The Defense Health Agency: For the Services, By the Services

26 Candidates for FRA National Office

28 FRA Education Foundation Announces 2105 Scholarship Recipients
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Featured

18 THE DEFENSE HEALTH AGENCY: FOR THE SERVICES, BY THE SERVICES
Over the past two years, the Defense Health Agency has become a joint combat support agency, providing the delivery of integrated, high-quality and affordable health care to military beneficiaries. Learn how this new agency is changing the way medical services are being provided and administered to service members, retirees 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
Military health care affects all service members and military retirees, as well as their family members. The Defense Health Agency helps the military medical community serve active duty, Reserve and retired service members from all branches of service.
A New Year

THERE ARE SEVERAL WAYS to look at the 12-month period we commonly refer to as “a year.” There’s the calendar year (January 1 through December 31); there’s the federal government’s fiscal year (October 1 through September 30); and then there’s the FRA membership year (April 1 through March 31). But of all the “new year” beginnings, I’ve always thought the start of the school year was the most exciting.

Although the specific start of the school year varies by state and district, it’s a safe bet that all students are in their respective classrooms by September. Despite the advancements in education technology, there are some icons of the school year that remain unchanged: Many of those classrooms have been freshly painted, chalk or white boards have been cleaned and classroom bulletin boards have colorful messages welcoming students and inviting them to have their best academic year ever. The beginning of this “new year” is often accompanied by fresh school supplies and notebooks full of blank sheets just waiting to be filled with new ideas. It often means new book (or laptop?) bags, new shoes and that all-important first-day-of-school outfit that has to be just right. And, best of all, the start of a new school year offers the promise of new concepts, new friends and new experiences.

This is especially true for the students featured on page 28 of this issue of FRA Today. These bright and deserving college students will begin this year’s educational journey with the help of scholarships provided by the FRA Education Foundation. This month also marks the beginning of the new scholarship cycle, which means the applications for the 2016 scholarships are now available at www.fra.org/foundation.

If you have a college-bound student in your life, please encourage him or her to apply for these generous scholarships. Applicants must have an affiliation with the Navy, Marine Corps or Coast Guard, either through their own service, or that of a spouse, parent or grandparent. Those affiliated with an FRA shipmate are eligible for a broader range of scholarships, so the Education Foundation can also be a great recruiting tool.

I neglected to mention another important year: FRA’s Association year, which runs from national convention to national convention. Your FRA National Headquarters’ staff and this year’s Convention Committee are working hard to prepare for next month’s gathering of shipmates and Auxiliary members in Spokane, Washington. If you haven’t already, be sure to make your reservations (before September 21st) to get the FRA rate) by calling the Spokane City Center DoubleTree Hotel at 509-455-9600. More information on the convention is available at http://fra2015.org or readers can contact Convention Chairwoman PRPNW Margret “Peg” Burke at (Home) 509-315-8818 or (Cell) 509-385-7275. Hope to see you all there!!
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Engaging New Members,
Retaining Current Shipmates

SHIPMATES, I HOPE THIS issue of FRA Today finds you well. So far, my year as your president has been a whirlwind of activity. Health issues have prevented me from traveling as much as I wanted, but with e-mail and phone calls, I have been able to stay on top of the issues de jour.

I want to thank NVP Virgil Courneya for stepping up and “filling in the blanks” for me, and doing the travel that I was unable to perform. Additionally I want to thank him for his article in the July FRA Today, regarding membership. He was right on, encouraging leadership to take advantage of all the resources available to them. As he pointed out, our branches are getting older and they are just ready to quit because they feel they just don’t have the people or wherewithal to carry on.

Every time I hear from a Regional President (RP) that a branch wants to surrender its charter, I ask him/her, “What has been done to help them stay afloat?” With the help of some RPs and the National Headquarters’ staff, we have managed to save a few. Sometimes it just takes a few phone calls to inspire them to carry on. Having said this, it is ridiculous to think that we can grow from within.

It’s been said many times that we have to find a way to attract the so-called millennials…. We have to be more engaged in social media, such as Facebook and Twitter.

It’s been said many times that we have to offer something tangible for younger members to be attracted to us. To espouse that we are their voice on Capitol Hill and that we need more members to make our voice louder is great, but we need to offer something more tangible. And we do, except it needs to have more emphasis placed on it, and that is our Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) program. See the May issue of FRA Today, where Editor Lauren Armstrong has a feature article regarding VAVS and FRA’s part in that program. We could advertise that the “way to the VA, is through the FRA” or something similar. We also have a generous scholarship program. We have established the FRA Education Foundation and annually award more than $100,000 in scholarships to deserving students. I think we need to do a better job of promoting this opportunity. The Past Regional Presidents Association also has a scholarship, and some Branches have scholarships. (Who knew?!) We need to add these benefits in our recruiting conversations and promotional literature.

Then there is the matter of Retention. I’ve heard it said that we recruit enough new members, but we lose more out the back door than come in the front. On the surface, you would think that shouldn’t be much of a problem. All you have to do is call up those whose memberships are about to expire and invite or encourage them to renew. Or, at a minimum, find out why they won’t retain their membership and make an effort to address their concerns. But guess what? We are not calling them! If we don’t call, rest assured, you will never see them again. If you do, there is a tangible probability they will renew. It won’t happen if we don’t try.

To test this concept, a Headquarters staff member, who calls Members at Large (MAL) whose memberships have lapsed, called 240 FRA branch members whose membership had expired. 40 branch members renewed via credit card over the phone! That’s a 16-percent success rate and it’s likely to be higher when mailed renewals are factored into the equation. Because of this success, we have decided to continue this program and will continue calling MAL and branch shipmates who are no longer members of our great association. Please note that this program will not affect branches that have their own Calls Program.

Last, while I was on the Binnacle List, I received many calls, cards and e-mails offering well wishes and prayers. I am happy to say that prayer works, because I have recovered 100%. Thank you, from the bottom of my heart. Hope to see you in Spokane.

John D. Ippert was elected to serve as FRA’s national president during the 2014–2015 Association year. He is a member of Honolulu Branch 46 and can be reached at 808-623-3521 or mcpojdi@hawaii.rr.com.
It's a fact: circulation issues can cause a variety of dangerous health issues. As we age and become less active, these issues can get worse. Several conditions can lead to poor circulation—the most common causes include obesity, diabetes, heart conditions and arterial problems. The heart has to work harder to circulate blood throughout our bodies, and gravity doesn't help—since the blood has to go “uphill”. One of the best ways to alleviate this problem is to elevate your lower extremities, so that your feet are above your heart. Now, there is a reclining lift chair that can put you safely in this position. It's called the Perfect Lift Chair™ and there's no other chair like it.

Whether you use your chair to read, watch TV, eat… or even sleep, comfort is the key. This chair has an overstuffed back and unique seat design that will cradle your body. The wide armrests and footrest provide better support when sitting or reclined. The fabric is comfortable and durable—plus there are a variety of colors for any décor. It features high and low heat settings and dozens of massage choices. Best of all, it gives you an infinite number of reclining options, from sitting up, lying flat and zero gravity positions. The chair even lifts you up to a position where it's easy to stand up or sit down.

Why spend another day or night suffering from the symptoms of poor circulation? This chair comes with “White Glove Delivery” and includes a one-year service warranty and our exclusive home trial. If you are not completely satisfied, simply return it within 30 days for a “No Questions Asked” refund of the product purchase price. Call now!
Definitions

Master Chief Petty Officer Richard Petrillo was correct when he wrote that one definition of “petty” is “small, minor, of little importance” [FRA Today, Shipmate Forum; August 2015]. But not once during my entire 20-year Navy career did I ever feel “small, minor or of little importance” while wearing a crow on my sleeve.

The word “petty,” when joined with “officer” to identify sailors, does not have the same connotation as “petty” when used to describe a thief or a grievance. No, it is a term of respect, respect that has been earned by years of dedicated service to one’s country.

“Petty” is also defined as “of lesser rank; subordinate.” So, although it’s true that I was of lesser rank than commissioned officers, I never felt I was “of little importance” when it came to matters related to my workspace duties. In fact, more than a few engineering-type officers deferred to me over the years when discussing and evaluating men or machinery, hardly an indication that I was just a “minor” link in the chain of command.

The term “petty officer” has evolved over the past 200 years or so to denote someone who has become highly proficient in his or her respective rating, so I didn’t become upset at all when someone referred to me as “petty officer,” all the way from 3rd class right up to master chief.

