The Places Nobody Knows

16 A Shipmate Survives the Sinking of the USS Yorktown
28 FRA’s Americanism Essay Contest
32 Meet New NHQ Staff Member Ben Young
Featured

18 **THE PLACES NOBODY KNOWS**
There are millions of hidden gems scattered across this great nation of ours. This month's feature highlights just a few offered by the National Park Service — beautiful natural treasures to excite your senses and soothe your soul. Find yours this summer!

Departments

2 **COMMUNICATIONS**

4 **FROM THE FIELD**
Leadership Resources

6 **SHIPMATE FORUM**

8 **ON & OFF CAPITOL HILL**
Era of Career Military Service May be Ending

14 **MEMBERSHIP MATTERS**

16 **HISTORY & HERITAGE**
A Shipmate Survives the Sinking of the USS Yorktown (Part II)

28 **FRA’S AMERICANISM ESSAY CONTEST**

30 **TAPS**

31 **REUNIONS**

32 **LOOKING FOR...**

34 **NEWS FROM THE BRANCHES**

36 **NEWS FROM THE AUXILIARY OF THE FRA**
Message from Southeast Regional President Pat Suckow

**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**
Fort Jefferson is the centerpiece of Dry Tortugas National Park in Key West, Fla. Constructed between 1845 and 1876 to protect shipping lanes that converge at the juncture of the Gulf of Mexico, the Atlantic Ocean and the Caribbean Sea, the fort occupies the majority of Garden Key and is open for tours. Photo by Varina and Jay Patel/Shutterstock.
A Wanderer is Always at Home

I ADMIT IT: I'm a self-proclaimed travel junkie. As a military brat and bride, my feet start to itch when I've been in one place too long. My travel bucket list expands by the day, not only in the number of destinations I want to visit, but also the scope and distance of the journeys I want to undertake. Many are far-flung adventures like walking along the Great Wall of China and witnessing the Great Migration across the Serengeti Plains. My father joined the Navy to “see the world,” so I guess the apple didn't fall far from the tree.

In recent months I’ve started adding some of closer-to-home destinations to my wanderlust list — learning more about my ancestors at Ellis Island, whale-watching off the Pacific coast and visiting the natural wonders of Yellowstone and Yosemite National Parks. Researching this month’s feature story made my soul strain to also explore some of our lesser-known national treasures. I sincerely hope it inspires our readers in a similar fashion.

As our nation celebrates 239 years of independence, I hope you'll also take a moment to celebrate the splendor and majesty of this great country. There's a different glimpse of America down every backroad and around every corner, just waiting to be discovered. Find your special place — whether it is near or far — and be extra proud to call it your home.

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

CORRECTIONS:

Corrected Dates for the Southwest Regional Convention
The dates for the 2015 Southwest Regional Convention published on page 30 of the June issue of FRA Today were incorrect. The convention will be held on August 14 and 15 (not August 8 and 9 as printed). The remainder of the information we published about the Southwest Region's convention is correct:

Dates: August 14 and 15, 2015
Location: Riverside Resort, Laughlin, Nevada
Host: Branch and Unit 70
Contact: RSSW Darvin Dalrymple at 619-992-9886, Darvin_FRA70@cox.net
Unit VP Michelle Caston at 760-803-5656, me-n-rc@cox.net

We apologize for any inconvenience that this misprint may have caused.

USS Chivo Reunion Correction
The reunion listing for USS Chivo (SS-341) in the May issue of FRA Today included a critical typographical error (the phone number and e-mail address got partially combined). The reunion information should read:

USS Chivo (SS-341): October 4–8, 2015, Myrtle Beach, SC. Contact Stan Pollard, 3016 Bayberry Cove, Wooster, OH 44691, 330-749-7151 or e-mail 341.stan@gmail.com. Further information is available at www.usschivo.org.
Leadership Resources

I WANT TO START by thanking the National President and members of the National Board of Directors for the opportunity to serve as the National Vice President for the remainder of the 2014-2015 Association Year. With that being said, there is much to consider for the remaining months of this Association Year, including ways to address our shrinking membership, how to motivate our members to get out and educate the public about the Fleet Reserve Association and what we can do for prospective members.

I'm hearing all too often that branches want to turn in their charter or merge with another branch. The common reason is because many branch officers have held their positions for a number of years and are tired or in ill health; and nobody else is willing to step up to hold office or do what's necessary to hold the branch together. Getting out the word to the younger generation that we are indeed here for them is to their advantage as much as ours.

It seems that we, as national, regional and branch officers, have failed to provide adequate training for all our members in what is involved in being an FRA leader. Officers at all levels of the FRA should have the knowledge of the Constitution and By Laws of the Association and be able to assist branches and shipmates who are having difficulty sustaining their membership and branch structure.

This is particularly important for those serving — or wishing to serve — as a regional president (RP). When holding an RP position, you are a member of the National Board of Directors and responsible for advancing the Association as a whole, as well as taking care of your respective region. It is essential that you stay involved with each branch in your region and assist them when they are having hardships. This starts by ensuring each branch is in good working order and it may be necessary for you to be there to help in recruiting members or assisting in establishing a slate of officers when needed. Assistance with information/recruiting booths and other outreach activities is also part of the RP's membership-related responsibilities. Regional presidents should also keep in contact with the National Vice President, who oversees many facets of membership recruiting and retention.

Problems inevitably arise and each branch should know that assistance is available. Branch leaders and members should not wait to advise their regional president that they are struggling. Turning in the branch charter should be the last resort, not the only option. There are tremendous resources, including the vast experience of past regional and national officers, that can help when difficult situations arise.

Past branch and regional officers can also provide information and assistance when branches are doing their annual reports. It is not a requirement for each officer to be computer literate, but it does help. When in doubt, remember that support is just a telephone call away, whether it is to the regional president or a past officer of the branch.

As we move towards our upcoming national convention, I believe we need to put more emphasis on ways to increase membership, through recruiting and retention initiatives, and focus on ways to maintain the viability of our organization. We need to work together and share what we can do to benefit all current and former enlisted members of the Navy, Marine Corp and Coast Guard. Let's focus on growing the FRA and sharing our positive and innovative ideas for the future.

There are tremendous resources, including the vast experience of past regional and national officers, that can help when difficult situations arise. When in doubt, remember that support is just a telephone call away, whether it is to the regional president or a past officer of the branch.

Virgil Courneya was elected to serve as FRA's national president during the 2013-2014 Association year and was recently appointed to fill the unexpired term of National Vice President when Shipmate Roger Mitchell passed away. He is a member of Branch 274 (Reno, Nev.) and can be reached at mgysgtvpc@att.net
VAVS Counts

After reading your story about the VAVS last month, I want to acknowledge Shipmate Jerome Beicher’s service and dedication to the VAVS program here in Nevada. The Director of the Sierra Nevada VA recently presented Shipmate Beicher (shown below) with the VAVS Leadership Award for his 15+ years and 6,250 man hours of voluntary service to the VA.

Keep up the great work, shipmate, and thank you from all of us!

RPVWC/PRPWC/PNC Pat LeClaire

As a Voluntary Service Program Manager in Massachusetts, THANK YOU for taking the time and effort to highlight the GOOD WORKS happening at VA Hospitals. Too often we don’t hear or see the good news.

We in VAVS need all the support we can muster and by highlighting the various VAVS opportunities, you have greatly assisted in our recruitment efforts. Your feature should also encourage FRA members to volunteer at VA Hospitals.

Joseph Dooley

21st Century FRA

Well, one shipmate hit the nail on the head. Recruiting new young members couldn’t have been put more plainly. His ideas are fresh and should be looked into. We cannot continue to do business “the same old way.” It’s the 21st Century and a digital world, and we have to move forward with it. Shipmates need to “get with it.” If not, our future is not going to look very bright.

I applaud Shipmate Athenours’ comments and suggestions. Hopefully, leadership will follow through with some meaningful discussion.

Robert W. Huscher

Former Chiefs

I admire your willingness to take the rap for oversights, but suggest you first check to make sure you’re guilty as charged. Naval traditions are a complex thing, always subject to debate by those who consider themselves well informed on the subject. None of us are infallible.

I can appreciate the basic intent of Shipmate Clark and his “once a chief, always a chief” spirit (June issue, FRA Today), but would quibble with his claim, “… there are no former chiefs, only active duty and retired chiefs.”

I have personally known, and helped expedite the departure of, chiefs who came in conflict with, and lost out to, naval justice. They are, by definition, “former chiefs.”

