Educational Services Branch of the Marine Corps and worked tirelessly to increase the potential for Marine Corps personnel to pursue college degrees.

Application forms for all FRA scholarships, as well as those offered by the Auxiliary of the FRA, are available at www.fra.org/foundation. The application deadline is April 15th of each year and applications must include a variety of additional documentation, such as transcripts, recommendations and an essay. Incomplete applications are the primary cause for disqualification, so applicants

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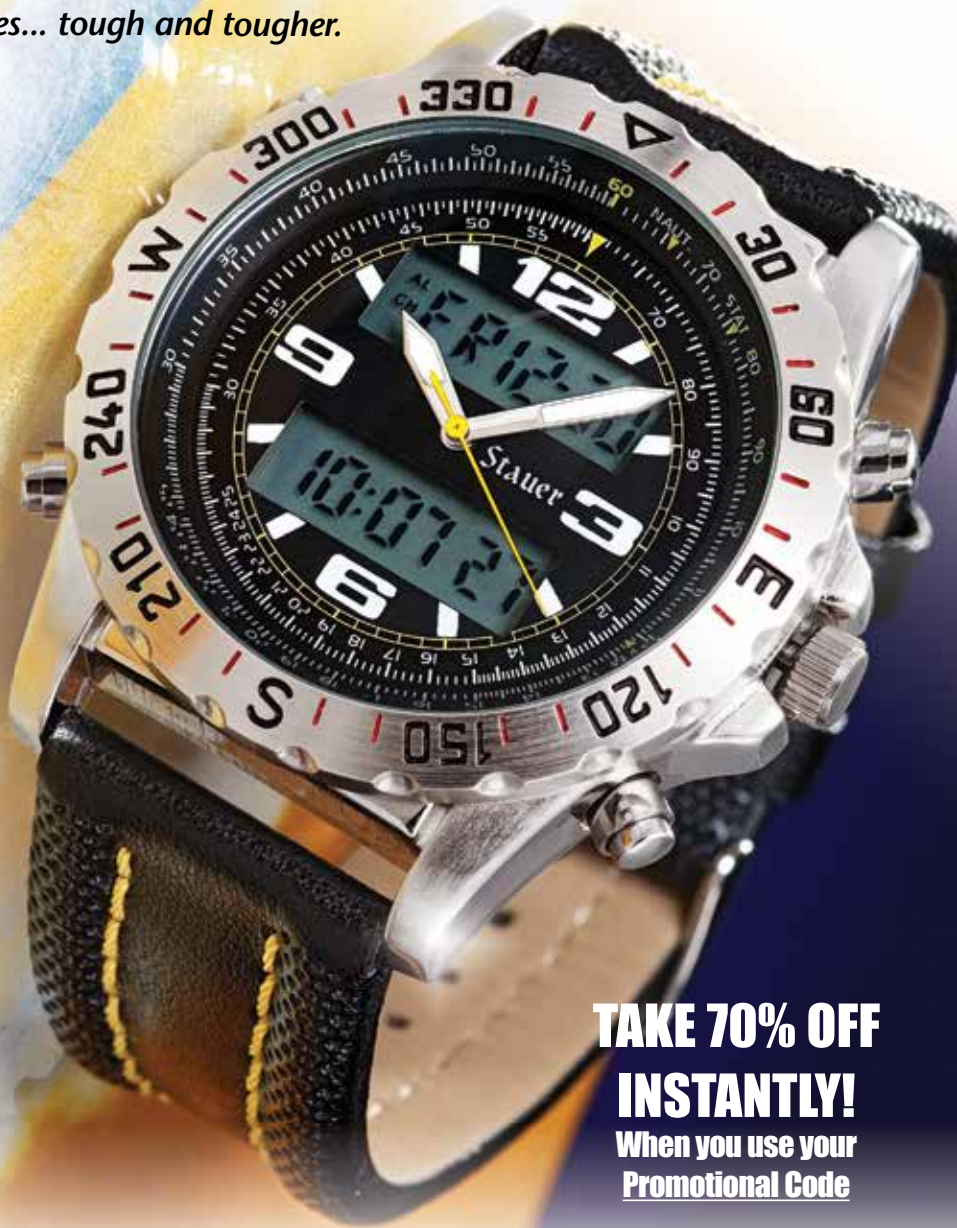
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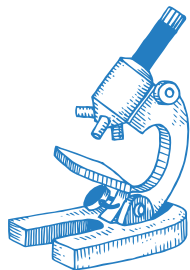
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are encouraged to pay particular attention to all facets of the application package.

Marilyn Smith, the Foundation's scholarship coordinator, suggests

applicants ensure their application is clear, neat, and legible, as it makes a first impression on members of the selection committee, currently comprised of Shipmates Harry Kantrovich and Peggy Bair, and Communications Director Lauren Armstrong. "My second bit of advice is to put some extra time into the essay. It's the one chance applicants get to 'sell' themselves," says Smith. "The essay is the place for applicants to inform the adjudicators about their plans for the future, hardships they may have faced, accomplishments they've attained, and especially their hopes and dreams. Lastly, I strongly advise applicants to seriously consider whom they ask to supply them with a recommendation. It is through these recommenders that the adjudicators gain insight into the applicant and what makes him/her worthy to receive a scholarship."