Richard B. Osburn

With Sincere Thanks

Thank you all so very much for the messages of support and sympathy following the loss of our son, Keith. The cards, letters, e-mails and phone calls meant the world to Ruth and me during a very difficult time. Ruth said it best: It’s times like these that we are reminded that FRA isn’t just an organization; it’s a family. We are sincerely grateful for your love and support.

PNP Jim Eblen

Some People Know

I enjoyed your article about Fort Jefferson in the Dry Tortugas. In 1945, I was in the Torpedo Squadron of Night Carrier Air Group 53 stationed at NAS Boca Chica, Key West, and we used to fly over Fort Jefferson on training flights. Sometimes we used to continue southerly and fly down the Havana waterfront before returning home. The article did not mention this fort was built after the War of 1812 to protect shipping through the Florida Strait. It was used as a prison prior to the Civil War and, after the war, Dr. Samuel Mudd, who [treated John Wilkes Booth after] the Lincoln assassination, was a prisoner there. The Tortugas were discovered by Ponce de Leon and named after the tortugas, or turtles, that were there in abundance.

John E Everett

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.
“My friends all hate their cell phones... I love mine!”

Here’s why.

Say good-bye to everything you hate about cell phones. Say hello to Jitterbug.

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Get 400 monthly minutes for the price of 200 with WE TALK.

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Enough talk. Isn't it time you found out more about the cell phone that's changing all the rules? Call now, Jitterbug product experts are standing by.
Congress Heading Toward Sequestration, Budget and Debt Ceiling Showdown

FOR THE FIRST TIME since 2009, the House and Senate both finished work on their respective versions of the FY 2016 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA, S. 1376/H.R. 1735) before Congress adjourned for its summer recess. Congress is on schedule to send the final NDAA to the White House before the start of the new fiscal year on October 1, 2015. Regrettably, the president has issued a veto threat on the NDAA because it exceeds sequestration spending limits. President Obama is not opposed to spending more on Defense, but he wants an equal amount of additional non-Defense funding beyond sequestration limits. Under sequestration, the Defense budget is assigned 50 percent of the budget cuts, even though Defense makes up only 17 percent of the federal budget. FRA believes across-the-board sequestration cuts will create a hollow force and threaten national security, as well as force Congress to drastically cut military pay and benefits. Members are strongly urged to use the FRA Action Center (action.fra.org/action-center) to ask their legislators to exclude Defense from sequestration.

Another unfortunate obstacle is the September 30 deadline for the passage of spending (appropriations) bills. Partisan maneuvering has delayed progress and the Senate has not passed any of the 12 appropriations bills at press time. The House has passed several spending measures, but they, too, have ground to a halt with potential amendments related to removing Confederate flags and other Confederate symbols from federal property. The expectation is that Congress will pass a short-term Continuing Resolution (CR) to keep the government operating at FY 2015 levels until December, when it is expected that the U.S. Treasury’s debt ceiling will be reached. Some legislators want to start negotiations now before the spending and debt limits loom, in order to assure there will be no government shutdown. As this issue of FRA Today goes to press, however, negotiations have not begun.

Funding for VA Budget Passes before Deadline

One day before the August 1 deadline, the Senate approved (91-4) funding to keep veterans hospitals open for the remainder of the current fiscal year and sent the bill to the president for his signature. The provision, included in the short-term highway funding bill (H.R. 3236), will free $3.4 billion from other spending accounts to cover the shortfall in the VA’s health care budget.

Veterans ID Card Bill to Help Reduce Identity Theft Signed into Law by President

President Obama recently signed into law the “Veterans Identification Card Act” (H.R. 91). The intent of the bill is to minimize the threat of identity theft and make it easier for veterans to prove their military service. Under current law, some veterans who did not serve for at least 20 years or receive VA health services must carry paper documents (DD 214) to prove their veteran status. These forms, used by many veterans, contain Social Security numbers and other details that could put veterans at risk of identity theft. The bill’s sponsor, Rep. Vern Buchanan, called it “an example of what Congress can accomplish when lawmakers put partisanship aside and address the country’s needs.” Buchanan’s Southwest Florida district includes more than 70,000 veterans, many of whom are age 65 or older. The bill allows the VA to charge the veteran a fee to cover the cost of the program.

This is particularly relevant in light of a recent data breach at the Office of Personnel Management, where records of 21.5 federal employees, including millions of military personnel, were compromised. These records included Social Security numbers, family information, health records and even fingerprints for current and former service members dating back to at least 2000.
TRICARE Coverage Travels with You

The Defense Health Administration (DHA) wants beneficiaries to know that TRICARE is portable and travels with the beneficiary whether the travel is for business or pleasure.

Beneficiaries should receive all routine care and get prescriptions filled before traveling. Beneficiaries should plan to have enough maintenance medication for the entire trip and be sure to pack medication in carry-on luggage.

With routine care complete, a beneficiary’s only health care concern should be urgent or emergency care. The first line of defense when deciding what kind of care is needed is TRICARE’s Nurse Advice Line (NAL) at 1-800-TRICARE (874-2273). A registered nurse can answer urgent care questions and schedule next-day appointments at military hospitals and clinics if necessary. Best of all, the NAL is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, so there is no need to worry about availability as you travel between time zones.

In the event of an emergency, seek care at an emergency facility. A TRICARE Prime beneficiary needing emergency care should notify the primary care manager (PCM) or regional contractor within 24 hours or the next business day. If only urgent care is needed, get a referral from the primary care manager or call the NAL to get advice on when and how to seek care for an urgent problem.

FRA Stands With Senator Gillibrand to Help “Blue Water” Vietnam Vets Harmed by Agent Orange, but Ignored by VA

At a July press conference in Albany, New York, FRA National Executive Director (NED) Tom Snee stood beside U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (N.Y.) as she announced a new push to pass bipartisan legislation to ensure thousands of Navy Vietnam veterans are eligible to receive the disability and health care benefits they have earned. These so-called “Blue Water” vets were exposed to the powerful toxin Agent Orange (AO) while serving off the coast of Vietnam and are currently ineligible for VA benefits for medical conditions related to AO exposure. Gillibrand is rallying support for the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act (S. 681), legislation that would clarify existing law so that TRICARE covers services that are medically necessary and proven safe and effective. For information about your health plan, visit the TRICARE website at www.TRICARE.mil.

Standard beneficiaries can visit any TRICARE-authorized network or non-network provider; simply call the doctor to schedule an appointment. Referrals are not required, but you may need prior authorization from your regional contractor for some services. If you use a non-network provider, you may have to file your own claim. You may also have to pay up front for your care, so look for a network provider for treatment and save your receipts to file a claim later. Using a network provider exercises the TRICARE Extra option, giving you a five percent cost-share discount.

U.S. Family Health plan participants should call customer service at 1-800-748-7347 for care. Be sure to save all of your health care receipts. Beneficiaries enrolled in the U.S. Family Health Plan cannot use the Nurse Advice Line.

TRICARE Overseas Program (TOP) beneficiaries traveling in the United States can call the Nurse Advice Line for health care advice, but if they ultimately seek care from a provider, they will need to call their TOP Regional call center to coordinate care.

TRICARE covers services that are medically necessary and proven safe and effective. For information about your health plan, visit the TRICARE website at www.TRICARE.mil.

FRA supports both the House and Senate versions of the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act (H.R. 969/S. 681) and believes that the status quo regarding disability claims of these veterans is unacceptable. FRA consistently cites the 2011 Institute of Medicine (IOM) report that validates a 2002 Royal Australian Navy study confirming that the desalination process used on Australian and U.S. Navy ships actually magnified the dioxin exposure in the ships’ water supplies. Recent presumption rulings that now include Air Force personnel who carried and distributed AO also strengthen FRA’s call for legislative change.

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ON & OFF CAPITOL HILL

ACTIVE DUTY/RESERVE ISSUES

Need for BAH Confirmed by Real Estate Study

Zillow Real Estate Research, a firm that analyzes trends in the real estate market, recently released a study of Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) that indicates service members are not receiving enough BAH to put them on a comparable footing with their private sector counterparts. The firm compared spending on rent and mortgages, factoring in total uniformed service compensation (both pay and allowances).

- When renting a home: The average uniformed service member spends 41.6 percent of his or her income on rent, compared to the average U.S. citizen, who spends 30 percent.
- When purchasing a home: The average uniformed service member spends 31.5 percent of his or her income on mortgage payments, compared to the average U.S. citizen, who spends 15 percent.