Until 1965, acting appointment chief petty officers could be, and sometimes were, reduced in rate at Captain Mast (UCMJ Article 15).

Since their permanent grade was E-6, they came out of the “contest” as PO2.

It requires court martial action to reduce a master, senior, or chief petty officer in rate and the nature of their offense rarely allows them to remain long as members of the active Navy. They are “former chiefs” and rightly so.

I would also point out to Shipmate Clark that his claim might get an argument from our large community of WO’s and LDO’s, many of whom cycled through the CPO rate as they rose to higher rank. Although the LDO may recall fondly their CPO days, the fact is that the CPO and officer communities are separate and distinct. Our WO/CWO and LDO’s are to be respected for their achievements and are worthy of being recognized as “former chiefs.”

Les Campbell

I take objection to Daniel Clark’s statement that former Chiefs do not exist. I just checked my pulse and pressure and I am still here. While I was in the regular Navy with a permanent appointment, at the end of the war the Navy was shedding personnel as fast as they could, had dropped Warrant from my rate and did not make any effort to retain me. Therefore I was no longer on active duty and not put on retired status. I was never retired from the Navy, so my status was and is Former Chief (and proud of it) and retired from the business world.

Louis Behrmann

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.
Era of Career Military Service May be Ending

AS THIS ISSUE OF FRA Today goes to press, the House has passed its version of the FY 2016 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) and the Senate is considering floor amendments (see below) and then final passage. Once the Senate approves its version of the bill, a conference committee will be appointed to resolve the differences between it and the House version. This final version will be voted on by both chambers and, if passed, will be sent to the President to be signed into law or vetoed.

The Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) marked up its version of the NDAA in a closed session and approved provisions that would enable the Department of Defense (DoD) to transfer $38 billion from Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) funds to the base budget, allowing the Department of Defense (DoD) to exceed sequestration spending caps.

Currently there are substantial differences between the two bills, but both accept the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission (MCRMC) recommendation to create a blended and smaller retirement benefit package for future military personnel who serve 20 or more years, although the provisions are not identical. The SASC proposes to replace the current defined benefit plan for those who serve 20 or more years with a reduced defined benefit plan that offers 40 percent (versus the current 50 percent) of base pay at retirement. This proposal also adds a new Thrift Savings Plan (TSP), a 401(k) type plan that provides a one-percent employer contribution and an employee contribution (unless the service member opts out). Employee contributions would be matched by the employer up to five percent of annual pay, but under the Senate proposal, the matching contribution would stop after 20 years of service. The plan would also provide a bonus determined by the military branch at 12 years of service if the service member signs up for four more years. The bill also authorizes the Secretary of Defense to modify the years-of-service required for retirement for particular occupational specialties in order to facilitate force shaping or to correct manpower shortages within an occupational specialty.

Other important provisions of the committee-approved bill include the following:

- Increasing pharmacy co-pays for retirees under age 65, except for prescriptions filled at Military Treatment Facilities (MTF);
- Rejecting the administration’s requests for a TRICARE merger and a large increase in annual enrollment fees;
- Rejecting the MCRMC plan to abolish TRICARE and replace it with a plan offered by commercial insurers;
- Accepting the administration’s reductions to annual pay increase (2.3 percent vs. 1.3 percent) for active duty personnel, and BAH reductions to 95 percent of cost (currently 99 percent);
- Allows SecDef to reduce end strength below that mandated in NDAA;
- Rejecting the administration’s request to reduce commissary subsidies;
- Enhancing confidential reporting options for victims of sexual assault by exempting sexual assault response personnel from mandatory reporting requirements under state law; and
- Mandating a 7.5-percent cut in Office of Secretary of Defense funding and personnel for four years.

Full Senate debate is ongoing at press time and the following are anticipated amendments to the Senate version of the measure:

- Rolling back TRICARE pharmacy co-pay increases;
- Providing comprehensive concurrent receipt reform;
- Increasing the annual military pay increase from 1.3 percent to 2.3 percent;
- Restoring Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) rates back to an average of 99 percent of actual housing costs (versus the 95 percent that is currently in place);
- Extending Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA) mortgage protection from nine months to one year; and
- Providing veteran status to those members of the Reserve Component who served 20 years or more, but were not activated.


The House Defense Authorization bill (H.R. 1735) is on the House floor as this issue of FRA Today goes to print and representatives are debating 135 floor amendments. The House is expected to have completed debate and voted on amendments and passed the bill by the time you are reading this. Once each chamber approves its version of the Defense Authorization bill, a conference committee will be appointed to resolve the differences in the two bills, after which the final bill will be voted on by both chambers and, if approved, sent on to the President to signed or vetoed.
FRA Weighs In on Homeless Veterans’ Issues

FRA National Executive Director (NED) Tom Snee testified before the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee (SVAC) in early June to discuss the problem of veteran homelessness. Snee, who appeared before the panel at the invitation of SVAC Chairman Johnny Isakson (Ga.), congratulated the Department of Veterans Affairs’ (VA) laudable goal of eliminating veteran homelessness (see story below) and stressed that we must improve and re-authorize the VA reintegration program that provides job training, counseling and placement services to expedite re-entry into the labor force. Snee also noted the importance of a seamless transition from the Department of Defense to the VA. FRA’s written statement dated June 3, 2015 addresses homelessness and other legislative issues, and is available on the FRA website at www.fra.org/testimony.

VA Secretary Promises to Eliminate Veteran Homelessness

Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Secretary Bob McDonald addressed approximately 600 community organizers at the annual National Coalition for Homeless Veterans conference, urging them to keep making progress toward the VA’s self-imposed deadline of ending veteran homelessness this year. Secretary McDonald said his department’s goal of cutting the number of homeless veterans to zero by January 2016 is less that making sure that number doesn’t rise again in years to come.

“The important thing is not just to get to zero, but to stay at zero,” he said. “How do we build a system that is so capable that, when a homeless veteran moves from Chicago to Los Angeles in the winter, we have the ability to touch them immediately?”

According to the VA, from 2010 to 2013, the number of homeless veterans fell by more than one-third, to about 50,000 veterans. VA officials expect that number to shrink even further when the 2014 estimates are released later this summer. VA funding for homeless assistance and prevention programs has increased dramatically, from $2.4 billion in FY 2008 to nearly $7 billion for FY 2016, providing funds that were nearly nonexistent a decade ago. Despite the downward trend and focused programs, the VA effort to end veteran homelessness by the end of 2015 is expected to fall short.

Senate Panel Reviews Blue Water Bill

The Senate Veterans Affairs Committee (SVAC) reviewed 12 pending legislative proposals pertaining to veterans’ benefits, including the “Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act” (S. 681). This measure provides presumption for VA disability claims associated with exposure to herbicides used in Vietnam, specifically those Navy veterans who served off the coast of Vietnam and did not have “boots on the ground” in country.

Bill sponsor Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (N.Y.) gave an impassioned plea for the committee to approve the legislation and SVAC Chairman Sen. Johnny Isakson (Ga.) indicated that the bill would be marked up, approved and sent to the Senate floor sometime in June.

FRA submitted a statement on several of these legislative proposals, with special focus on the Blue Water bill. The statement emphasized that many of the veterans affected by Agent Orange are senior citizens and the time to help them is now! A copy of FRA’s statement is available on the FRA website (www.fra.org/testimony) and members are strongly urged to use the FRA Action Center (action.fra.org/action-center) to ask their legislators to support the “Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act” (S. 681) and its House companion bill (H.R. 969).

HVAC Assesses VA’s Ability to Promptly Pay Non-VA Providers

The House Veterans’ Affairs Committee (HVAC) Subcommittee on Health held a hearing assessing the Department of Veterans Affairs’ (VA) ability to promptly pay non-VA providers of healthcare services. A March 2014 GAO report indicates that some non-VA providers experienced “lengthy delays” in the processing of their claims that, in at least one case, took years to resolve. Despite efforts to expedite reimbursement across the VA health care system, reports of delinquent and delayed payments to non-VA providers across the country continue. As a result, some health care providers are hesitant, unwilling or unable to provide care to veterans due to fears they will not be paid for the services they provide. The fact that many veterans are being held responsible for these outstanding bills in the absence of VA payment is even more disturbing. The Subcommittee examined the ability of VA to comply with the Prompt Pay Act, reviewed the barriers that are preventing timely and accurate reimbursement, and assessed VA's efforts to expedite payments to non-VA providers.

FRA at Memorial Day Observances

National Vice President Virgil Courneya represented the Association at Memorial Day ceremonies at Arlington National Cemetery on May 25th. FRA was joined by other national organizations and leaders in honoring the men and women who have died in service to their nation by laying a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknowns.