Selection Process

Selecting scholarship recipients is a very objective, two-step process, according to Smith. "The first review of eligible applications is carried out by a volunteer adjudicating committee, comprised of FRA shipmates and FRA staff members. In the first round, adjudicators classify applications as either 'Yes, this applicant is worthy for further consideration' or 'No, this applicant is not worthy to move forward.' Those applications that are selected for further consideration move to a second round, where they are again reviewed by the committee. In this step, each adjudicator ranks the applicants in numerical order, with their top pick being ranked first and so on. The adjudicators' rankings are then compiled and those applications with the highest composite ranking are offered scholarships."

Recipients are notified by mail in late June or early July and checks are distributed directly to the recipients' schools for use in the Fall semester.

Awards

This year's awardees (listed on page 24) include 24 deserving students who received a collective \$112,000 in scholarships. The total number and amount of awards vary from year to year, based on the number of corporate donations and qualified applicants. These recipients were

selected from the more than 200 applicants who were vying for scholarships.

"We're always looking for ways to expand the program," explains Barnes. "We're hoping to raise awareness at the regional and branch levels of the Association and encourage shipmates to promote the program within their local communities. For example, a template for a press release about the start of the scholarship season is now available at www.fra.org/membernews under Public Relations Resources. [You must log in to the website to access this page.] We invite shipmates and branches to fill in the highlighted blanks to make it relevant to their community and then send it to their local newspapers and media outlets."

Donors and Partners

The Foundation's scholarships are funded by various donors and corporate sponsors. As previously mentioned, some scholarships were established with bequests from shipmates and others who remembered the FRA scholarship program in their wills or named the Association or Foundation as the beneficiary on a life insurance policy. These legacy gifts are simple to establish, but a donor's wishes to support the Foundation must be documented in writing. (See page 30 for more information.)

Contributions are also made by shipmates and others who simply want to support the program. Donations are accepted at any time, but some shipmates and branches choose to make a donation in person to the National President at the Association's annual convention. Because there are very strict rules about the types of gifts military personnel can accept, FRA also makes a donation to the Foundation in the names of our convention speakers rather than purchasing gifts for them. Other scholarships are funded on an annual basis by our affinity partners and other corporate donors. For example, Mercer (formerly Marsh) and GEICO support many FRA initiatives, including sponsorship of annual scholarships.

"Beyond providing scholarships to qualified and deserving individuals, the Foundation's mission includes educating Congress and the American public on how the service of current and former enlisted members of the Sea Services benefits the nation, preparing educational materials and conducting educational activities in support of the Foundation's work, engaging in charitable and educational activities in order to expand awareness and supporting the Foundation in conjunction with its annual awards," adds Barnes.





The Impact of FRA's Commitment to Education

The FRA Education Foundation is also an outgrowth of FRA's commitment to education in general. FRA has been an outspoken advocate for enhanced education benefits for service members and veterans for decades and has been actively engaged in efforts to preserve and enhance those benefits. For example, FRA was instrumental in ensuring the Post-9/11 GI Bill benefit was available to military personnel who previously had no education benefits and included provisions allowing transferability of the benefit to family members. More recently the Association weighed in to secure in-state tuition for service members who may not be legal residents of the state in which they are attending college, and supports funding to strengthen the military's Tuition Assistance programs.

The scholarships presented over the past decades are a tangible demonstration of that commitment. Just since 2001, the FRA and the Foundation have provided 330 scholarships totaling more than \$1.4 million. As impressive as these totals are, it's hard to quantify the impact these scholarships have on the students who receive them. Awards have been presented to students from all parts of the country who have gone on to become doctors and nurses, lawyers, teachers, social workers, professional musicians and a wide variety of other chosen career paths — thanks in no small part to the support they received from FRA. These awards pay dividends for generations.

Every shipmate can take great pride in this long-standing tradition and can play a part in continuing it. There are two ways to help: contributing to the scholarship fund and encouraging deserving students to apply for these generous awards.

Donations to the FRA Education Foundation are welcome from individuals, organizations and businesses, and are tax deductible. Shipmates can remember FRA in their wills and they can also donate to the Education Foundation online at www.fra.org/support. Contributions can also be made during the 2014 CFC, which runs September through December, using **Charity Code #80236**.

The Foundation awards can go a long way in defraying the increasing cost of a college education. Shipmates can help the Foundation and students in their communities by promoting the Foundation and its scholarship program.

In addition to promoting the Foundation scholarships in the local media (using the aforementioned press release template), new promotional materials are being developed to promote the scholarship offerings. Shipmates can also encourage family members and other eligible students in their community to submit applications.

"There are a lot of competing messages out there," says Barnes, "and there's a need to get the word out to prospective applicants. FRA national and regional leaders, branches and individual shipmates can really help us spread the word about this great program."

Further information about the Foundation and scholarship program, including application forms, is available at www.fra.org/foundation.

Supporting Our Military Families

Although not a recipient of FRA's scholarship program, Marilyn Smith is the quintessential example of the importance of the Foundation's work. "When I graduated from high school, becoming an elementary teacher was my goal and dream. After obtaining my Bachelor of Science in Education degree I realized that dream. During the last seven years of my husband's military career in the Coast Guard Reserve, I was fortunate to work with military families as the Ombudsman-at-Large for the Reserve Force and I saw the need for educational support. Working as the Foundation's scholarship coordinator gives me the opportunity to work in two areas — education and the military family — that hold significance in my life.