For more information on the study, go to: http://www.zillow.com/research/military-home-values-9656/ and http://www.zillow.com/research/military-affordability-9807/

The obvious conclusion from the research is that this is not the time to be cutting BAH. The House and Senate are currently working to resolve the differences between the two chambers’ versions of the FY 2016 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA—S. 1376/H.R. 1735). The Senate bill would reduce BAH for active duty and mandate awarding BAH only to the higher-ranking member of a member-married-to-member couple. (The House version of the NDAA does not include BAH cuts or reductions in dual-service couples’ allowances.) FRA argues that if the cuts in the Senate version are included in the final bill, the reduction will be detrimental to service members and will only create a marriage penalty for service members who marry other service members.

Shipmates are urged to use the FRA Action Center (action.fra.org/action-center) to weigh in on this and other issues in the pending FY 2016 NDAA.

FRA’s Call for White House to Honor Fallen Marines, Sailor

Many FRA shipmates shared their frustration about the delay in lowering flags at federal facilities following the deaths of four Marines and one sailor killed in Chattanooga, Tenn. In response, FRA issued a “Making Waves” alert asking members to use the FRA Action Center to request the president to issue a proclamation to lower the flags at U.S. government facilities in honor of these fallen sea service comrades. The Association thanks those who responded to the alert, which was removed from our website when the president issued the proclamation five days after the shooting.

FRA’s service flags at the National Headquarters were draped and the United States flag outside of the headquarters was placed at half-staff in honor of the Chattanooga shooting victims. This practice continued for 30 days, from July 20 through August 20, 2015.

CFPB Report Finds Service Members Continue to Face Roadblocks on Student Loans

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) released a report outlining the continued challenges faced by service members who contact student loan servicers to invoke the rights and protections earned through their military service. The report, “Overseas & Underserved: Student Loan Servicing and the Cost to Our Men and Women in Uniform,” indicates that some lenders continue to make mistakes handling service members’ student loan repayments. These costly errors result in improper denials of legal benefits, negative credit reporting, and shoddy follow-through on legal protections for military families. Complaints also include frustrations from grieving parents seeking to discharge a co-signed loan following the death of their child.

Specifically, the report found:

- Deployed service members continue to report difficulties in obtaining the Servicemembers’ Civil Relief Act (SCRA) interest rate cap of 6 percent;
- Lenders fail to adequately inform service members of deferment options and process completed requests; and
- Some disabled veterans and parents of deceased borrowers co-signing for loans encounter difficulty processing loan discharges.


New and Stronger Predatory Lending Rules

The Department of Defense (DoD) will implement new rules meant to rein in payday lenders that have often sidestepped existing rules to charge service members excessive — and illegal — interest rates.

The rules would set interest rate caps on payday loans, car title loans, refund anticipation loans, deposit advance loans, installment loans, and credit cards extended to service members. These products were not included under past protections. The new rule also covers add-on features for certain offers so lenders that have traditionally set up shop near military bases cannot charge excessive fees. New protections will also prevent lenders from requiring that service members automatically send a portion of their paychecks to pay off the debt.

The rules were written with help from federal banking regulators including the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB). CFPB Director Richard Cordray told the Senate Banking Committee that under past loopholes, there were still a number of online lenders charging service members interest rates as high as 600 percent. The Obama Administration is using the new rules to mark the fifth anniversary of the 2010 Dodd-Frank law.
Own a Replica of the Race Car that Sold for Millions!

Carroll Shelby’s sleek Cobra Daytona Coupe was the first American-built car to win a prestigious international racing title and elite status as the world’s fastest car! And recently it sold for a remarkable $7.25 million, the most ever paid for an American car at auction!

Now there’s no need to wait for auction to own a replica of the finest, high-performance car ever built! Crafted to BIG 1:18 scale, this awesome Shelby Cobra Coupe boasts opening doors that reveal an articulated interior, racing seats, dashboard instrumentation and working steering. Look under the hood, and you’ll find a detailed engine compartment sure to rival the competition!

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This 1:18-scale die-cast replica can be yours for three interest-free payments of $26.66*, with only the first due prior to shipment. Our 365-Day Guarantee assures your satisfaction or your money back. **Send no money now; reserve yours today!**

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Military Suicides Reduced in First Quarter of 2015

Suicides among active duty troops dropped in the first quarter of calendar year 2015 compared to the same time in both 2013 and 2014. According to information released by the Department of Defense (DoD), 57 active duty service members (30 soldiers, 14 airmen, 10 sailors, and three Marines) died by suicide, a 22-percent decline from the first quarter of 2014 and a seven-percent drop from 2013’s first quarter. But while the Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps saw lower death tolls, the Army saw an increase of 11 percent over the same time period.

FRA welcomes the recent reduction in active duty suicides and appreciates the inclusion of an additional $18.8 million in the FY 2015 NDAA, targeted for special operations units that have experienced an increase in suicides over the past year.

FRA supported the “Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention for American Veterans Act,” which was signed into law (P.L. 114-2) February 12, 2015. The law requires the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and DoD to allow for an annual independent third-party evaluation of their mental health care and suicide prevention programs. Service members or military family members experiencing a mental health crisis can get help by calling the Veterans Crisis Line at 800-273-8255 and pressing 1.

Senate Confirms Dunford, Richardson

General Joseph Dunford, USMC, was recently confirmed by the U.S. Senate to be the next chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. In early May, Dunford was nominated by President Obama to be the 36th Commandant of the Marine Corps, and he has exceeded all expectations. “I know Joe. I trust him,” Obama, said. “He’s already proven his ability to give me his unvarnished military advice based on his experience on the ground.” During his 18 months in Afghanistan, Dunford served as acting commander, leading the Afghanistan war coalition during 2013–2014. Moreover, he directed the ongoing drawdown of U.S. troops, the switch to Afghan military lead combat operations, and the disorderly Afghan elections that delayed efforts to reach an agreement on the U.S. military’s presence in the country. Dunford is expected to take over October 1st for Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, who will be retiring after serving 41 years in the Army.

Lt. Gen. Robert B. Neller has been nominated to replace Dunford as Marine Corps Commandant. Neller, a 40-year career infantry officer, currently serves as commander of Marine Corps Forces Command in Norfolk, Virginia, where he oversees deployment planning and execution and East Coast Marine bases. At a press event where the nomination was made official, Secretary of Defense Ash Carter noted how the two worked closely together when Carter was deputy secretary and Neller was director of operations for the joint staff. “We traveled together in the theater and around the country, where I saw Bob’s outstanding relationship with the troops,” Carter said. “He loves them. He relates to them. And they light up when he talks to them.” Senate confirmation is required, and the White House wants a quick confirmation that would allow a Senate vote in early fall. Neller was approved by the Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) and is awaiting vote in the Senate.

Adm. John Richardson, the current director of Naval Reactors, has been nominated to be the next Chief of Naval Operations (CNO). Richardson, who is expected to win the confirmation, is set to replace Adm. Jonathan Greenert in September. During his July 30 nomination hearing before the Senate Armed Services Committee, Richardson referred to the billions of dollars in cost growth for the service’s next generation aircraft carrier program as “unacceptable.” Sen. John McCain, who agrees with Richardson concerning this cost growth, is supporting a measure in the current defense bill that would give the CNO more oversight in the carrier acquisition program.

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.
Vintage watch auctions don't always make history or break records. Sometimes they can get downright dull. Most occasions I sit through a seemingly endless parade of secondhand luxury castoffs; perfectly fine timepieces that billionaires now find boring. But once in a while something catches my eye, something genuinely rare and exciting that stops me cold and reminds me that there are still vintage treasures to be found.

Our Stauer Octagon Watch was inspired by such a find. It was a 1920s classic from one of the biggest luxury watchmakers in the world and after a flurry of bids, it wound up coming home with me. I've always been intrigued by the geometry of watches and believed that exploring shapes beyond old-fashioned circles and squares made for a truly memorable watch. Fergo the bidding wars and take home the Stauer Octagon for just $99!

The Stauer Octagon showcases all of the key elements of a classic gentleman's timepiece including a guilloché-style face with bold Roman numerals, blued Breguet-style hands, a separate seconds subdial and a decorative crown, surrounded by a polished, gold-finished octagonal case. We've even added a thick, genuine brown leather strap that adds to its vintage appeal.

Buckle it up, wear it out and I can guarantee that you'll find yourself fielding compliments, attracting attention and making a statement. This is not a watch for men who want to be ignored. With a price that would just be a classic timepiece's starting bid at auction, seize the moment and make this watch yours today.