FRA National President John Ippert represented FRA at Memorial Day ceremonies at Pearl Harbor on May 25. NED Thomas Snee and branches from the East Coast Region’s Central Liaison Committee (CLC) gathered for additional tributes that day at the U.S. Navy Memorial in Washington, D.C.

On Saturday and Sunday (May 23 and 24) of Memorial Day weekend, shipmates from around the D.C. area staffed an information booth on the National Mall as part of Rolling Thunder, an annual motorcycle riders’ tribute to show the country and the world that Vietnam POWs and MIAs are not forgotten.
ON & OFF CAPITOL HILL

FRA Meets with New Marine Corps Sergeant Major

FRA National Executive Director (NED) Tom Snee and members of FRA’s Legislative Team recently met with Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps Ronald Green to discuss various legislative issues and other topics of mutual concern. NED Snee explained FRA’s 2015 legislative agenda and the Association’s growing concerns about the impact of sequestration on the Defense budget. Further, NED Snee and Shipmate Green discussed the recommendations of the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission (MCRMC) and current legislative action on the FY 2016 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA).

Navy Mandatory Retirement Board to Start in August

The Navy is scheduled to start a senior enlisted continuation board with forced retirement authority beginning on August 3, 2015. The board will begin a performance-based review of E-7s, E-8s and E-9s with at least 19 years of service and three years in grade as of February 28, 2015. Past retirement boards have searched for indicators such as reduced performance rating or misconduct in a chief’s record. Last year’s board reviewed 7,017 personnel records and issued 161 forced retirements.

President Nominate New CNO

President Barack Obama selected Admiral John Richardson, head of the Navy’s nuclear propulsion program, as the next Chief of Naval Operations (CNO). Defense Secretary Ashton Carter recommended the 55-year-old Richardson, and President Obama agreed to nominate him to become the Navy’s top officer and a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The CNO position requires Senate confirmation, and as FRA Today goes to press there was no word on when Senate Armed Services Committee confirmation hearings for Richardson will begin.

NED Attends White House Meeting on Military and Veteran Family Issues

FRA National Executive Director (NED) Tom Snee participated in meeting at the White House on military and veteran family issues with CEOs of 15 other military and veterans associations. Several of the recommendations of the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission (MCRMC) were discussed and concern was raised that no enlisted personnel or women were appointed to the commission.

NED Snee expressed concern about the smaller-than-civilian-sector annual pay increase in the FY 2016 Defense Authorization bill, along with the impact of proposed cuts to commissary and Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) on military families. Snee requested White House support for expanding the VA Caregivers program to include veterans who became disabled before 9-11-2001 (S. 657) and the “Final Month’s Pay” (HR 454) legislation, which would prohibit the potential recoupment of military retired pay from military widow/widower bank accounts, for the month in which a retiree dies. Although the survivor eventually receives a pro-rated check for the days the retiree was living in his/her last month, this recoupment is an extremely insensitive policy and often creates financial hardship during an already-traumatic time for the survivor and the family.

Members are urged to use the FRA Action Center (action.fra.org/action-center) to ask their legislators to support these proposals.

FRA Salutes Outstanding Sailors

FRA congratulates the Navy’s 2014 Sailors of the Year (SOY), who were meritoriously promoted to chief petty officers during ceremonies in the Washington, D.C. area this week. The week’s activities included an FRA-sponsored tour of the U.S. Capitol, a Capitol Hill luncheon for the SOYs and their families, and an advancement ceremony held at the U.S. Navy Memorial.

The finalists included:

CMC (SCW/EXW) Jimie Bartholemew, USN

2014 Reserve Sailor of the Year

BMC (EXW/SW) Joe A. Mendoza, USN

2014 U.S. Fleet Forces Sailor of the Year

SWC (SCW) Brenton W. Heisserer, USN

2014 CNO Shore Sailor of the Year

LSC (SCW/EXW/AW/SW) Blanca A. Sanchez, USN

2014 U.S. Pacific Fleet Sailor of the Year

Coast Guard Coin Bill Introduced

Representative Joe Courtney (Conn.) and Senator Christopher Murphy (Conn.) have introduced the “United States Coast Guard Commemorative Coin Act” (HR 1683/S. 985 respectively), which would honor the men and women of the Coast Guard and support the National Coast Guard Museum. Despite its significant role in our national defense, the U.S. Coast Guard is the only uniformed service without a national museum to showcase its 224-year history.

In 2004, a bill was enacted authorizing the National Coast Guard Museum to be located in New London, Connecticut. The museum is scheduled to open in 2017. This bill would honor all those who have served in the Coast Guard by the minting of a special commemorative coin. Proceeds from sales would be used to support the development and operation of the museum via the National Coast Guard Museum Association, a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting the facility and to expanding awareness of the important history, service and missions of the Coast Guard.

Members are urged to use the Action Center (action.fra.org/action-center) to ask their legislators to support these proposals.
USMC Commandant Selected to be Next Chairman of JCS

FRA National Executive Director Thomas Snee attended a White House Rose Garden ceremony in which President Obama announced Marine Corps Commandant Gen. Joseph Dunford’s nomination to replace Gen. Martin Dempsey as the next chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, a position that requires Senate confirmation. Gen. Dunford was nominated to be the 36th Marine Corps Commandant on June 5, 2014 and was confirmed by the U.S. Senate on October 17, 2014.

President Obama said in his presentation, “I know Joe. I trust him. He’s already proven his ability to give me his unvarnished military advice based on his experience on the ground. Under his steady hand, we’ve achieved key milestones, including the transition to Afghan responsibility for security, historic Afghan elections, and the drawdown of U.S. forces—setting the stage for our combat mission there. So Joe is a proven leader of our joint force … and one of our military’s most highly-regarded strategic thinkers. He’s known and respected by our allies, by members of Congress—on both sides of the aisle—and by colleagues across our government.”

Dunford was raised in Quincy, Mass. He graduated from Saint Michaels College in June 1977 and earned his commission after college graduation. He is a graduate of the U.S. Army War College, the Ranger School and the Amphibious Warfare School. He holds a Master of Arts degree in Government from Georgetown University and a second Master of Arts in International Relations from Tufts University. He is noted for leading the 5th Marine Regiment in the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

TRICARE: Easy Access to Mental Health

The Defense Health Agency (DHA) wants beneficiaries to know how easy it is to access TRICARE’s mental health services. Counseling, psychotherapy and family therapy are covered benefits under TRICARE. The first eight appointments with a TRICARE-authorized provider do not require a Primary Care Manager (PCM) referral; just your military identification card. Prime beneficiaries must see in-network providers, not just TRICARE-authorized providers, or point of service (POS) charges will apply. TRICARE Standard and TRICARE Extra beneficiaries may see any TRICARE-authorized provider, but will minimize out-of-pocket costs by visiting network providers (under TRICARE Extra). Active duty service members require prior authorization for civilian non-emergency care. For more information about TRICARE mental health services, go to: www.tricare.mil/mentalhealth

TRICARE Beneficiaries Being Targeted in Phone Scam

The Defense Health Agency’s Office of Program Integrity has received a significant number of contacts from TRICARE beneficiaries concerning unsolicited attempts by “call centers” to encourage them to provide personally-identifiable information and health information so that the callers can allegedly provide prescribed cream medications to the beneficiary. TRICARE and its contractors never call and ask for personal or health information. Beneficiaries should be wary of unsolicited attempts by any entity asking them for this type of personal information, either by phone or in person.

For more information, visit http://www.health.mil/News/Articles/2015/04/10/TRICARE-Beneficiaries-Being-Targeted-by-Call-Centers-and-Others

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

FRA HAS ESTABLISHED FIVE COMMITTEES to manage our awards programs and select winners for branch and individual recognition. FRA branches and shipmates can participate in activities to make them more competitive for awards presented by the Americanism-Patriotism; Public Relations; Hospitals, Welfare and Rehabilitation; Youth Activities; and Membership and Retention Committees. Involvement in community service and outreach undertakings engages shipmates in our organization, which is a key factor in membership retention. Participation in such events also helps advance the image of the FRA and strengthens recruiting efforts.

Each branch should submit a report to its respective regional convention, outlining activities covered by each of these committees. The information in the reports will be reviewed at the regional level and the shipmates and branches receiving first place honors will be forwarded to the national committees to be considered for national awards. Remember: Branches and individuals cannot be recognized if they do not make their efforts known at the regional level.