"Great strides have been made in helping military families pursue higher education with the implementation of the Post-9/11 GI Bill and other programs, but there is still more need. It's particularly rewarding to know that the FRA Education Foundation and its scholarship program is helping to address that need."



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

FRA Education Foundation Announces 2014 Scholarship Recipients

The FRA Education Foundation proudly announces its scholarship recipients for 2014. Funded through private donations, corporate sponsorships, established trusts and the FRA, the Foundation will present \$112,000 in scholarships to 24 deserving students who are pursuing their dreams of a college degree in the 2014–2015 academic year.

“We’re extremely proud of our scholarship program and our student recipients,” says Joe Barnes, president of the Foundation and former executive director of the FRA. “Students, ranging from young college students to active duty personnel and spouses, will benefit from these scholarships. Since 2001, we’ve disbursed more than \$1.4 million in awards and we’re sincerely grateful for the substantial gifts that make it possible.”

Applications for FRA’s 2015–2016 scholarships will be available at www.fra.org/foundation after September 1, 2014.

THE RECIPIENTS OF FRA EDUCATION FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS FOR 2014 ARE:

Glenn F. Glezen Scholarship (\$5,000)

*Jonathan Yong Kim (1), Auburndale, Mass.

Robert W. Nolan Scholarship (\$5,000)

*Brittney Kay Rampley (2), Carrollton, Ga.

Joseph R. Baranski Scholarship (\$5,000)

Cody Nicholas Minor (3), Fort Collins, Colo.

Fleet Reserve Association Awards (\$5,000 each)

James Amos Manning (4), Riley, Kans.

*Robert Buck Patenge (5), Litchfield, Conn.

Nicholas DePidio (6), Pine Hill, N.J.

Christara Lynn Holtgreffe (7), Apple Valley, Calif.

Courtlyn Amber Hisey (8), Citrus Springs, Fla.

Christina Rose Breitenbuecher (9), Mill Valley, Calif.

Jacquelyn Ann Crossman (10), Chesapeake, Va.

Christian James Dudukovich (11), Orlando, Fla.

Mary Catherine Carter (12), Owensboro, Ky.

Robert M. Treadwell Annual Scholarship (\$5,000)

Sean Christopher Egan (13), Staten Island, N.Y.

Stanley A. Doran Memorial Scholarship (\$5,000)

Kyle Sterling Abernathy, Norfolk, Nebr.

Colonel Hazel Benn Scholarship (\$2,000 each)

Rebeca Cristine Griner, Folsom, Calif.

Victoria Elizabeth Ray (14), Burleson, Texas

The Donald Bruce Pringle Family Scholarship

(\$5,000)

Brandon Michael Keel (15), Garland, Texas

MCPO Ken E. Blair Scholarship (\$5,000)

Samantha Kari Gray (16), Green Cove Springs, Fla.

Mercer Scholarship (\$5,000)

Rebecca Jean Mixan (17), Glenwood, Iowa

PhrMA Scholarship (\$5,000)

Jennah Danae Romansky, Akron, Ohio

GEICO Scholarship (\$5,000 each)

Hannah Marie Hassert (18), Raleigh, N.C.

Brooklyn Synclair Penn (19), Noblesville, Ind.

HealthNet (\$5,000)

Nicole Alexandria Heyl, Oriental, N.C.

Individual Contributions Scholarship (\$3,000)

Luca Faustino Valle (20), Lebanon, N.H.

*FRA member

FRA EDUCATION FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS RECIPIENTS FOR 2014



Not shown: Kyle Abernathy, Rebeca Griner, Jennah Romansky, and Nicole Heyl.

Candidates for National President



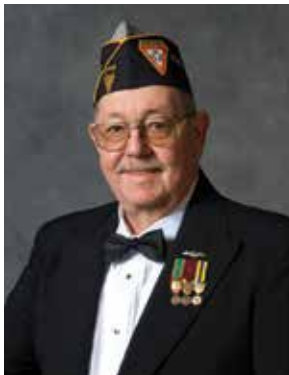
NP VIRGIL COURNEYA, BRANCH 274 (RENO, NEV.)

FRA member since 1982

Shipmate National President Virgil Courneya has been nominated by Branch 274 (Reno, Nev.) to serve as FRA's National President for a second term. He has been a member of the FRA since 1982 and has held numerous leadership positions at the local, regional and national levels of the organization. His national leadership roles include his service as the Association's West Coast Regional Vice President (2004–2005) and President (2005–2006), FRA's National Vice President (2012–2013) and National President (2013–2014).

Courneya enlisted in the United States Marine Corps in 1972 and his military career included assignments in California, Nevada, North Carolina and Hawaii, overseas duty in Japan and Marine Security duty in Bolivia. He achieved the rank of Master Gunnery Sergeant before retiring from the Marine Corps in 1996. Courneya holds a bachelor's degree in Social and Criminal Justice and recently retired from the U.S. Postal Service.

NP Courneya has worked diligently during the Association Year 2013–2014 to strengthen the Association in all aspects of the position. There have been many accomplishments during the year, but he believes it would not be fair to the other candidates to cite them, as they did not have the benefit of working with the outstanding NHQ staff and the membership of the FRA. He feels that the Association would be better served if the National President position was considered to become a two-year position in the future.