Your satisfaction is 100% guaranteed. Wear the Stauer Octagon Watch for 60 days and if you're not completely happy send it back for a full refund of your purchase price. You won't always get this kind promise from an auction.

Going, Going, Octagon!

Sold! To the discerning reader who knows a unique find when they see one.

Vintate watch auctions don't always make history or break records. Sometimes they can get downright dull. Most occasions I sit through a seemingly endless parade of secondhand luxury castoffs; perfectly fine timepieces that billionaires now find boring. But once in a while something catches my eye, something genuinely rare and exciting that stops me cold and reminds me that there are still vintage treasures to be found.

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Going, Going, Octagon!
FRA’s Impact on Youth

SHIPMATES, THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT is addressing you in the column that I would normally write. Still, I cannot resist the temptation of giving some thoughts regarding education.

September is the start of another school year, 2015–2016. We as Shipmates are by far the greatest resource of higher learning as well as of experience in daily life. Today, students’ thought processes need to be guided toward becoming critical thinkers. There is a great quote that supports this from Robert H. Shaffer: “We must never view young people as empty bottles to be filled, but as candles to be lit”.

The FRA Education Foundation's Scholarship and Essay programs support this focus. Higher education in any form is not cheap, but the mechanics of obtaining it should not go unnoticed. They are a part of the “wisdom and understanding” that students need to gain, whether from the classroom, in books, through technology, and even through the social exposures they have available to them. Push for the scholarship within your high schools and junior colleges.

Essays are a delight to both teachers and student alike, if presented with a positive spin. In some schools, one essay can be the grade for Social Studies (History/Civics), Language Arts, Computer, and even Speech classes; one essay, four separate grades for the student—WOW! For teachers, the contest presents a relief in grading, especially if they do not have to draft up another rubric. Teachers in any school are always looking for ideas to get students motivated for the first marking period. We in the FRA have a way to accommodate both the student and the educators of this country; all we have to do is show them and explain how it can be done. See some of this year’s Essay Contest winners below.

Make this a great school year for the students through the FRA! Volunteer as a mentor, teacher’s aide, reader, or guest speaker in the classroom. Your lifetime of experiences may provide a light to set the candles burning.

PRESS ON!

217, Winston-Salem, N.C.
Branch President Clarence E. West presents the National 9th Grade First Place essay award, plaque and check to Rebekah Mitchell. The branch hosted a hot dog and baked beans dinner with all the trimmings for Rebekah and her family prior to presenting the award.

41 Roanoke, Va.
Branch President Joe Black presents Branch and East Coast Region First Place awards (10th Grade) to Brandi Mitchell at Jefferson Forest High School, Forest, Va.

Tom Snee is FRA’s National Executive Director and can be reached at NEDFRA@fra.org.
In tribute to this legendary American motorcycle that is still made in America, Hawthorne Village presents the Indian Motorcycle® Express. This train is boldly decorated with the famous colors, official logos and classic slogans of this true American motorcycling legend. You'll appreciate the extraordinary wealth of impeccably authentic details devoted to every inch of this heirloom-quality train. Plus, you'll enjoy the faithfully sculpted replicas of some of Indian® Motorcycle's most popular and legendary bikes including the 1928 Indian® 101 Scout and the 1948 Indian® Chief. These beautiful reproductions each "ride" on their own Flat Car with backdrops featuring the look of vintage Indian Motorcycle® advertising and are removable for display wherever you choose!

An incredible train at an exceptional value.

Begin your train collection with the "Indian Motorcycle® Diesel Locomotive" for three easy payments of $26.66*, the first billed before shipment. Subsequent cars—some with sculpted Indian® Motorcycles—will each be billed separately at the same low price and sent about every other month. In addition, you'll receive the track set, power-pack and speed controller—a $100 value—FREE with Shipments Two and Three! With our best-in-the-business 365-day guarantee, your satisfaction is assured and you may cancel at any time.

Not available in any store! Order today!

This is a limited-time offer and strong demand is expected. Send no money now. Just sign and mail the Reservation Application today!

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Outreach Programs

TODAY THERE ARE MANY ways to reach out to people in your community and raise awareness of FRA and the important work we do. FRA Headquarters, like many of our branches, maintains a Facebook page that makes it easy to share photos and important news stories. Many of our shipmates, however, do not participate in social media and prefer to communicate in person or by mass media—print, radio, and television. FRA participates in social media, community outreach events, TV, radio, fundraisers, and any way we can to get the word out about our Association. Here are a few examples of what we are doing to promote a positive image of FRA.

“The one-on-one approach always works well”, say two of our top recruiters, Shipmates Bob Campbell (Branch 13, Atlantic City, N.J.) and Frank Gates (Branch 293, Elizabeth City, N.C.). Both shipmates are outstanding spokesmen for FRA and between them, have recruited 303 shipmates over the years. That is fantastic! Both are retirees from the U.S. Navy; Shipmate Bob is a former mayor of a township in New Jersey and Frank was a used car salesman. If you want to learn about the gift of gab, talk to either one of these shipmates about what it takes to recruit new or former members into the FRA. They both participate in outreach events such as parades, fundraisers including collecting donations using the coin drop method in their communities, cooking meals for meetings to entice branch members to attend, and fostering cooperation with other veterans’ organizations. The best method they both recommend is if you see a veteran with a hat, bumper sticker or other indication they are or have been affiliated with one of the sea services, take the opportunity to introduce yourself and start a conversation. A little small talk can easily lead to a discussion about FRA. Lastly, close the deal and ask about their interest in becoming a member. Shipmate Bob says, “If you don’t ask, you will not receive.”

Shipmate Mark Hughner, Vice President of Branch 290 in Mayport, Fla., recommends creating an “auxiliary” based around a shared interest amongst the members. Case in point is the “Shellback Riders of the Fleet Reserve Association Branch 290.” They are all active duty members from the Naval base. It is imperative that our outreach approach include attention to the next generation of members in order to sustain FRA in the future. Volunteering to participate in active duty uniform at events like Flag, Independence, Veterans and Pearl Harbor Days is always a draw for people in the community. If your branch has the resources, be sure to offer a social gathering after these events and invite prospective members to meet and greet over sandwiches or burgers. Food is always a draw. Help at blood drives and seek out veterans to talk with about FRA.

“Leave no stone unturned” says Shipmate Rick Athenour, President of Branch 137 in Minden, Nev. Take every opportunity presented to place FRA in the public eye at events such as carnivals, car shows, civic events, etc. They are all fair game. When you talk to prospective members, discuss proposed legislative changes in benefits for active duty or veterans and point out the “Bill Tracker” on the FRA website (www.fra.org), which shows all of the legislative measures that FRA is engaging with on behalf of our members. If you see a veteran who may be from the Army or Air Force, please don’t let that stop your approach; you never know who among their friends or family may have served in the sea services. Go on military bases at every opportunity. Sponsor an Easter egg hunt for the children or a barbeque for the single members on base. Sponsor outings where new base personnel can get to know the local area. You may not be able to recruit on base, but service members will remember you.

Try contacting the public affairs office on base and ask to place an article of interest of about FRA. If it is free, take advantage and use it to communicate. Work with your Auxiliary Unit, if you have one. Offer assistance with projects and programs. Unit 137 has a program dubbed “Taste of Home” where they fill the refrigerator at the barracks with home-baked goods once a month. When you feel tired at outreach activities, think of the young men and women were are advocating for and keep pushing on.

Participation at outreach events must not just be the typical “stand at a table and distribute information.” Lending a helping hand to a veteran, sponsoring a youth activity, developing programs of interest for the next generation are all aspects of outreach. Don’t waste any opportunity to participate.

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.
Continuing Programs

Recruit 3 Program
Any FRA or Auxiliary member who recruits/sponsors three (3) new or reinstated FRA members will be eligible to receive the red/white/blue collectible pin.

Recruit 32 Program
Any FRA member who recruits/sponsors 32 new or reinstated members will be eligible to receive a life membership or $200 cash award if already a life member. For each subsequent 32 members recruited, a shipmate will be eligible to receive an additional award of $200.

Submit completed applications to:
FRA, 125 N. West St., Alexandria, VA 22314-2754. Remember to include payment and your full name and membership number in the “Sponsored by” section of the application.

Join FRA: Membership Application
Membership is open to all current or former enlisted members of the Navy, Marine Corps or Coast Guard. I certify that I fulfill the eligibility requirements and want to join FRA. Annual dues include a subscription to FRA Today magazine.