The Americanism-Patriotism Committee honors our nation’s flag, observes service-related national holidays, encourages shipmates’ participation in civic and patriotic programs, and oversees FRA’s Americanism Essay Contest (see page 28). In addition to recognizing outstanding work by branches in each membership group, the committee also announces three annual awards at FRA’s national convention. The Walter D. “Step” Rowell Award is presented to the branch with the best overall Americanism-Patriotism report; the Leonard D. “Swede” Nelson Award is presented to a Shipmate of the Year for outstanding American-Patriotism efforts, and the Robert E. Doherty Award is presented to a Shipmate nominated for national recognition and deemed deserving of special recognition in this field.

The Hospitals, Welfare and Rehabilitation (HWR) Committee’s mission is to foster and maintain good relations between the FRA and hospitals, rehab centers and welfare agencies. At the branch level, this committee keeps in touch with shipmates who are ill or in need of assistance, which is very important in maintaining the spirit of camaraderie. Committee members may also investigate incidents involving the needs of shipmates and their dependents are not receiving their lawful benefits. At the national level, this committee reviews nomination packets and recognizes those branches that have rendered outstanding service in the HWR arena.

The Public Relations Committee recognizes exemplary public relations efforts for the FRA and considers the quality and consistency of branch newsletters and webpages, submission of articles to local news outlets, letters to the editor about veterans’ concerns and other ways shipmates and branches promote the FRA in their local communities. They recognize branch efforts and also name a Shipmate of the Year who exhibits outstanding public relations efforts.

The Youth Activities Committee acknowledges various methods by which branches serve the youth in their communities, such as involvement with or sponsorship of scout troops, sports teams, NJROTC units, Young Marines, Sea Cadets, and Soap Box Derby competitions. A Shipmate of the Year is recognized for his/her individual dedication to youth activities.

The Membership and Retention Committee recognizes branches and shipmates who demonstrate the greatest success in recruiting new FRA members and retaining current shipmates within the organization. Branches who sustain or increase their current membership base receive the FRA 100% Award. The Charles E. Lofgren Award is presented annually to the branch and individual shipmate in each Membership Group that has recruited the greatest number of members during the membership year (April 1 through March 31). The branch with the highest percentile increase in membership receives the Abraham M. Rosenberg Membership Award. A shipmate who exhibits a positive public attitude as it affects the membership and retention of members in the Association can be nominated for the Frank J. McPherson Memorial Award. Nominations for the McPherson Award should be submitted to the regional Membership and Retention Chairman no later than June 30 for review and consideration. Regional nominations must be submitted to the Penny Collins, chairman of the National Committee for Membership and Retention, at least seven days prior to the convening of the national convention.

Recognizing the efforts of individual shipmates and branches is an excellent way of promoting great work that improves recruiting and retention throughout the Association.

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.
THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY
A Shipmate Survives the Sinking of the USS Yorktown: Part 2

By Keith Kaider

AFTER LEAVING PEARL HARBOR, the Yorktown battle-cruised the Coral Seas. For the most part, this cruise was several weeks of monotony. Frequent General Quarters found Duane in either the Radio Direct Finder room or Main Radio. One of his favorite pastimes was lying on the flight deck at night looking at the stars. Since it was always hot in the berthing spaces, many of the crew would take their mattresses up to sleep in the steel netting between the flight deck catwalk and hull. Duane recalls his good friend who was a baker striker, “His name was Jack Sheldon and he would give us a loaf of freshly baked bread some nights. We would eat it with pork and beans and it was really delicious.” The days wore on much the same. Even the various raids made by the Yorktown and Lexington planes had little impact on Duane’s normal routine. It was the Battle of the Coral Sea that initiated him into war.

He recounts, “My battle station was Main Radio. Of course all ports and hatches were dogged down. I believe the battle would be easier to endure if you could only see what was going on rather than picturing it in your mind. The ship was making flank speed and the rudder was being swung from port to starboard as fast as the helmsman could react. This made it very difficult to maintain our operating position in Radio Central. The vibration from flank speed was shaking everything. The noise from the gunfire was deafening and relentless. The bomb hit we took was just aft of the Radio Room, and it exploded several decks below. This gave us quite a jolt as well as some smoke. I had a friend that was killed in the repair party where the bomb exploded.”

“When the battle was over, I saw the USS Lexington slip under, and my heartfelt sympathy went out to the crew. Once we observed smoke over the horizon and found out that it was the sinking of the USS Neosho. She had refueled us and taken our mail.”

The Yorktown proceeded back to Pearl Harbor for repairs. During this time, Duane remembers, “Some of us in ‘K’ Division took up a collection and someone bought a record player for the compartment. The song that everyone was crazy about at the time was ‘Moonlight Cocktail’. It is still a favorite of mine.”

The Yorktown left Pearl Harbor before all repairs could be completed. Sailing to Midway, the crew was apprehensive; they suspected that something big was coming given their premature departure from Pearl.

Part 3 of Shipmate Robertson’s story will be featured in next month’s issue of FRA Today.
The Places Nobody Knows

By Kelly Smith Trimble and the National Park Foundation

Everybody loves Yosemite, Yellowstone, and the Grand Canyon, and with good reason. Those and other icons of the National Park System are undeniably spectacular, and to experience their wonders is well worth braving the crowds they inevitably draw. But lest you think the big names are the whole story, consider that the vast park network also boasts plenty of less well-known destinations that are beautiful, historic, or culturally significant — or all of the above.

Some of these gems are off the beaten track, others are slowly rising to prominence, and a few are simply overshadowed by bigger, better-publicized parks. But these national parks, monuments, historic places, and recreation areas are overlooked by many, and that’s a mistake you won’t want to make.

For every Yosemite, there’s a lesser-known park where the scenery shines and surprises. Consider these …
**VISIT: Canyonlands National Park** (Moab, Utah)

**IF YOU LOVE:** Bryce Canyon National Park  
**FOR:** Red-rock vistas and canyon trails

Known for its quirky geologic formations called “hoodoos,” Bryce Canyon lures visitors to Utah’s national parks, who can see prime examples of Southwestern geology in a few hours or a few days.

Travelers often tack on Bryce as part of a tour including Zion or the Grand Canyon’s North Rim. A bit to the north, though, a vast, less populated park awaits.

Canyonlands — even the name gives a sense of this national park’s vastness. Divided into four districts, the park offers numerous ways to experience up-close its many canyons and buttes and the Colorado and Green Rivers that form them. Whether you fancy traveling on foot or on-wheels, Canyonlands delivers.

Islands in the Sky, the most accessible district, offers breathtaking views of the canyons and hikes along the edge of the plateau “islands.” Four-wheel enthusiasts (who congregate in nearby Moab, Utah) find their bliss here, whether on easier tracks in Islands in the Sky or more hard-core technical routes in the Needles district and the remote areas of the Maze district. Hikers, too, shouldn’t miss the Needles, well worth the longer drive from Moab around the canyons and into the lower portion of the park, below the Islands. If raging water is more your scene, make reservations with local outfitters to raft the Colorado and Green Rivers through the park.

Though both Islands in the Sky and the Needles have visitor centers, you won’t find much in the way of food, gas, or lodging here. Most areas of Canyonlands are rather primitive, and that’s what makes this park Utah desert adventure at its finest.

---

**VISIT: Bandelier National Monument**  
(Los Alamos, New Mexico)

**IF YOU LOVE:** Mesa Verde National Park  
**FOR:** Archaeologist’s dream

Few and precious places give us great insight into the civilizations that lived on this land long before it was called the United States. Mesa Verde National Park in Colorado is a prime example of such a place, with nearly 5,000 of the most well-preserved archaeological sites in the country, including 600 cliff dwellings of the Ancestral Pueblo people who lived in the regions from A.D. 600 to 1300.

Another less well-known, but equally intriguing, example of ancient culture exists just across the border in New Mexico. Bandelier National Monument traces the Ancestral Pueblo people from their nomadic hunter-gatherer roots over 10,000 years ago to 1550, when they shifted their homes from the cliffs here to pueblos along the Rio Grande.

Come to Bandelier to experience 33,000 acres of canyon and mesa country at its finest. A few short, accessible hikes lead to up-close views of the ancient ruins and to prime examples of petroglyphs on the walls of Frijoles Canyon. Many other longer hikes take you further into the canyon and along the mesa, mostly in designated wilderness areas.