NVP JOHN IPPERT, BRANCH 46, HONOLULU, HAWAII

FRA member since 1988

Shipmates of Pearl Harbor-Honolulu Branch 46 have nominated National Vice President John D. Ippert to serve as FRA's National President for Association Year 2014–2015. A 26-year member of the FRA, Shipmate Ippert is also a Life Member and has served the Association at the local, regional and national levels. In addition to his position as a member of the branch Board of Directors, he is currently serving as branch secretary (six years), chairman of the branch Membership and Retention Committee, and has served as chaplain, chairman of the Public Relations Committee, newsletter editor, lounge manager, vice president, and president (two terms). He is a past regional president for FRA's Northwest Region (2006–2007) and has chaired the region's Americanism/Patriotism Committee (three years). He has served as regional chaplain, a member of the Northwest Regional Budget & Finance Committee, and is a member of the Past Regional Presidents Advisory Committee. He has also served as a member of the regional Credentials Committee and as regional secretary (two years).

In addition to his national responsibilities as regional president, Ippert has also served on numerous national committees, including Public Relations, Americanism/Patriotism, Youth Activities, Credentials, Time and Place, and was acting chaplain at the 2012 National Convention. He is currently serving as FRA's National Vice President. His efforts to strengthen the Association earned him various membership awards including a free Life Membership for recruiting 32 new members and, most recently, the prestigious Frank J. McPherson Award in 2012 for exemplifying FRA's three cardinal principles of Loyalty, Protection and Service.

Shipmate Ippert is a Vietnam veteran who joined the U.S. Navy in 1961 and retired as a master chief petty officer in 1986. He holds a bachelor's degree in business administration with a major in management and a minor in finance from Washburn University and, following his military service, he served for four years (two terms) as mayor of Mayetta, Kansas. Shipmate Ippert also retired from the U.S. Postal Service in 2001 as a supervisor of maintenance operations. He currently resides in Mililani, Hawaii, with his lovely wife, Marjorie.

Candidates for National Vice President



**PRPSC DONALD (DON)
LARSON, BRANCH 94,
CORPUS CHRISTI, TEXAS**
FRA member since 1992

I've been nominated by my shipmates of Branch 94 to serve as FRA's National Vice President. As a 22-year member of the FRA, I earned my Life Membership in 2009 through the Association's "Recruit 34" life-membership program. I

was honored to serve as Branch 94's president (2002–2007), two terms as South Central Regional President (2005–2006 and 2008–2009), and now serve as Branch 94's secretary/treasurer (2011–present). Additionally, I've chaired numerous branch, regional, and national committees. I served as a committee member of the 2007 FRA National Convention and am presently chairing the 2014 FRA National Convention in Corpus Christi, Texas. When called upon to serve, I've stepped up without hesitation. I'm extremely proud to have been selected as the recipient of the prestigious Frank J. McPherson Award in 2007. In 1998, I retired from the U.S. Navy with 20 years of service, and am currently completing a bachelor's degree at Texas A&M Corpus Christi, so that I may service as a Veterans Service Officer in my local community.

Shipmates, I am your candidate for the 2014–2015 National Vice President of the FRA. I attend meetings and conventions to be involved, gather knowledge and leadership skills from my peers, and work with those shipmates wanting to better themselves in the FRA. What I've learned over my years of involvement is that, regardless of who we elect to represent and lead us in the FRA, that this is OUR association. Until we each "step-up" and take ownership of OUR FRA, we will continue to decline in membership. As active duty, Reserve, retired and veteran shipmates, we will not be taken seriously on Capitol Hill if we don't VOICE our concerns. FRA NHQ works tirelessly to provide us with the tools and resources to accomplish these tasks. As professional Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard men and women, **we** can and must move forward.

Shipmates, I call upon you to allow me the privilege of representing OUR FRA as the NVP for 2014–2015. I have the leadership experience; knowledge of both the FRA, as well as the Auxiliary; drive, and I have youth on my side. With your active support, we can make our "voice" not only heard, but acknowledged.



**PRPSE ROGER MITCHELL,
BRANCH 188, TAMPA, FLA.**
FRA member since 1985

Roger E. Mitchell is a candidate for Fleet Reserve Association National Vice President for 2014–2015. He joined the U.S. Navy Reserve while a junior in high school in 1959, reporting to active duty in February 1961, and retiring in September 1981 as a Chief Warrant Officer 4

(Gunner). He served 16-and-a-half years of sea duty on two destroyers (DD-696 & DD-780), one repair vessel (AD-37) and one aircraft carrier (CVA/CV-66). Shore assignments included Great Lakes, Iran, Bainbridge and Dam Neck, where he retired.

Retirement from the U.S. Navy led on to a position with Sperry Corporation (later becoming Lockheed Martin Corporation) for the next 22 years. His progression with Sperry/LM began as a Field Engineer advancing to Supervisor, then Project Manager and retiring as a Program Manager (within the top 10 percent of management) in 2002.