Name: _______________________________________________________________ Rate/Rank: ____________________________________
Address: ____________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Date of Birth: _______________________  SSN (optional): ______________________________  Phone: (         ) ___________________
Service: ___________ Status: ____________  Membership Preference: Branch No. _______
Nearest to Home  Member-at-Large

Previous FRA Member: □ No  □ Yes  (If yes, previous Member No.: ______________________________)

Spouse’s Name: ___________________________ Your E-mail Address: _____________________________________________________

Applicant’s Signature: ______________________________________________________________ Date: ___________________________

PAYMENT OPTIONS:
□ MC  □ Visa  □ Discover  □ AMEX  □ Check-enclosed
Credit Card No.______________________________________________________________
Exp. Date: ________________________________

SPECIAL OFFER FOR NEW MEMBERS
$48 for 2 years

New Recruiting Initiatives (2015)

Recruit 5 Initiative
Any FRA member who recruits/sponsors five (5) new or reinstated members will receive a “Recruit 5” collectible pin and a one-year extension of his/her existing membership, valued at $30. If the recruiter is already a Life Member, a special gift valued at $30 will be awarded in lieu of paying for one year of membership dues. The recruiter is eligible to recruit only one set of five new or reinstated members during the recruiting year and receive the special incentive awards.

Retain 10 Initiative
As a new incentive to strengthen retention, we will randomly draw 10 names of new or reinstated FRA members with one or two years of membership who are eligible for renewal. This drawing will be held quarterly in July, October, December, and April. Winners’ memberships will be extended for one year, valued at $30.00.

Special Programs
Continuing Programs

Artist’s rendering of the Moving Forward PINS. Actual pin design may vary and is smaller than shown.
Precisely two years ago, a new, joint and integrated combat support agency, the Defense Health Agency, came into being. I have had the privilege of acting as its first director, leading a team of dedicated health care professionals, administrators, and civil servants as we have transitioned to a new system to support the delivery of integrated, affordable, and high-quality health care. The journey has been challenging, yet satisfying.

Over the last decade or so of conflict, the Military Health System (MHS) has undergone significant transformation. Advances in strategy, training, technology and greater interoperability have helped save lives and prevent both illness and injury at a level never witnessed in combat medicine. The Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC) requirements produced a military health care delivery environment far different from what existed at the turn of the century. Overall trends in American medicine, coupled with increases in beneficiary numbers and health benefits in military medicine, drove costs from $19 billion in 2001 to $53 billion in 2011.

Superb Medical Support While Containing Costs

The dual imperatives of ensuring superb medical support for current and future military operations and instituting enduring health care cost containment measures required MHS to continue to transform itself. The existing fiscal environment, combined with broad Congressional support, sparked a need for change.

It was in this environment that on June 14, 2011, the Deputy Secretary of Defense William J. Lynn established an internal task force with representatives from the Services, the Joint Staff, and the Office of the Secretary of Defense. This task force was directed to evaluate options for the long-term governance of the Military Health System (MHS) as well as the multi-service health care markets. In its work, the task force developed, assessed and refined numerous variations of five potential organizational models. These included the idea of a unified medical command; a Defense Health Agency; management by one or more military departments; a hybrid model incorporating elements of the others; or an “as is” option.

The foundational elements upon which change needed to be structured were: Sustainment of a medically ready active duty/reserve component through high quality health care; Maintain a trained and ready, deployable medical force; Provision of high quality, integrated medical care to non-active duty/reserve beneficiaries; Achievement of significant cost savings through reduction in duplication and variation; Creation of a dispute resolution process with clear decision authority and clear
accountability; Ease of implementation; and enhanced interoperability.

Ultimately, after thorough analysis of various courses of action, it was decided to establish a Defense Health Agency (DHA) that would be designated a Combat Support Agency.

DHA was not created in a vacuum, nor was it created to replace or remove service responsibility for the health care needs of the force. Rather, it is an organization that was built for the services, by the services — under the auspices of the Army, Navy and Air Force medical departments.

**DHA as Part of Larger MHS**

The establishment of DHA was just one part of a set of sweeping changes to how we — the senior medical officers in the Department of Defense — collectively lead and manage the Military Health System (MHS). In March 2013, the Deputy Secretary of Defense at the time was a leader named Ashton Carter. I keep on my desk the memo he wrote to all DoD leaders about the change in how we manage the Military Health System. I highlighted one of the passages that resonated the most: “We must operate the MHS in the same manner that medical support of operational forces has been so effectively provided in our recent conflicts: jointly. We must also be responsive to the fiscal challenges facing the nation ...”

A very direct and very simple message. Our medical successes in battlefield medicine were achieved through better joint operations and learning from each other. And Secretary Carter links two important points: one — operating jointly makes us better, and improves our support to the warfighter; and two — operating jointly also makes us effective and efficient.

It’s important to also remember that, although the goals are straightforward, getting to this point was not. Going back to the 1950s, 17 different studies recommended a more unified approach to managing military medicine. And 17 times nothing happened. What’s significant this time is the leadership — the

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*Lt. Gen. Robb welcomes a delegation of international Aerospace Medicine students.*
Secretary, Deputy Secretary and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs — were engaged every step of the way. They understood the value of jointness.

The input and feedback we receive from organizations like FRA directly affects our approach to better managing our health system and educating our beneficiaries about upcoming changes.

And so, in terms of goal-setting, the good news was we weren’t starting from a blank sheet of paper. We were operating off of a model that worked beyond anyone’s expectations in the deployed environment.

Progress Continues

We have come a long way over the last two years and we are seeing the initial hard work begin to bear fruit. For these last two years we have been standing up the agency by streamlining processes in both our clinical operations and business operations. This has been done through very detailed approaches to our work — business process reengineering supported by sophisticated, stringent, reproducible business case analyses. And it involved everyone — the Services, Joint Staff, and engagement with stakeholders who’ve established enterprise-wide shared services in other industries.

In some ways, it’s not up to me to say whether we met the goals outlined. That’s for our customers to judge — the combatant commanders and the Services — and the patients they serve. We are a supporting agency. We’re here to meet their needs and help them accomplish their respective missions.

That said, there has been unmistakable progress. Our ability to develop and deliver joint solutions is definitely working. In the area of Pharmacy Operations for example — which is more than $8 billion per year of our Defense budget — we have introduced a number of improvements during the last two years that have allowed us to improve home delivery of prescription drugs and to save both patients — especially our retirees and their families — and the government money along the way.

We’ve worked very closely with the services to improve access to care and reduce wait time for appointments. Additionally, we’ve fully implemented the Nurse Advice Line, which is handling more than 1,700 calls per day, of which 94 percent are from the direct care system.

The agency has also re-energized the lines of communications with our military and veteran organizations, to include the Fleet Reserve Association (FRA). The input and feedback we receive from organizations like FRA directly affects our approach to better managing our health system and educating our beneficiaries about upcoming changes. I’ll go back to the example of pharmacy home delivery. It was a big change to be sure. But our monthly meetings with FRA and others helped us fine-tune our communications, avoid unnecessary errors, and allowed us to introduce the program with almost no hiccups. I could cite 10 other examples around access to care, new TRICARE benefits, or healthy living programs in which FRA sharpens our work. It’s real collaboration!

It would be a mistake, however, to say that this exchange of information is only about retiree or family benefits. I always leave our meetings feeling more motivated than when I came in. FRA and others push just as hard to ensure our current active duty personnel have the skills, training, equipment, and support required to achieve their current missions. Those who have served in the past never forget the sacrifices of today’s service members and don’t let other Americans forget it either!

“Medically Ready Force…Ready Medical Force.”

Everything — and I mean everything — is first judged against our core mission: Ensuring our service members are medically ready for all mission requirements and ensuring our medical personnel are ready to support them in any environment. My shorthand is “Medically Ready Force…Ready Medical Force.”
We’ve looked at the underlying business and clinical work we do and asked: Where can we streamline in ways that both improve support to the warfighter and provide more efficiencies?

One example is in Medical Logistics. A lesson learned from 13 years of war came from having Army medical units replaced by Navy medical units replaced by Air Force medical units. The work we do in these combat support hospitals doesn’t change based on the color uniform you wear. So, we’re continuing to streamline our medical supply and equipment purchases across the services in a way that supports the clinicians’ needs. And the clinical teams help determine what they need.

We are standardizing medical equipment procurement. It is saving millions of dollars over five years, but more importantly, it supports our readiness mission. We are driving more of our people to order medical supplies through electronic catalogues. Again, millions of dollars in savings and it’s a smart approach for our staff.