Conditions at Bandelier change considerably according to the season. Check the website (www.nps.gov/band) or call for advice on preparing, especially for longer hikes or overnight trips. Consider planning a visit around the park’s Fall Fiesta to learn more about Pueblo people past and present.
VISIT: Dry Tortugas National Park (Key West, Florida)
IF YOU LOVE: Haleakala (Hawaii)
National Park
FOR: Island adventure, far from home

For many Americans, Haleakala National Park on the Hawaiian island of Maui feels like a paradise destination, ocean crossing required. Indeed, the Hawaiian Islands have served as the nation’s western-most outpost since the late 1800s and Haleakala their natural treasure. But there is at least one island park, perhaps even more remote — Dry Tortugas National Park at the country’s southern-most tip.

Made of the seven farthest-flung of the Florida Keys (70 miles west of Key West), Dry Tortugas is managed alongside its mainland sister park, Everglades. Dry Tortugas plays an important role in American history, protecting the valuable shipping channel at the confluence of the Gulf of Mexico, the Atlantic Ocean, and the Caribbean Sea and securing the coastline for the U.S. Today, visitors value these clear azure waters more for swimming, sailing, snorkeling, and sightseeing.

Unless you’re accustomed to sailing a private boat in the Caribbean, this isn’t a drop-in spot. Visitors can’t drive or fly here commercially, but instead must travel via ferry, chartered seaplane, or private boat. Yankee Freedom ferry, the most economical option, departs Lands End Marina at Key West.

However you get to Dry Tortugas, come prepared with water (it’s called dry for a reason: there is no fresh water), food, sunscreen, and gear for activities such as snorkeling, swimming, camping, and bird watching; the park offers none of these amenities. Your first stop must be a tour of Fort Jefferson, the park’s biggest cultural attraction. Then embark on the adventure of your choice.

VISIT: Shenandoah National Park (Luray, Virginia)
IF YOU LOVE: Rocky Mountain National Park
FOR: Breathtaking mountains and wilderness

Colorado’s Rocky Mountains beckon world travelers with high mountain peaks, hundreds of miles of hiking trails, and vast wildflower-covered expanses. For easterners looking for a similar experience closer to home, come to Shenandoah National Park, a stone’s throw (well, just 75 miles) from Washington, D.C. The park encompasses 300 square miles of the Blue Ridge Mountains in the southern Appalachians, one of the most biodiverse ecosystems in the world.

More than 500 total miles of hiking trails wind through the park, and in spring, you’d be hard-pressed to find a hike that doesn’t pass by one of Shenandoah’s signature cascading waterfalls. Among the 500 are more than 100 miles of the Appalachian Trail. Shenandoah protects a large expanse of previous hardwood forest, and nearly 40 percent of the park is protected as wilderness under the Wilderness Act.

Though wilderness escape lures many visitors, Shenandoah welcomes everyone, whether you’re looking for backcountry trails and camping or just a cozy, casual weekend getaway. Several lodges and cabins offer comfortable options for staying the night, minus the tent. Adventures of the culinary kind can even be found here, with fine dining available at both Skyline Lodge and Big Meadows Lodge. Need a cool beverage after a day of hiking or scenic driving? You’re in luck. Each lodge also features a signature taproom.

Every season has something to offer in Shenandoah. Come for snow in the winter, wildflowers in the spring, lush green views in summer, or, like many travelers, visit for vibrant color in the fall.
VISIT: Black Canyon of Gunnison National Park (Gunnison, Colorado)

IF YOU LOVE: Grand Canyon National Park
FOR: Experience the depths of time

The Grand Canyon represents one of America’s most iconic landscapes. Its vast layers depict a depth of American history — geologic history — that’s nearly incomprehensible to most, which is fine. After all, who needs to fully understand the Grand Canyon to appreciate it? The Grand Canyon is irreplaceable, but some places do inspire nearly equal levels of awe.

Take Black Canyon of the Gunnison, for example. What it lacks in width, the Black Canyon makes up for in depth. Great cliffs plunge to the Gunnison River, at points more than 2,700 feet down, creating some of the best and most advanced rock climbing opportunities in the national park system. In spots at the canyon bottom, the river has only 40 feet width to get through. This tight squeeze makes for radical Class V rapids, suitable only for the most technically skilled paddlers. Likewise, hikes into the canyon are reserved for well-prepared hikers who can manage orienting along unmaintained rock routes rather than established trails.

Not all features of Black Canyon of the Gunnison are limited to experts only, though. Ample scenic drives and short hikes along the South and North rims provide stunning views of this geologic time capsule. And for those who come to Colorado with big fish on the mind, look no further. The Gunnison River is designated a Gold Medal Water & Wild Trout River by the state. Come prepared for hiking among wildlife, including possible bears, and legendary poison ivy. Most of all, come prepared to be overwhelmed by the awesome views.

VISIT: Cuyahoga Valley National Park (Brecksville, Ohio)

IF YOU LOVE: Great Smoky Mountains National Park
FOR: Lush, verdant valleys

With its easy accessibility to many urban areas along the East Coast, Great Smoky Mountains National Park claims the prize, hands-down, for being the most-visited national park in the system. Along with those inspiring waterfalls, fall colors, and layered vistas come long lines and traffic jams. This popular park should be on your not-to-miss list, but if you’re looking for a little more solitude along with accessibility, try Cuyahoga Valley.

A short drive from Cleveland and Akron, Ohio, Cuyahoga provides the weekend respite and open space that many weary urbanites need. Don’t be fooled, Cuyahoga still receives plenty of visitors each year, but thankfully many find alternative modes of transportation, namely bike, train, or sometimes both. The historic Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad (CVSR), a private partner of the national park, operates train rides through the park from nearby cities.

This park offers not only natural treasures — forests, hills, open farmland, and the Cuyahoga River — but historical interest as well. The Cuyahoga Valley played a key role in American history as the site of the Ohio & Erie Canal, which opened Ohio up to settlement in the early-to-mid 1800s. Today, the Towpath Trail follows the route of the canal, winding through the valley past historical sites and verdant landscapes. Some travelers choose to bike one way and hitch a $3 CVSR ride back.

Cuyahoga offers plenty of infrastructure and amenities.

Stop by one of a few visitor centers for interpretation and cultural exhibits.
VISIT: Shiloh National Military Park (Shiloh, Tennessee)
IF YOU LOVE: Gettysburg National Military Park
FOR: Turning points in Civil War history

Even those Americans without a passion for Civil War history know the importance of the Battle of Gettysburg and the words spoken there by President Abraham Lincoln, recalling the country’s founding “four score and seven years ago...” Gettysburg is a must-see among the park system’s many preserved national military parks and battlefields, but many battlefields, including several in the South, offer the complete telling of America’s Civil War.

Shiloh National Military Park, situated along the Tennessee River not far from the mighty Mississippi River, is one battlefield that should not be missed. Civil War soldiers thought the historic April 1862 battle for Shiloh would decide the war, giving control of the Mississippi River Valley to one side or the other. In the end, the Union stopped the Confederates from moving northward as planned, but more than anything, the battle steadied the Union’s resolve to crush Southern rebellion at all costs.

You’ll want to visit both the Shiloh Battlefield itself, near Crump, Tennessee, and the Corinth Civil War Interpretive Center, not far across the state line in Corinth, Mississippi. Both stops include engaging interpretation, including several films that bring the battle to life and illuminate its role in the Civil War. To get the full experience, drive the 12.7-mile auto tour of the battlefield, including Shiloh National Cemetery and Shiloh Indian Mounds. Then stretch your legs for a walking tour of Corinth, complete with Civil War-era homes. Shiloh National Military Park hosts several living history events throughout the year, so check the events calendar on the website to plan your trip.

Passes to National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands

A pass is your ticket to more than 2,000 federal recreation sites. Each pass covers entrance fees at national parks, national wildlife refuges, as well as standard amenity fees at national forests and grasslands, and lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management and Bureau of Reclamation. A pass covers entrance and standard amenity fees for a driver and all passengers in a personal vehicle at per vehicle fee areas (or up to four adults at sites that charge per person). Children age 15 or under are admitted free.

**Annual Pass**
- $80 annual pass, available to everyone.
- Free to current members of the U.S. military.
- Can be obtained in person at a federal recreation site, or by calling 1-888-ASK USGS (1-888-275-8747), Ext. 3 (Hours of operation are: 8:00 am to 4:00 pm Mountain time), or online.
- Non-transferable.

**Access Pass**
- Free at federal recreation sites. ($10 for processing if obtained through the mail).
- For U.S. citizens or permanent residents with permanent disabilities. Applicants must provide documentation of permanent disability and residency or citizenship.
- Passes are available at federal recreation sites or through the mail. Visit http://store.usgs.gov/pass/ to learn more.