Retirement from two careers only made him ready to dedicate his service to the Fleet Reserve Association, his community and the youth of Florida. His service has not been overlooked by the State of Florida, which selected him as Florida Wildlife Hunter Education Instructor for the Southwest Region (13 counties) five times, Florida Statewide Instructor of the Year in 2009 and Top Student Producer for six years. He is additionally a certified County Coordinator, Range Master and Hunt Master for youth hunts in Florida.

Over the past 29 years of continuous membership in the Fleet Reserve Association, he has served the membership with outstandingly dedicated effort at both regional and national levels. He has stepped forward to serve and is currently serving as a branch president — a duty he's shouldered for more than 22 years in two branches in the Southeast Region. He has also chaired two different Southeast Regional committees (Youth Activities for six years and Legislative Service for seven years) and has helped organize and attended over 50 public relations/recruiting events in the Southeast Region since 1992.

He has also served on most national committees and has chaired the national Youth Activities, Public Relations, Future Planning and National Convention Committees.

He is the son of a retired Air Force S/MSGT and his youngest son currently is on active duty with the U.S. Army.

Aviation Boatswain's Mates Association (ABMA)

September 11–15, 2014, San Diego, Calif. Contact Secretary LCDR (Ret.) Doug Thornton, 5765 Jade Moon Circle, Milton, FL 32583, 619-578-1523, thunderdjt@gmail.com

Cargo Handling Battalion Six

November 7–9, 2014, Williamsburg, VA. Contact Vito Motisi, 197D Ramapo Road, Garnerville, NY 10923-1845, 845-786-7086.

USS Belknap (DLG/CG-26)

October 22–26, 2014, Portland, Maine. Contact Christine Maloney, 704-603-8526.

USS Coral Sea (CVA-43) Assoc.

October 1–4, 2014, Nashville, Tenn. Contact John Ranson, 52 Woodland Pl., Ft. Thomas, KY 41075-1605, 859-250-3727, jrsr3843@fuse.net

USS Ranger (CVA/CV-61)

October 1–4, 2014, Jacksonville, Fla. Contact George Meoli, 1740 Durham Road, Guilford, CT 06437, 904-997-2217, Larry-Schmuhl@yahoo.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.



LOOKING FOR...

AT2 Gossett, last known duty station NAS Alameda 1973–1976;
AE 3 Young, last known duty station VP-28 NAS Barabar Point;
PNC Puskar, last known city of residence is Philadelphia, Pa.

Please contact Richard Waltman, kj5pn@yahoo.com.

S/SGT Ray D. Whitbeck, USMC

Instructor in AVA school, NATTC Memphis/Millington around 1964–1966. Contact ATCS Haskett (Ret.) at RHAS4852@AOL.COM or 901-872-0074.

I have a photo of my San Diego Boot Camp Company 206

taken in July 1949. I would be happy to provide a copy to anyone who desires one. Contact Richard E. Taylor, HMCM (Ret) at taylordoctor@yahoo.com

HM3 Trudy Smith

from Dispensary, NAS Brunswick, Maine, for a reunion. Contact HMC Don Ledbury (Ret.) at donledbury@gmail.com or 850-459-3255.

PCI Eric Hausman, Trent Baker and Claude Schirmer

I was stationed with them in Naples, Italy. I was a MSI BEQ manager from 1989–1992, and was on *USS Enterprise* from 1986–1989. Please contact John Tarasow at 228-243-3409 or johnntarasow@gmail.com

Trying to locate a photo of Company 126, Great Lakes, Ill.,

from January–March of 1956. Contact Woodrow W. Franks Jr., USN (Ret.), 108 Date Palm Dr., Brownsville, Texas 78521, 956-455-0807.

RD2 Julius J. “Skip” Nelson

Who served aboard *USS Mellette* (APA-156), recently of Carmichael, Calif., and formerly of Fullerton, Calif. Attended reunion in Branson, Missouri in 1996. Please contact OSC(SW) Lee Sale, USN (Ret.) at chic724@yahoo.com.

Members of River Division 592

at Nha Be, Vietnam from May 68–May 69. Contact Marlin Schleef at 712-229-0725 or marlyschleef@gmail.com.

Corpsmen

Looking for corpsmen who were stationed in Da Nang from Nov. 62 to Feb 63 and Fetenma, Okinawa from Feb 63 to Sept 63. Contact Otha Wallace at papawallace@earthlink.net or Bob Kasunick at bkasunick@gmail.com.

RD2 J.J. “Skip” Nelson

He served aboard *USS Mellette* (APA-156), 1953–1954. His last known address was Carmichael, Calif. (formerly Fullerton, Calif.) Contact OSC(SW) Lee Sale at chic724@yahoo.com or 828-254-3239.



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Legacy Gifts to the FRA

YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN FRA demonstrates extraordinary commitment to improving the quality of life for current and former service personnel. Many shipmates choose to leave a legacy of Loyalty, Protection and Service by contributing to the FRA or remembering the Association in their wills or living trusts. Creating such a lasting tribute is a simple way to perpetuate your commitment to the guiding principles of our organization.

PNP Gary Blackburn is one of the many shipmates who have provided for FRA in their wills. "My life changed after my wife passed away," Blackburn said. "I was supposed to be the first to go, or so I thought, and I had everything set up so that she would be taken care of financially. That's what we do for those we care for, and who have taken care of us. In many ways, FRA has become my family; I became even more deeply involved with my shipmates and they came together for me.