We never cease seeking methods to measure our progress. There is a comprehensive set of measures that we look at across the Military Health System. First, there are the big metrics the enterprise looks at — what my boss, the assistant secretary of Defense for Health Affairs looks at, and what our customers, the surgeons general, and combatant commanders look at. Our job is to determine how the DHA can help the broader enterprise achieve the goals that they’ve set — namely supporting a Ready Medical Force and Medically Ready Force.

Within the agency, the question we ask ourselves is this: How can we enable improved performance?

We also have what I call “supporting products” that help our customers perform their mission and also deliver efficiencies.

For example, what can we do within our Patient-Centered Medical Home Advisory Board to improve access? One answer was a nurse advice line integrated with our appointing system. It was an enterprise solution offering value to the customers we serve and value to the patients that they serve.

For safety issues, we have a Patient Safety Analysis Center that can help identify best practices and highlight those facilities with sustained high performance in quality and safety. That’s the power of having access to data from across all of the Services, and being able to share information in a way that helps drive improved MHS enterprise performance.

One last example: We’ll look again at our pharmacy operations. One of the biggest reengineering efforts we undertook in the past year was to move the refills of all chronic medications to home delivery. That one change is projected to deliver hundreds of millions of dollars in savings. And guess what? It also is shown to improve satisfaction. Once people get accustomed to it, they like it. And there’s one more advantage. When patients are assured their medications will show up on time, they’re more likely to take that drug every day. In some cases, that means avoiding a trip to the ER, or even a hospitalization. Better health, better care, lower cost. But the real judges of our success are our customers.

The DHA has integrated more than 1,700 employees from the Army, Navy, Air Force, and the former TRICARE Management Activity into the Defense Health Agency at a number of operating locations around the globe, with sizable operations in the National Capital Region, San Antonio, Aurora, Colorado; San Diego, Chicago, Germany and Japan.

One of the unanticipated, positive outcomes from our stand-up is the relationships we have
Meet the Beauty in the Beast

Discover this spectacular 6½-carat green treasure from Mount St. Helens!

For almost a hundred years it lay dormant. Silently building strength. At 10,000 feet high, it was truly a sleeping giant. Until May 18, 1980, when the beast awoke with violent force and revealed its greatest secret. Mount St. Helens erupted, sending up a 80,000-foot column of ash and smoke. From that chaos, something beautiful emerged… our spectacular Helenite Necklace.

Helenite is produced from the heated volcanic rock of Mount St. Helens and the brilliant green creation has captured the eye of jewelry designers worldwide. Today you can wear this massive 6½-carat stunner for only $149!

Make your emeralds jealous. Our Helenite Necklace puts the green stone center stage, with a faceted pear-cut set in .925 sterling silver finished in luxurious gold. The explosive origins of the stone are echoed in the flashes of light that radiate as the piece swings gracefully from its 18" luxurious gold-finished sterling silver chain. Today the volcano sits quiet, but this unique piece of American natural history continues to erupt with gorgeous green fire.

Your satisfaction is guaranteed. Bring home the Helenite Necklace and see for yourself. If you are not completely blown away by the rare beauty of this exceptional stone, simply return the necklace within 30 days for a full refund of your purchase price.

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- J. from Orlando, FL
Stauer Client
built with other defense agencies, including the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA), and the Defense Information Systems Agency (DISA). These agencies now have a single point of contact on issues in which they are supporting our customers. The result has been our ability to resolve issues more quickly and ensure standard, less expensive, and more effective solutions for the Army, Navy, and Air Force customer. And our partner agencies also went through their own organization transformation, and have provided us with some very helpful recommendations as we stood up the DHA.

Finally, one of the most important things I think we’ve accomplished is a commitment to transparency. Whether it is with our customers, with our patients, with Congress, or the public, we are making important decisions with a perspective that our decisions and how we reached them can be looked at, audited and challenged. We’ve opened up the doors with military and veterans organizations, and really put structure into how we engage with our customers and beneficiaries on a regular basis.

**Better Health, Better Care, Lower Cost**

In the short term, Oct. 1, 2015, will be a real milestone, not just another day. On that day, we say, “The foundation is laid. We have reached Full Operating Capability and are completely ready to manage every task in our portfolio.” That being said, this is just the beginning of a long journey.

As I mentioned before, there are some other major milestones in our not-too-distant future that are receiving our very close attention. For example, enabling the modernization of the electronic health record (EHR) is a long-term, strategic imperative for the Department and for DHA.

We need to continue to ensure our military hospitals and clinics are the first choice for our beneficiaries and that we attract them, rather than compel them, to come to our clinics and hospitals. And that means focused attention on access, quality and safety.

**Measuring Progress**

In January, we established the first enterprise-wide performance management system for the Military Health System called the Partnership for Improvement (P4I) system. We selected measures and metrics that are aligned with each element of the MHS Quadruple Aim — the centerpiece of the MHS Strategic Plan: Improved Readiness, Better Health, Better Care and Lower Cost. Senior leaders are now able to look at data for all military health facilities on a quarterly basis to see how they are performing in those central areas of quality, safety and access.

In the last six months, leadership has established 30 key measures. We look at preventive care — how are we doing in terms of ensuring our patients get essential types of screening tests for cancer detection. We have established an “index” of the various recommended cancer screening tests and see how we compare to ourselves over time, and to our civilian colleagues. For access to care, we look at some straightforward measures of how long it takes to get an appointment, and how that compares with our own access-to-care standards.

What makes the dashboard we’ve developed so useful is we didn’t pick measures where we were already performing well. We picked measures that were centrally important to our mission and where we knew we needed improvement.

And this is just a start. These measures and metrics are not fixed. We are a learning organization, and as the MHS leadership reviews information, we will assess whether we are measuring the right things and setting the right targets. And input from both our internal and external stakeholders will be considered in this dynamic assessment.

We also have a High Reliability Organization (HRO) Task Force. The Department — with the unanimous
The establishment of the Defense Health Agency has worldwide implications for the future of military medicine.

consent of all senior medical leadership — has established this task force to cement its quality and safety practices. The concept of “HROs” actually emerged from DoD’s nuclear and aviation safety programs — programs where human error can have catastrophic consequences. Other leading health institutions have learned from DoD how to design programs in a way that mitigates risk from human factors. The DoD HRO Task Force has representatives from the services and DHA to help chart its future quality and safety policies and programs.

The most important thing we can do is reinforce a culture that focuses on, and talks about, safety at every turn. I believe we have that culture. We have leaders discussing safety every day. We have a team of medical professionals who bring great skills to the process of getting better. And, in a number of areas, we are already national leaders in performance.

Communicating Changes to Customers and Beneficiaries

We continue to communicate with the services on the many activities that are underway in DHA to support their missions. But, the daily work activities and responsibilities of our health care team are the province of the service medical departments and the National Capital Region Medical Directorate. As we develop new clinical processes and business support tools together with the services, the services will educate their workforce on any “changes” in their day-to-day work.

With that said, I am very careful to make sure we don’t introduce change simply for the sake of change. Any changes DHA recommends and implements should be designed around the concept of making the lives of our front-line healthcare providers easier, and not more complex. It should be easier for providers to purchase medical supplies and equipment online. It should be easier for patients to access care — whether making appointments by phone, online, or by e-mail. It should be easier to make healthy choices about food, activity and sleep. It should be easier to generate reminders for individuals to access preventive services.

Striving for Success

The irony is that simplifying work is a complex undertaking. We need to make sure whenever we make processes more efficient, we ensure they also enhance readiness, safety and quality. The DHA is part of the team — working with the services — that is going to make that happen. The DHA was built by, and is staffed by, the dedicated professionals from the services and from our career civilian staff who are determined to see this succeed.

And that is my final point. No one takes success as a given. We have to persevere and military medical leaders, the services, clinicians and beneficiaries must work together to succeed.