**Senior Pass**
- $10 Lifetime pass (plus an additional $10 for processing if obtained by mail).
- For U.S. citizens or permanent residents age 62 or over. Applicants must provide documentation of age and residency or citizenship.
The National Park Service turns 100 years old on August 25, 2016!

The Centennial will celebrate the achievements of the past 100 years, but it is really about the future. It’s about kicking off a second century of stewardship for America’s national parks and for communities across the nation. Most importantly, it’s about inviting you to join in the celebration.

The National Park Service (NPS) and National Park Foundation (NPF) are working closely with partners and stakeholders across the country to ensure that the Centennial is more than a birthday. They want people everywhere to embrace the opportunities to explore, learn, be inspired or simply have fun in their 407 national parks, as well as understand how the National Park Service’s community-based recreation, conservation, and historic preservation programs positively impact individual communities.

In celebration of the upcoming events, the NPF and NPS kicked off the Find Your Park movement, a public awareness and education campaign that celebrates the milestone centennial anniversary and sets the stage for the national parks’ next 100 years. Find Your Park invites the public to see that a national park can be more than just a place — it can be a feeling or a state of mind — and encourages people to find their own personal connections within the network of national parks and National Park Service programs. People everywhere can be part of the Parks’ second century by joining the movement at FindYourPark.com and by using #FindYourPark on social media.

VISIT: Natchez Trace Parkway (Tupelo, Mississippi)

IF YOU LOVE: Blue Ridge Parkway
FOR: The lure of the open road

The proverbial Sunday drive becomes an anyday-of-the-week experience on one of the few roadways designated as a National Parkway. Driving slow enough to take in the scenery, parkway travel recalls a time when automobiles were more about relaxation and enjoyment than a daily necessity designed for speed and convenience.

Perhaps the most famous parkway is Blue Ridge, which connects Shenandoah National Park in Virginia and Great Smoky Mountains National Park in North Carolina via 469 road miles. Along the way, travelers stop to take photos at overlooks, hike trails (including the Appalachian Trail), or set up picnics or campsites. It’s unarguably one of the most pleasant drives in America.

Not far away, Natchez Trace Parkway meanders through three more Southern states. For 444 miles, travelers see beautiful scenery, for sure, but they also experience a sort of time travel, learning about the people and places along this important historical route from Natchez, Mississippi, to just south of Nashville. In the 1800s, the Natchez Trace was a thoroughfare for farmers and boatmen carrying supplies from Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Kentucky to ports in Natchez and New Orleans. By the time these folks, often called “Kaintucks,” came along, the path had been well worn by generations of Choctaw and Chickasaw Indians.

Plenty of spots along the parkway deserve a stop, from waterfalls in Tennessee to Indian mounds in Mississippi. Natchez Trace Parkway is a designated bicycle route, so drivers should remember to slow down and share the road. Few conveniences such as gas stations or restaurants exist on “The Trace” (as it’s often called), so it’s best to plan ahead.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL PARK FOUNDATION

The National Park Foundation is the official charity of America’s national parks and nonprofit partner to the National Park Service. Chartered by Congress in 1967, the National Park Foundation raises private funds to help PROTECT more than 84 million acres of national parks through critical conservation and preservation efforts, CONNECT all Americans with their incomparable natural landscapes, vibrant culture and rich history, and INSPIRE the next generation of park stewards. Find out more and become a part of the national park community at www.nationalparks.org.
As I read through the pages of my American history book, it’s as if I’ve stepped into a time machine. It takes me back to places, people and events that are part of my Country’s story.

My time travel stops first at Valley Forge. I shiver as I see men dressed in rags and marching in the snow. Bright red footprints trail behind them. *The bleeding feet of the men at Valley Forge make me proud to be an American.*

My next stop is Philadelphia, where I peer in the window at Freedom Hall. I cover my ears as the arguing of the Founders grows louder and more heated. *As consensus is reached and the Constitution is completed, I am proud to be an American.*

Next I peek into the workshops and see our nation’s great inventors: Alexander Graham Bell with is telephone, the Wright Brothers with their airplane, and Steve Jobs with his Apple computer. *The creativity of these men makes me proud to be an American.*

Speeding forward in time, my travel machine lands with a jolt as I hit the rocky island of Iwo Jima. I see six men laboring to lift the American flag. *Seeing the Stars and Stripes flying above Mount Suribachi makes me proud to be an American.*

The temperature becomes sweltering, as my travel machine dips down into the jungle of Vietnam. I’m saddened to see young men the age of my brothers dying on the battlefield. *The great sacrifices these young men make for freedom makes me proud to be an American.*

My travel machine dodged skyscrapers as it next landed on a crowded street. To my horror, I saw people fleeing the rubble and fire left from the collapsed Twin Towers. *As I saw policemen and fire fighters running in to help, it made me proud to be an American.*

My history book allows me to look back and be proud and also look forward with anticipation about how my story will become part of America’s story. *I’m proud to be an American!*
WHAT THE UNITED STATES FLAG STANDS FOR

GRAND PRIZE: $5,000

Plus
18 National Awards and Regional and Local Prizes

Eligibility: Students, Grades 7 thru 12
Deadline: December 1, 2015
Requirements: 350 words or less on “What The United States Flag Stands For”
Internet: www.fra.org/essay