"I want to make sure that FRA stays the same FRA that I have known—shipmates coming together just like a family to help one another. My question to myself has always been, how can I help out? I do that here and now by participating in branch programs and events and serving as a national officer, and I have ensured that my service will continue after me by naming FRA as a beneficiary in my will. It's my way of giving back and saying 'thank you' to my loyal family, my shipmates."

We encourage you to share your story of ways in which the Loyalty, Protection and Service of your shipmates have impacted your life and inspired you to give back.

Donations and Bequests

FRA gratefully accepts donations from our members and others who wish to support the Association's important work. Some shipmates elect to donate directly or make bequests as part of their estate plan, while others ask family and friends to make donations and bequests in their name.

As you consider your contribution, know that FRA's management of financial resources far exceeds the Better Business Bureau's standards for charity organizations. FRA spends 85 cents of every dollar to provide direct service to its members, with a minimum spent on fundraising and overhead. Donors can be assured their legacy donations are handled with the same good stewardship and respect.

Shipmates are encouraged to request a copy of our free publication, *My Personal Affairs*, designed to help you organize all of your important financial information. For your copy, please contact Member Services at fra@fra.org or (800) FRA-1924.

Contributions may be made in a variety of ways.

By phone: Please call FRA's Finance Officer at 1-800-672-1924 or 703-683-1400, extension 102, and explain that you would like to make a memorial donation.

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By mail: If you prefer to make your donation by check, you may mail it to:

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Shipmate Gary Blackburn and his late wife, Yoshi, following his installation as FRA's National Vice President during the 2008 National Convention.



NAME	BRANCH	NAME	BRANCH
Abdon, Laurel A, SD1, USN	084	Goolsby, Gordon E, SN, USN	MAL
Allen, Joe T, ACC, USN	MAL	Grammer, Thomas W, RMCM, USN	106
Anderson, Jack W, CWO2, USN	203	Guenther, Franklin, AECS, USN	022
Arvin, Michael, GYSGT, USMC	086	Hallila, Esko E, MGYSGT, USMCR	067
Aznavorian, Ray, HTC, USN	038	Harbison, James C, FTC, USN	MAL
Bangi, Roberto D, SDC, USN	043	Harrison, John T, RMC, USN	MAL
Bartley, Leon C, ENC, USN	214	Heitger, Robert L, GYSGT, USMC	MAL
Baskins, Rudolph J, SD1, USN	062	Henry, Thomas P, HM1, USN	182
Bell, J O, AVCM, USN	MAL	Ireland, Michael J., RM3, USN	061
Bercero, Bonifacio C, HT1, USN	MAL	Jackson, Byron, CDR, USN	MAL
Bernardy, Benjamin V, LT, USN	061	Jamison, William E, AOC, USN	MAL
Bigart, Thomas W, CPO, USN	MAL	Jencks, Robert A, CSC, USN	MAL
Blache, Albermale B, ADCS, USN	126	Kimpler, Omer, YNC, USN	241
Bland, Richard D, LT, USN	319	Kowalski, Robert J, LI1, USN	254
Brewer, Charles G, AFCM, USN	022	Laplane, Francis C, ENC, USN	020
Brown, Wallace C, CTMCS, USN	MAL	Leep, Thomas B, ADRC, USN	018
Brown, Myron L., AMH3, USN	170	Lowe, Oscar C, HMC, USN	289
Bryant, Clarence A, ICC, USN	MAL	Malloy, Carroll N, ENC, USN	018
Bunce, William V, SKCS, USN	MAL	Manca, Joseph, ATCS, USN	146
Chronister, Wesley G, MSCS(SS), USN	267	Mancuso, Gillis, PO2, USN	023
Cox, William H, CWO4, USMC	162	Mathews, Hubert, W3, USN	MAL
David, George L, ADRC, USN	MAL	Mayo, John J, ABH1, USN	MAL
Day, Paul, CPO, USN	MAL	McCargo, Worthy, CPO, USN	071
Dean, James E, SK1, USN	324	Mikels, Beuford L, PO1, USN	MAL
Dierlam, Paul E, AMHC, USN	274	Miller, Francis D, PO1, USN	MAL
Doyle, Raymond H, YN2, USN	214	Monsalud, Antonio, SDC, USN	022
Dugger, Henry D, CPO, USN	022	Morton, Riley E, EMC, USNR	089
Dunn, Robert E, ENC, USN	175	Musgrove, Harry D, BMC, USN	040
Earlston, Robert P, CAPT, USN	256	O'Brien, William L., MM2, USN	296
Ellison, Orpha C, SSGT, USMC	216	Outlaw, Aubrey C, GMGC, USN	117
Evans, Howard E, GYSGT, USMC	175	Padgett, George L, GM1, USN	MAL
France, Raymond J, GYSGT, USMC	086	Palmer, George W, MUCS, USN	117
		Pattie, Norman R., AMS1, USN	126
		Perry, Chester A, LT, USN	061
		Person, Thomas O, SD2, USN	175
		Peterson, James H, ADJ1, USN	183
		Phillips, John S, STSCS(SS), USN	269
		Pippin, David W, SCPO, USN	126
		Potts, Phillip L, YN1, USN	070
		Powell, Kenneth E, FTC, USN	MAL
		Ralston, Robert R, CWO4, USN	MAL
		Ravenscroft, Bruce, PH2, USN	137
		Reese, Barry A., BT3, USN	001
		Renoe, Richard F, HTC, USN	MAL
		Ross, John Frank, YNCS(SW), USN	294
		Rush, Anthony P, CAPT, USN	022
		Sanders, Billy G, OMC, USN	MAL
		Sasules, Alfred, AD2, USN	MAL
		Segall, Harvey, HMC, USN	MAL
		Showers, Jean L, YNC, USN	061
		Singleton, Gerald E, USN	101
		Skillman, Charles F, CDR, USN	MAL
		Terry, Odis F, BMC, USN	MAL
		Tester, Earl L, AFCM, USN	MAL
		Thiebaut, Martin Vern, SH1, USN	MAL
		Thomas, Ithiel H, ADR1, USN	099
		Valdez, Benjamin E, GYSGT, USMC	MAL
		Watson, Eugene G, YNC(AW), USN	099
		Wischstadt, Ace, SSGT, USMC	289
		Young, James A., HM3, USN	170