Lt. Gen. (Dr.) Douglas J. Robb, USAF, is the Director of Defense Health Agency (DHA), headquartered in Falls Church, Virginia. He leads the joint, integrated Combat Support Agency that enables the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps medical services to provide a medically ready force and ready medical force to Combatant Commands in both peacetime and wartime.
CANDIDATES FOR NATIONAL OFFICE


delEgates at FRA's 2015 National Convention will be electing the Association's next national president and national vice-president. While additional candidates may be nominated from the floor, the following are excerpts from each of the known candidate's nominating resolutions:

Candidates for National Vice-President

PRPWC RICK FETRO, NOMINATED BY SANTA CLARA VALLEY BRANCH 101

Whereas, This shipmate has served at the Branch level with positions as President (two years), Secretary Treasurer, Board of Directors, and collateral duties as committee member, chairman, or advisor; and

Whereas, This shipmate has served on various national committees, Regional Vice President West Coast, Regional President West Coast, Chairman of the 55th West Coast Region Convention, various regional committees and currently serves as West Coast Region Parliamentarian; and

Whereas, The shipmates of Santa Clara Valley Branch 101, Fleet Reserve Association, know that this dedicated shipmate's experience and devotion to our Association qualifies him to continue to serve his shipmates; now therefore be it

Resolved, That Santa Clara Valley Branch 101 did unanimously vote to place the name of Past Regional President West Coast Richard J. Fetro in nomination for the office of National Vice President for the Association year 2015–2016.

PRPSC DON LARSON, NOMINATED BY CORPUS CHRISTI BRANCH 94

Whereas, this shipmate has been a member of the FRA since 1992, earning his Life Membership in 2009 through the association's Recruit 34 Life Membership program; and

Whereas, this shipmate has served at the Branch level with positions of the Board of Directors of the VAV’s Reno, Education Foundation and served as the National President, Jr Past National President and currently serving as the National Vice President; and

Whereas, The shipmates of High Sierra Branch 274, Fleet Reserve Association, know that this dedicated shipmate's experience and devotion to our Association qualifies him to continue to serve his shipmates; now, therefore be it

Resolved, That High Sierra Branch 274 did unanimously vote to place the name of National Vice President Virgil P Courneya in nomination for the office of National President for the Association year 2015–2016.

Candidates for National President

NVP VIRGIL COURNEYA, NOMINATED BY HIGH SIERRA BRANCH 274

Whereas, This shipmate has served at the branch level with positions on the board of directors, as treasurer, as vice president, president, and collateral duties as committee member, chairman, or advisor; and

Whereas, This shipmate has served nationally as Chairman, Americanism-Patriotism Committee, standing and convention (two terms); and as a member or advisor of at least four other national committees; and for five years served as a director representing the West Coast Region of the Past Regional Presidents’ Club; serving on the Coalition of the Board of Directors of the VAV’s Reno, Education Foundation and served as the National President, Jr Past National President and currently serving as the National Vice President; and

Whereas, The shipmates of High Sierra Branch 274, Fleet Reserve Association, know that this dedicated shipmate's experience and devotion to our Association qualifies him to continue to serve his shipmates; now, therefore be it

Resolved, That High Sierra Branch 274 did unanimously vote to place the name of Past Regional President West Coast Richard J. Fetro in nomination for the office of National Vice President for the Association year 2015–2016.
USE THE CREDIT CARD THAT SUPPORTS FRA.

USAA Bank is proud to offer members ways to support organizations like the Fleet Reserve Association. Plus, you can benefit from great rewards, competitive rates and USAA’s legendary customer service.

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FRA Education Foundation Announces 2015 Scholarship Recipients

THE FRA EDUCATION FOUNDATION proudly announces its scholarship recipients for 2015. Funded through private donations, corporate sponsorships, established trusts and the FRA, the Foundation will present $95,000 in scholarships to 19 deserving students who are pursuing their dreams of a college degree in the 2015–2016 academic year.

“We’re extremely proud of our scholarship program and congratulate this year’s award recipients,” says Joe Barnes, National Executive Director Emeritus for the FRA and current President of the Foundation’s Board of Directors. “Students from 14 states will benefit from these scholarships. Since 2000, we’ve disbursed more than $1.5 million in awards and we’re grateful for the strong and continuing support from FRA, many FRA Branches and other contributions that make these awards possible.”

More than 200 students applied for FRAs annual scholarship program, in which recipients are selected based on financial need, academic standing, character and leadership qualities. Established in 2009, the FRA Education Foundation works to advance FRAs long-standing tradition of helping students reach their educational and professional goals.

All current and former members of the Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard are eligible to apply for Foundation scholarships, and members of the FRA, their spouses, children and grandchildren qualify for a broader range of awards, several of which are funded through member legacy donations. Applications for FRA’s 2016–2017 scholarships will be available at www.fra.org/foundation after September 1, 2015.

THE RECIPIENTS OF FRA EDUCATION FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS FOR 2015 ARE:

Glenn F. Glezen Scholarship ($5,000)
(1) Erica Suzanne Sill, Wartburg, TN

Robert W. Nolan Scholarship ($5,000)
(2) Bryana Rene Koontz, Laguna Niguel, CA

Joseph R. Baranski Scholarship ($5,000)
(3) Jonathan Yong Kim, Auburndale, MA, Member, Branch 289

MCP0 Ken E. Blair Scholarship ($5,000)
(4) David Matthew Dudukovich, Orlando, FL, Member, Branch 51

Robert M. Treadwell Annual Scholarship ($53000)
(5) Christara Lynn Holtgrefe, Apple Valley, CA

Stanley A. Doran Memorial Scholarship ($5,000)
(6) Sarah Bain Hazard, Douglasville, GA

The Donald Bruce Pringle Family Scholarship ($5,000)
(7) James Amos Manning, Riley, KS

Fleet Reserve Association Awards ($5,000 each)
(8) Emma Elizabeth Porto, Dartmouth, MA

(9) Jennah Danae Romansky, Akron, OH

(10) Sierra Patricia Louise Watson, Stockton, MO

(11) Blake Joseph Smith, Lebanon, CT

(12) Samantha Kari Gray, Green Cove Springs, FL

(13) Caleb Jordan Hancock, Spanaway, WA

(14) John Caleb Zockoll, Salisbury, MD

(15) Lauren Renee Mortimer, Ingleside, MD

(16) Bryant Thomas Marsh, East Machias, ME

Mercer Scholarship ($5,000)
(17) Samantha Elizabeth James, Fort Collins, CO

Individual Contributions Scholarship ($3,000)
(18) Leanza Courtnie Tupfer, Benicia, CA

(19) Shelby Nichole Bonomo, Mesa, AZ

The FRA Education Foundation

The FRA Education Foundation provides academic scholarships to deserving students based on financial need, academic standing, and demonstrated leadership qualities. The Foundation is a Combined Federal Campaign-authorized charity and partners with military and education professionals to promote life-long learning opportunities that help scholars reach their educational, professional and personal goals. To learn more, visit www.fra.org/foundation or call 703-683-1400.
FRA EDUCATION FOUNDATION
SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS
RECIPIENTS FOR 2015

[Images of scholarship recipients numbered 1 through 19]
FRA's Education Foundation awards over $100,000 in scholarship funds each year to recipients based on financial need, academic standing, character and leadership qualities. Our scholarship program is open to anyone who has an affiliation with the USN, USMC or USCG, through their own service or that of a spouse, parent or grandparent.

To learn more about the FRA Education Foundation and our scholarships, visit www.fra.org/foundation where you will find descriptions of each scholarship program, lists of past winners and, starting in September of each year, applications for the current year's programs. We encourage all eligible recipients to apply for our scholarships and to share information about them with others.

Questions?
E-mail us at scholars@fra.org or call 703-683-1400.
Excelsior Webinar Aims to Help Returning Veterans Jumpstart College and Career Success

**VETERANS AND ACTIVE DUTY** service members encounter many challenges on their return to civilian life, especially those seeking higher education. In response, Excelsior College, which counts more than 4,000 veterans and 11,000 active duty personnel among its currently enrolled students, offers a number of programs and services aimed to ease the transition back.

Those services are the topic of a recorded webinar conducted by the Center for Military Education at Excelsior. This free online event addresses the most common concerns voiced by those considering college following military service and provides an overview of student-focused initiatives at Excelsior.

The one-hour webinar features four Excelsior experts and focuses on targeted issues in the college’s two premier courses on college success: CCS 112 Success Strategies for Military and Veterans and CCS 120 EC Success Seminar.

In addition, the webinar also touches on a number of other topics, including:
- Easing the transition to academic life;
- Getting the most of your nontraditional credits, state and federal financial aid, and VA benefits;
- Self-discovery, career exploration, planning, and job search techniques; and
- Online writing lab, library, and academic support services.

To see the one hour recorded webinar go to: http://bit.ly/1f5eQQX.