FRA AMERICANISM ESSAY CONTEST RULES
• All entrants shall be students in grades seven through twelve (or equivalent).
• Entrants must be sponsored by a member or branch of the Fleet Reserve Association or a unit of the Auxiliary of the Fleet Reserve Association.
• The essay shall be on the theme designated and shall not exceed 350 words.
• The essay shall be legibly written or typed on one side of the paper.
• A student may submit only one entry each year.
• Each entry must be accompanied by a separate sheet stating: the entrant’s name; address; zip code; telephone number; school grade (or equivalent); name of school or the words “home schooled;” number of words in essay; and the sponsoring shipmate/branch/unit. A parent or guardian must also sign the cover sheet.
• Entries submitted to branches shall be submitted to the Branch Americanism-Patriotism Committee and postmarked not later than December 1st for judging at the branch level.
• Entries sponsored by members-at-large shall be submitted to the national chairman and forwarded to an appropriate branch for judging in their respective grade group. All entries shall be postmarked not later than December 1, 2015.
• All entries become the property of the Fleet Reserve Association.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>BRANCH</th>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>BRANCH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albertsen, Peter</td>
<td>AECS, USN</td>
<td>093</td>
<td>Ellis, Carl G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allen, David O</td>
<td>SKCM, USN</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>Erven, Wayne P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arinduque, Cristino</td>
<td>SKC, USN</td>
<td>084</td>
<td>Fanjoy, Luverne W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashby, Robert H</td>
<td>AD1R, USN</td>
<td>MAL</td>
<td>Finch, Horace C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atkins, Kenneth V</td>
<td>HT, USN</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>Fornoles, Teodoro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAKER, James H</td>
<td>OSC, USN</td>
<td>053</td>
<td>* PRPS, French, Robert L, LCDR, USN 126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballard, Robert F</td>
<td>PN1, USNR</td>
<td>MAL</td>
<td>Friedt, Perry L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barchus, Clarence E</td>
<td>CSC, USN</td>
<td>068</td>
<td>Fune, Joaquin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barco, Maurice</td>
<td>GYSGT, USMC</td>
<td>040</td>
<td>Gebbie, Larry Allen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bauley, Raymond P</td>
<td>LCDR, USN</td>
<td>MAL</td>
<td>Giddens, Rudolph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beard, C. R.</td>
<td>GYSGT, USN</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>Gilson, Robert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beckman, Edward V</td>
<td>AMCS, USN</td>
<td>091</td>
<td>Glassmire, Theodore W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bereny, John J</td>
<td>ATC, USN</td>
<td>099</td>
<td>Grant, Robert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biggins, Charles T</td>
<td>ATC, USN</td>
<td>008</td>
<td>Green, Grady E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blair, James B</td>
<td>ETCM, USN</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>Grissom, Eugene G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blanchard, Michael J</td>
<td>ADR1, USN</td>
<td>092</td>
<td>Guida, James S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blevins, Herbert L</td>
<td>AS1, USN</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>Guild, Joseph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bogdan, Joseph H</td>
<td>FTB1, USN</td>
<td>MAL</td>
<td>Habuda, Frank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOUNCE, Warner L</td>
<td>BMCM, USN</td>
<td>MAL</td>
<td>Hatfield, Charles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowers, Sumner M</td>
<td>POC, USN</td>
<td>MAL</td>
<td>Hawkins, Ray M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Briggs, Glenn</td>
<td>JOCS, USN</td>
<td>MAL</td>
<td>Hawkins, Andrew R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bright, J O</td>
<td>GMGC, USN</td>
<td>MAL</td>
<td>Haynes, George L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brion, Voltaire H</td>
<td>SK1, USN</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>Hersita, Honorato R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown, Edward A</td>
<td>ADR1, USN</td>
<td>MAL</td>
<td>Hetzel, Frank R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bullington, Eugene L</td>
<td>L, PO1, USN</td>
<td>MAL</td>
<td>Hetzko, Clifford F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burrill, Alfred J</td>
<td>TMCM(SS), USN</td>
<td>022</td>
<td>Hill, Harold C,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burwinkel, Stephen R</td>
<td>HMC, USN</td>
<td>022</td>
<td>Hoffine, Harold H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butler, J W</td>
<td>SWF1, USN</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>Hogge, Harvey E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Callahan, John</td>
<td>CPO, USNR</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>Hogue, Leeland E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cande, Frederic P</td>
<td>HMC, USN</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>House, Wm. Lou</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canevai, Ferdinand A</td>
<td>ADR1, USN</td>
<td>001</td>
<td>* PRPW,0, Carroll John P, RMCS, USN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cannizzaro, John S</td>
<td>LCDR, USN</td>
<td>091</td>
<td>Carruthers, Morris E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caprio, Frederick A</td>
<td>AO, USN</td>
<td>091</td>
<td>Caskey, Raymond</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caron, Francis</td>
<td>LT, USN</td>
<td>MAL</td>
<td>CHAMBERLIN, Robert M, STG1, USN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrell, John P</td>
<td>RMCS, USN</td>
<td>087</td>
<td>COOKE, Robert P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caskey, Konrad</td>
<td>ATC, USN</td>
<td>002</td>
<td>Copeland, Earl D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cathman, Norman</td>
<td>CE1, USN</td>
<td>MAL</td>
<td>Couch, Ernest C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crawford, Edward D</td>
<td>EN1, USN</td>
<td>MAL</td>
<td>Crenshaw, Dennis T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crenshaw, Dennis T</td>
<td>AZCM, USN</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>Crowle, Michael J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dale, Donald R</td>
<td>AKCS, USN</td>
<td>042</td>
<td>* PRPW, Cox, Stephen T, ADRC, USN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davenport, Ernest P</td>
<td>ADJC, USN</td>
<td>005</td>
<td>KRAMER, Marvin W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decker, Richard ADRC</td>
<td>USN</td>
<td>005</td>
<td>Krog, Howard J, AO1, USN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defrancesco, Carmine R</td>
<td>CSR, USN</td>
<td>338</td>
<td>Krone, James L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denardo, George D</td>
<td>RMC, USN</td>
<td>005</td>
<td>Lalla, John J, HMC, USN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doll, Ralph R</td>
<td>BMCM, USN</td>
<td>082</td>
<td>Landis, George F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duff, Raymond E</td>
<td>ISTSGT, USMC</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>Lavack, David F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drake, Charles E</td>
<td>AMHC, USN</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>Lavery, James R, RMC, USN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Driscoll, Donald A</td>
<td>ETCM(SS), USN</td>
<td>MAL</td>
<td>Lenk, John P, BTC, USN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dunn, Anthony T</td>
<td>LCDR, USN</td>
<td>MAL</td>
<td>Lieberman, Samuel I, CTRC, USN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duplessis, Joseph A</td>
<td>ADR2, USN</td>
<td>092</td>
<td>Lind, Roger L, TD1, USN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EARLE, Kenneth L</td>
<td>HT, USN</td>
<td>091</td>
<td>Long, Lewis P, OSC, USN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earley, John</td>
<td>TMC, USN</td>
<td>022</td>
<td>Lowe, Bobby W, LCDR, USN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edwards, Marvin</td>
<td>AMH1, USN</td>
<td>093</td>
<td>Magee, Chris, CPO, USN RET, USN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellis, Carl G</td>
<td>SM1, USN</td>
<td>382</td>
<td>Maresch, Vernon E, ADR1, USN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erven, Wayne P</td>
<td>CW03/YNCM, USN</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>Maurer, George, GMC, USN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fanejoy, Luverne W</td>
<td>MR1, USN</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>Mazzarella, R H, CS1, USN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finch, Horace C</td>
<td>ETCM, USN</td>
<td>053</td>
<td>McCaheen, Charles J, GMC, USN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fornoles, Teodoro</td>
<td>MS2, USN</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>McCasland, Renald B, MSGT, USNR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fornoles, Teodoro</td>
<td>MS2, USN</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>McClain, Rob, ADCS, USN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French, Robert L</td>
<td>LCDR, USN</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>McClelland, Hollis E, ADR1, USN</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

continued on page 31
### Names in red indicate 50 year continuous members. Name in bold indicate past national officers.

**Correction:** Shipmate Charles Blanchard (Branch 214) was mistakenly listed in last month’s TAPS column. We apologize for any confusion this may have caused.

All reunion notices must be submitted in writing. Members can post reunions online at www.fra.org, submitted via e-mail to Victoria@fra.org or in writing to FRA Reunions, 125 N. West St., Alexandria, VA 22314. Questions regarding reunion submissions should be directed to 1-800-FRA-1924, ext. 108.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Branch</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MCB-1/NMCB-1/MCB-9/MCB-10</td>
<td>October 15–18, 2015, Port Hueneme, CA. Contact Peter Dowd, 89 Edward Rd., Marshfield MA 02050, 781-837-0393, <a href="mailto:danang1966@hotmail.com">danang1966@hotmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Association of Naval Photography/Photographers Reunion Plus Shootoff</td>
<td>September 23–26, 2015, San Diego, CA. Contact Bill Solt, 757-427-5766, <a href="mailto:sisbill@aol.com">sisbill@aol.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USS Chickasaw (ATF-83)</td>
<td>September 20–25, 2015, Baltimore, MD. Contact Jerry Howard, 208-866-8325, <a href="mailto:addy964@msn.com">addy964@msn.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USS Colahan (DD-658)</td>
<td>September 1–5, 2016, Nashville, TN. Contact Skip Slagle, 941-625-4260, <a href="mailto:Ingleis102@comcast.net">Ingleis102@comcast.net</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USS Enterprise (CVAN/CVN-65)</td>
<td>September 21–25, 2015, Windsor Locks, CT. Contact Ray Cote, Jr., 41 Strong Street Manchester, CT 06042-3109, 860-643-2740, <a href="mailto:bigtruckertom@yahoo.com">bigtruckertom@yahoo.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USS Everett F. Larson (DD/DDR-830)</td>
<td>October 7–11, 2015, Jacksonville, FL. Contact Ellis Warmkessel, 13740 Spicewood Dr., Clarksville, IN 47129, 863-640-3885, <a href="mailto:FLFOX1@juno.com">FLFOX1@juno.com</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Branch</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USS James K. Polk (SSN/SSBN-645)</td>
<td>October 8–12, 2015, Norfolk, VA. Contact Michael McGinn, 757-739-3571, <a href="mailto:anavqmc@yahoo.com">anavqmc@yahoo.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USS Mahan (DD-364/DL-11/DDG-42/DDG-72)</td>
<td>September 30–October 3, 2015, Reno, NV. Contact Gary White, 10534 Rippling Fields Dr., Houston, TX 77064-4298, 281-890-7823, <a href="mailto:gankintx@comcast.com">gankintx@comcast.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USS New Jersey (BB-62)</td>
<td>August 19–23, 2015, Portland, OR. Contact Ernest Dalton, 210-275-7886, <a href="mailto:ps159@sbcglobal.net">ps159@sbcglobal.net</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USS Rupertus (DD-851)</td>
<td>October 14–16, 2015, San Diego, CA. Contact Pete Spoonhower, 54512 Seeley Lane, Center, MO 63436, 573-267-3510, <a href="mailto:pspoonhower@gmail.com">pspoonhower@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USS Telfair (APA-210)</td>
<td>September 28–October 2, 2015, St. Pete, FL. Contact John Tonyes, 930 Spicewood Dr., Clarksville, IN 47129, 863-640-3885, <a href="mailto:FLFOX1@juno.com">FLFOX1@juno.com</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Correction:** Shipmate Charles Blanchard (Branch 214) was mistakenly listed in last month’s TAPS column. We apologize for any confusion this may have caused.