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

Oldest New Shipmate is a Pearl Harbor Survivor and First-Shot Veteran

Photo and story by Shipmate Daniel G. Jirovec, Branch 238

THE NEWEST MEMBER OF Branch 238 (Plover, Wisc.) is 93-year-old Will Lehner. Shipmate Lehner is not only a Pearl Harbor survivor, but was on the destroyer that fired America's first shot in the Pacific theater of WWII an hour before the main Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

The USS *Ward* (DD-139), a WWI "four stacker," was not considered much of a fighting ship because of its age. The commander was Lt. William W Outerbridge, USN, and it was manned mainly by Reservists from the St. Paul, Minn.-based 47th Division. The *Ward* was on a seven-day patrol, beginning the evening of December 6th, the objective of which was to patrol the entrance of the harbor. At 0200 the minesweepers *Condor*, *Crossbill* and *Reedbird* started their Sunday morning patrol.

At 0400, the *Condor* radioed the *Ward* saying a submarine was sighted moving westerly at five knots. *Ward* went to battle stations and started to search. At 0605 the USS *Antares*, towing a 500-ton barge, "blinked" – someone was trying to follow it into the harbor. It appeared to be a periscope.

The attack began and *Ward* sent this message: WE HAVE ATTACKED AND DROPPED DEPTH CHARGES UPON A SUBMARINE OPERATING IN THE DEFENSIVE SEA AREA.

Historians credit the *Ward* with firing the first shot of WWII. Many historians also credit the *Ward* with sinking the submarine. Only two members of



Shipmate Bob Almquist welcomes fellow WWII veteran, Pearl Harbor survivor Will Lehner (left) to FRA. Lehner served on the USS *Ward*, credited with firing the first shots of WWII in the Pacific theater, and is perhaps the oldest person ever to join FRA.

the original crew are still alive — Will Lehner and Richard Thrill.

Lehner was on the National Geographic expedition that went looking for the sub. In August 2002, in the area where Lehner said the attack started, the Hawaii Undersea Research Lab discovered the sunken 78-foot two-man midget submarine in 1,200 feet of water with the crew still entombed. The submarine was in good condition and intact with a torpedo in each tube. It had a hole through the conning tower which confirmed the fact that the sub was hit during its dive.

Proving you are never too old to join the Fleet Reserve Association, Shipmate Lehner was glad to share his

experiences and said he hoped he contributed something to the war effort. Today, when he wants to swap war stories, he walks across the street where he talks with his neighbor, SGT John Reigner, who was on the team that liberated some of the German death camps with General Eisenhower.



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Richard James
BS in Nuclear Engineering Technology

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BRANCH 1 PHILADELPHIA, PA.

Shipmate Robert E. Leopold, Jr., his brother and son with Sea Scouts at the commissioning of the USS *Somerset* (LPD-25) at Penn's Landing. The Sea Scouts participated in the commissioning ceremony and served box lunches.

**BRANCH 210 MILTON, FLA.**

Branch President Marlan "Tank" Truelsen presents medals to Pensacola Sea Cadets for their participation in FRA's Americanism/Patriotism Essay Contest.

**BRANCH 29 BREMERTON, WASH.**

Branch Essay Contest winners were honored at the March branch meeting. Shown (l to r) are Americanism/Patriotism Committee Chairman, Glenn Wahlbrink, 1st place winner Kelli Edwards, Branch President Michelle Hodges, 2nd place winner Danielle Cox and RPNW Dan Holloway.

**BRANCH 298 GRAND RAPIDS, MICH.**

Branch President Rosemary Posekany (right) visited Allegan High School in Allegan, Mich., to present awards to Essay Contest participants (l to r) Siera Ruffer, Sawyer Johnson and Marisa Henrickson, who was the branch's third place winner. All, along with Sam Armintrout (not shown), are 12th grade students. During her visit to the school, Shipmate Posekany also spoke with four different English and History classes about life in the Navy, sharing photos and cruise books from her 20-year Navy career.

**BRANCH 20 GROTON, CONN.**

Branch President Michael Wiemann proudly presents Shipmate Thomas Russell III with his 50-year continuous membership certificate, pin and membership card, while Mrs. Russell looks on.