The Fleet Reserve Association and Excelsior College have an education partnership to bring special pricing to FRA members and their spouses for associate, bachelor and master degrees, as well as credit-bearing certificates. If you would like to schedule a complimentary pre-evaluation review, provide your unofficial military and civilian transcripts all in one e-mail to veterans@excelsior.edu or all in one fax to 518-608-8142; in your subject line, write FRA/Pre-eval Request. For more information, go to: http://bit.ly/1DK0z8f.
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Names in red indicate 50 year continuous members.
USS Arneb (AKA-56) cruise books from 1955–1959.
Antarctic/South Pole. Please Contact Jim Hyman, 860-445-6128 or 1320 Rt 12, Groton, CT 06340.
BU1/BUC Jack Feagan
I served with Jack in MCB-62 stationed in Gulf Port, Miss. We were together in Diego Garcia for eight months in 1972. Please contact BMCS Henry Winston, USN (Ret.) at 913 Englewood Dr., Chesapeake, VA 23320 or 757-436-3521.

HMC Gary Thomas
We were stationed together at US Naval Communications Station, Zamboales Province, Philippines 1964–1967. Please contact DTC Robert Wagner, USN (Ret.) at 9217 Via Colina, LA Mesa, CA 91941, rwagner2@cox.net or 619-589-1055.

All Looking For … notices must be submitted in writing. Members can submit requests via e-mail to Lauren@fra.org or in writing to FRA Looking For, 125 N. West St., Alexandria, VA 22314. Questions regarding reunion submissions should be directed to 1-800-FRA-1924, ext. 126.

USS Cabot (CVL-28)
October 9–13, 2015, Ocean City, MD.
Contact Ron Davis, Mystic, CT, 860-536-1835, cvl28rgd@hotmail.com

USS Henry L. Stimson (SSBN-655)
October 13–15, 2016, N. Charleston, SC. Contact Nick Nichols, 102 Greenhurst Ave., Summerville SC 29485, 843-452-3189, 655webmaster@ssbn655.org

USS Monticello (LSD-35)
October 22–25, 2015, Nashville, TN.
Contact Robert Behm, 3011 Dunn Road, Valley Springs, CA 95252, beamer@ussmonticello.com or www.ussmonticello.com

USS Persistent (MSO-491)
October 15–19, 2015, Branson, MO.
Contact Nelson Arroyo, 619 Highlander Ave., Placentia, CA 92870, 714-524-1747. neloyo@aol.com

USS Ranger (CVA/CV-61)
September 3-6, 2015, Foster City, CA.
Contact George Meoli, 1740 Durham Road, Guilford, CT 06437, 203-524-4279, uss.ranger@yahoo.com

USS Ulysses S. Grant (SSBN-631)
November 1–5, 2015, San Diego, CA.
Contact Ruth Jordan, 936-581-4810, oceangirl200@sbcglobal.net

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.

Reunions are a Great Recruiting Opportunity!

IF YOU'RE HOSTING OR attending a reunion, please consider how many prospective FRA members will also be there! FRA has published a prospective member brochure with an information request form. You can easily talk through benefits of membership with the prospect using this brochure and offer NewsBytes or one of the FRA guides, provided by filling out the information card.

These work great for one-to-one conversations with someone who you know is eligible for membership (at least one day of enlisted service in the Navy, Marine Corps or Coast Guard). You can request these brochures or other items for your reunion from Penny Collins at 1-800-372-1924 (ext. 123) or penny@fra.org. Reunions are great places to recruit. If you’d like additional information or ideas for your reunion, please contact Penny!
BRANCH 115 LEHIGH VALLEY, PENN.
Shipmate William Nixon (at podium) and Branch President David Sharp (2nd from right) present awards and checks to our essay contest winners on Memorial Day. Elise Devlin (black dress) was the 2nd place NE/NENG Regional winner and Nicholas Braughton (wearing USA tie) was awarded 1st place from Branch 115. Winners are shown with their proud parents. Secretary Don Bear, shipmates Jeff Chewning and Ron Adams (who is also President of New Jersey Purple Hearts) are on right side.

MAL
PRPSW Agustive Hermes Jr. presents MAL Shipmate Ronald G. Stinebiser with his 50-year continuous membership certificate, pin and card at Poway Branch 070's general meeting July 1, 2015.

BRANCH 124 LAKEHURST, N.J.
This wedding photo features three generations of FRA branch 124. Pictured (l to r) are groom John Scilla (FRA Club 124 associate), mother of the bride Janice Engel (LAFRA and Club 124 manager), stepfather S/M Vernon McLaughlin, son of the bride S/M MA3M Lance Smith, and bride Lee Ann Scilla (FRA Club 124 associate).

BRANCH 42 QUONSET POINT, R.I.
Branch members help Shipmate William Grimshaw celebrate his 102nd birthday in early May. Shipmate Bill was a Seabee during WWII, and participated in the invasion of Saipan in June of 1944.

BRANCH 171 SOUTHERN LUZON, P.I.
Shipmate Paul Cabasug received four citations for exemplifying the FRA cardinal virtues of Loyalty, Protection and Service. Pictured (l to r) are Branch Secretary Viviano Cruz, Branch President Chon Quevado, Branch Vice President Romeo Manalo, and Shipmate Cabasug. Bravo Zulu, Shipmate Cabasug!
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 South Central Regional President Pauline Wampler

HOWDY FROM THE SOUTH Central Region of the Ladies Auxiliary of the Fleet Reserve Association!

The South Central Region has been very busy with fund raisers for the Wounded Warrior Program, Homeless Veterans, Veterans with Disabilities and numerous other programs. It is great to see the community working together on these endeavors. Members assist in their communities helping to provide transportation for doctor visits, chemotherapy appointments, meetings and other errands as requested.

Traveling to the units has been a highlight of my term of office. The diversity of each group is amazing! Thank you to all who put out their welcome mats. Learning of the ideas and projects being initiated in our units is most enlightening and helpful. Kudos to all the South Central Units. I also attended my first, but not last, Pilgrimage in Washington, D.C. It was awe inspiring to participate in this amazing event.

Membership continues to be the number one priority. Sharing of thoughts and ideas is a great tool in being successful for recruiting new members.

Thanks to all for the support during my year, I couldn’t have done it without you. The year has gone by swiftly and I look forward to working with the new regional president who was elected at our regional convention in August. Being the South Central Regional President and working with the units and shipmates has been an honor. Always remember to support our veterans.
ATTENTION: U.S. NAVY VETERANS
MESOTHELIOMA COMPENSATION CLAIMS FILING DEADLINE

U.S. Navy veterans have been exposed to asbestos onboard ships and many have developed mesothelioma lung cancer as a result. Millions of dollars in compensation are available for those who have been diagnosed with mesothelioma lung cancer and their loved ones. Thousands of US Navy veterans have already received compensation. Strict time deadlines may bar late claims. If you or a loved one has been diagnosed with mesothelioma then you need to call now for a free consultation and Claims Information & Evaluation Package.

CALL NOW TOLL FREE!
1-888-310-2138
NAVY VETERANS MESOTHELIOMA CLAIMS HOTLINE

Sponsored by Quinn Law Firm. Nationwide representation of US NAVY Veterans and their families in mesothelioma claims. In home appointments are available nationwide by appointment only. Fees, costs, and expenses are charged only against any recovery that is made. No recovery – no fee. We do not sue the U.S. or Navy. Principal office Fort Worth, TX
MESOTHELIOMA
ASBESTOS LUNG CANCER
AND RETIRED SAILORS

Many sailors were exposed to asbestos onboard ships in the U.S. Navy. This asbestos exposure often causes lung cancer much later in life. Mesothelioma is a particular form of lung cancer that is only caused by exposure to asbestos.

FREE INITIAL LEGAL CONSULTATION
If you or a loved one has been diagnosed with MESOTHELIOMA OR ASBESTOS LUNG CANCER, please call us immediately to find out about the compensation you may be entitled to recover.
We provide retired sailors and their families with a free no obligation initial legal consultation with an experienced lawyer. We represent clients from all 50 states.

NO RISK TO CLIENTS
Our clients are never at risk of paying any fees, costs or expenses out of pocket. All legal fees, court costs and other expenses are paid by the client only out of any judgment or settlement in the case.

DON’T loose your Rights!
Your legal claims must be filed within the time period allowed by law or you and your family members will lose all of your rights to recover against the corporations that are responsible for your injuries. CALL NOW!

The Johnson Law Firm
CALL NOW! 1-888-MESO-HELP TOLL FREE
1-888-637-6435

"Nationwide Legal Help"
"Nationwide legal representation of mesothelioma and lung cancer victims"
In home and local appointments available nationwide by appointment only. Principal office Fort Worth, TX.
* Past successes cannot be an assurance of future successes since each case is decided on its own merits.