All reunion notices must be submitted in writing. Members can post reunions online at www.fra.org, submitted via e-mail to Victoria@fra.org or in writing to FRA Reunions, 125 N. West St., Alexandria, VA 22314. Questions regarding reunion submissions should be directed to 1-800-FRA-1924, ext. 108.
MCPO Gil Barela and MM2 Calv Henwood
Please contact CWO Jim Reidy at 702-655-4362 or 4916 Winterset Dr., Las Vegas, NV 89113.

BMCS or BMCM Phil Legasse (or maybe Lagasse) and RMC Sam Russell
I served with these shipmates at the Naval Reserve Center in New Bedford, Mass., in the 1970s. Please contact YNC Robert N. Marseglia at 40 Edmonds Circle, Whitinsville, MA 01588, 508-234-5371 or bmarseglia@charter.net

C.W. Fortune
We served together aboard the USS Coral Sea (CVA-43), G Division, 1964–1967. Please contact John Willis at 256-249-8663 or Lcwaterboy@aol.com

CTT3 Perry Lee Pinkard, Jr. or his family
I have an Orlando Boot Camp Annual for a Perry Lee Pinkard, Jr. with advancement certificate to CTT3 and I’d like to return it to him or his relatives. Contact: PNC (SW) Tony V. Brown, USN (Ret.) at chiefbrown84@sdcglobal.net

Meet Benjamin Young, FRA’s Assistant Director of Veterans Programs

FRA recently welcomed Benjamin (Ben) Young to the FRA NHQ staff. Ben serves as FRA’s Assistant Director of Veterans Programs, working closely with Director of Legislative Programs John Davis and Chris Slawinski, our National Veteran Service Director. Ben’s work includes all issues related to veterans’ quality of life and associated legislation, but his key area of focus is assisting veterans develop and submit their claims for VA disability.

Ben grew up in Valdosta, Georgia, where he attended Valdosta State University and received a Bachelor of Arts in history. He enlisted in the Marine Corps and, following graduation from boot camp in 2008, he reported for training as a Warehouse Clerk at Camp Johnson, in Camp Lejeune, N.C. His subsequent duty assignments included 4th Supply Bn. at Marine Corps Logistics Base in Albany, Georgia, and 2nd Supply Bn. at Bolling Air Force Base in Washington, D.C. He separated from the Marine Corps Reserves in October 2014 at the rank of Corporal.

Before coming to FRA, Ben served as a congressional intern for Rep. Scott Rigell, of the 2nd Congressional District of Virginia, and as a congressional intern for Rep. Austin Scott, of the 8th Congressional District of Georgia.

About his time at FRA, Benjamin said, “I am privileged to work for an association that aims to safeguard the pay and benefits of our nations’ service members. It’s a rewarding experience to be able to work and advocate for improving the benefits and quality-of-life programs that our men and women in uniform deserve.”
**BRANCH 346 PANAMA CITY BEACH, FLA.**

Branch members celebrated the 94th Birthday of Shipmate Dick Sherlock in October. Dick served on USS Pampanito (SS-383) during WWII and is a veteran of several war patrols. He participated in the rescue of 75 Australian POWs after the Japanese ship they were being transported on was sunk.

**BRANCH 159 PASADENA, TEXAS**

PNP Ralph Schmidt presents a 60-year membership certificate and pin to Shipmate Phil Rowe. Rowe is 91 years old and has maintained his FRA membership since May 1, 1955.

**BRANCH 260 GOLDEN VALLEY, ARIZ.**

Branch President Don Johnson recognized Shipmate Robert Thrombley for his 50 years of continuous FRA membership.

**BRANCH 137 MINDEN, NEV**

Shipmates and Auxiliary members celebrated a yearlong fundraising effort by presenting a check for $904 to the Suicide Prevention Network. Pictured (l to r) are Unit President Jan Solberg, President of the Suicide Prevention Network Denise Castle, Branch President Rick Athenour, and Debbie Posnien, Executive Director of the Suicide Prevention Network.

**BRANCH 371 BATON ROUGE, LA.**

When shipmates learned that the Louisiana War Veterans Home was in need of 15 replacement televisions for needy vets, they went into action. With the help of the local WalMart, the branch delivered 10 high-definition TVs to the Home. Making the presentation (l to r) are Tonya Smothers, Branch President Jim Broussard, Unit President Crystal Fontenot, Leon Perkins, Hope Godwin, Activities Director Jackie Wells, Assistant Administrator Gus Freche, Josh Faucher, Administrator Jon Salter and Joe Maldondo. The Branch and Unit have been strong supporters of the Home for many years.
**BRANCH 299 WILMINGTON, N.C.**

Branch President Ron Meyer (right) and Shipmate Ken Hammann (left), commanding officer of the Wilmington Naval Sea Cadet Corps, present the US Marine Corps Medal to Cadet Tristan Foster for “Loyalty” to the Detachment. Branch 299 originated and is a co-sponsor of the Wilmington Naval Sea Cadet Corps with the US Navy League.

**MEMBER-AT-LARGE**

Shipmate Al Grappone proudly holds the certificate that honors his 50 years of continuous FRA membership. Grappone’s service in lighter-than-air ships was highlighted in the feature story in the February 2014 issue of FRA Today.

**BRANCH 26 BAKERSFIELD, CALIF.**

Branch members presented a check for $1,500 to Kern County Honor Flight to assist in flying veterans to Washington, D.C., to view the memorials to their service. Pictured are Branch Secretary Leonard Culotta, Branch President Walter Stabenow, Honor Flight board member Dave Oliver, and Lili Marsh, Executive Director of Kern County Honor Flight.

**BRANCH 97 OAK HARBOR, WASH.**

Branch President Dianne Haddon awards a 50-year continuous membership pin to Shipmate Wayne L. Tessaro, a Life Member of FRA who still resides in Coupeville, Wash.

**BRANCH 126 JACKSONVILLE, FLA.**

President James J. Thomas presented a certificate of achievement and FRA medal and ribbon to NJROTC Cadet John Walker during formal ceremonies at the Orange Park (Fla.) High School. Branch and Unit 126 presented a total of 26 such awards to cadets in area high schools, including Middleburg and NAESE High Schools.

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 Southeast Regional President Pat Suckow

THE LA FRA SOUTHEAST Region encompasses the Southern United States — commonly referred to as the American South, Dixie, or simply the South.

Auxiliary members may have never served in the military or fought for their country, but there are countless ways that everyone has helped, and continues to help, our veterans and their families.

Here are some simple things they are doing to make a difference:

- The Units donate to the United States Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots Foundation in lieu of giving holiday gifts to those special individuals in their lives. In doing so, they help provide Christmas joy to millions of children who might not be enjoying the things we take for granted.

- The Units choose families that are going through some hard times by providing baskets of food or gift cards to help with holiday meals. If the Units don’t know of any families in need, they contact the Command Master Chief, local church or shelter, which leads the Units in the right direction.

- Our Units also coordinate with the activity directors for local retirement communities, supporting fitness specialists who teach classes, feeding residents and other activities that show our members genuinely CARE. Many Unit members also go to nursing homes on holidays and at other times throughout the year, bringing the residents gift bags, games and snacks. Sometimes Unit members organize sing-a-longs, an ice cream social or other activities that the residents enjoy.

- Many of our Units in the Southeast Region are small, but their efforts make a big difference. They donate to veterans drives, local schools, Ronald McDonald House and Fisher House, contributing either their time or money or both. They supply paper goods, stuff and stamp envelopes in community kitchens, write notes or mail Christmas cards for our service members. Many of our Auxiliary members do community support outside of their units, working for Pet Helpers and donating toys, food, towels, blankets and other items for the cats and dogs.

As you can see, the Southeast is there to help out and their efforts put smiles on others’ faces. These acts are simple, but they make an impact. And so many veterans have never heard the words “thank you.” If you know a veteran or see someone in a military uniform, say something. It may make his or her day and yours.

The Shipmates & Auxiliary members of Branch and Unit 269 are looking forward to seeing you at the upcoming 2015 FRA and LA FRA Southeast Regional Convention on August 14 and 15! Reservations can be made at the Double Tree by Hilton (7401 Northwood’s Blvd. North Charleston, S.C.) by calling 1-843-518-6200. Specify that you are making a GROUP RESERVATION under the name of “Fleet Reserve Southeast Regional Convention.” Room Rates are $99.00 plus 13.5% room tax plus $1.00 occupancy tax per room, per night (2 double beds/ two room suite for $109.00). Reservations must be made by August 10, 2015 to receive preferred group rate.

Being the Southeast Regional President and working with the Units, Shipmates, and especially the Veterans, has been an honor. Remember, we are ready to help.