**BRANCH 202 COLUMBIA, S.C.**

Branch President James Turner Jr. and PRPSE Ron Hoadley congratulate the Southeast Region's Essay Contest Winner Sean Trahan. Branch members voted to match the region's award and Sean received a total of \$150 in addition to his certificates. Shown (l to r) are Don Deluney, Danny Trapp, Bruce Tucker, Hoadley, Trahan, Turner, Charles Hanson and Perry Riley.

BRANCH 126 JACKSONVILLE, FLA.

Shipmate Clinton "Bud" Attebery (left) is recognized for his 60 years of continuous FRA membership by Branch President James J. Thomas. Shipmate Attebery joined the FRA and Branch 126 in June 1954 and is the longest-serving member of the Branch Board of Directors.

**BRANCH 208 JACKSONVILLE, N.C.**

Shipmates recognized FRA Essay Contest winners at Infant of Prague Catholic School in Jacksonville, N.C. Shown (l to r) are Shipmates Robert Baum and Branch Secretary Mark Rogers, Seventh Grade Winner Katherine Dyke, Eighth Grade Winner Joseph Johnson and Shipmate Conrad "Bill" Hemmingway. Ms. Dyke and Mr. Johnson were also winners at the regional level, placing first and second, respectively.

**BRANCH 146 JOHNSTOWN, PENN.**

FRA Branch Essay Chairman and Boyertown, Penn., Area School District officials stand with the six NJROTC Cadets who placed high at the branch level. Shown (l to r) are Branch Essay Chairman Joe Millman, Cadet Hanna Mullen (12th Grade, 2nd Place), Principal Dr. Brett A. Cooper, Cadet Lance Kokonos (11th Grade, 2nd Place), Cadet David McLarnon (11th Grade, 1st Place), Cadet Liz Reehle (10th Grade, 1st Place), Cadet Kaitlin Haggert (9th Grade, 2nd Place), Superintendent of Schools Dr. Richard Faidley and Cadet Helena Berner (9th Grade, 1st Place). The Branch also recognized students at St. Isidore Catholic School.

**BRANCH 41 ROANOKE, VA.**

Shipmate Branch President Joe Black presents the 12th Grade winner award for FRA's 2014 Americanism/Patriotism essay contest to Lindsey Baldwin at Northside High School, Roanoke, Va.

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.

Message from the North Central Regional President Christine Drew

HERE IN THE MIDDLE of the “land of the free,” we are 16 units strong, living out the principles of Loyalty, Protection and Service day by day — sometimes in ways shared by many units, sometimes in ways unique to a particular unit.

Unit 267 (Greater St. Louis, Mo.) participates in local parade events with their branch counterparts. Community participation lets others in the area know of the LA FRA and our good work. How handsomely the flags wave! Branches may provide Units with unique banners to display. And the parade units are stories unto themselves.

Unit 161 (Kansas City, Mo.) is known throughout the region for their Christmas gift donations to area children’s homes. Branch and unit members participate in a variety of fundraising activities and partner with local businesses to contribute about \$10,000 each year to this effort. The homes provide a wish list for each child and volunteers shop for one “want” and various “needs,” such as pajamas and socks. Christmas parties, complete with a visit from Santa and live music, are held at three of the homes.

Unit 136 (Minneapolis, Minn.) held its first Viking Pilgrimage on June 12, 2014, at the FRA/LA FRA marker placed at Ft. Snelling National Cemetery. This ceremony, similar to the National Pilgrimage, affords an opportunity to those unable to attend Regional or National Conventions to remember departed shipmates and members.

Many members are older and are limited in their ability to drive. They gather for monthly lunches, they check up on each other by phone, and they remember special occasions. Friendships formed in LA FRA are treasures, indeed. As a “daughter,” I find being with the other members a fun way to walk down memory lane or share other common experiences. One day at lunch following a unit meeting we figured that there were several of us there who at one time lived in Quonset huts. Important? Not really. But, a bond? Absolutely.

By the time you read this article, the 2014 North Central Regional Convention will be history. Hosted by Branch and Unit 136, it was held at the Kahler Grand Hotel in Rochester, Minn. What a wonderful opportunity to renew friendships, rekindle memories — oh — and conduct some business, of course!

Recruiting is important and I encourage each member of LA FRA to share our great organization with others. Spouses, parents, grandparents, sisters, brothers, children, stepchildren or grandchildren of a member of the FRA are eligible to join, as are relatives of those who were FRA shipmates or were eligible to be shipmates at the time of death. All LA FRA members must be 16 years old or older. Each member is included in the count of people represented by FRA when it lobbies Congress for military and veterans’ benefits. Refer prospective members to www.la-fra.org for more information.

My late father was a 50+-year member of FRA. It seems to me that being an LA FRA member is a perfect way to say “Thank you for your service” — both to him and to all the other shipmates. Hopefully you will agree!



Branch and Unit 267 members participate in a variety of community events, including local parades.



CHRISTINE DREW
North Central Regional President



Shipmates and Auxiliary members contribute thousands of dollars and hundreds of man-hours to support local children’s homes during the holiday season.



(Left to Right) Auxiliary members Pat Brown, Barb Skates, Unit President Linda Schonhorst, Shirley Ferrington and Betty Schonhorst hold their Unit banner.

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