

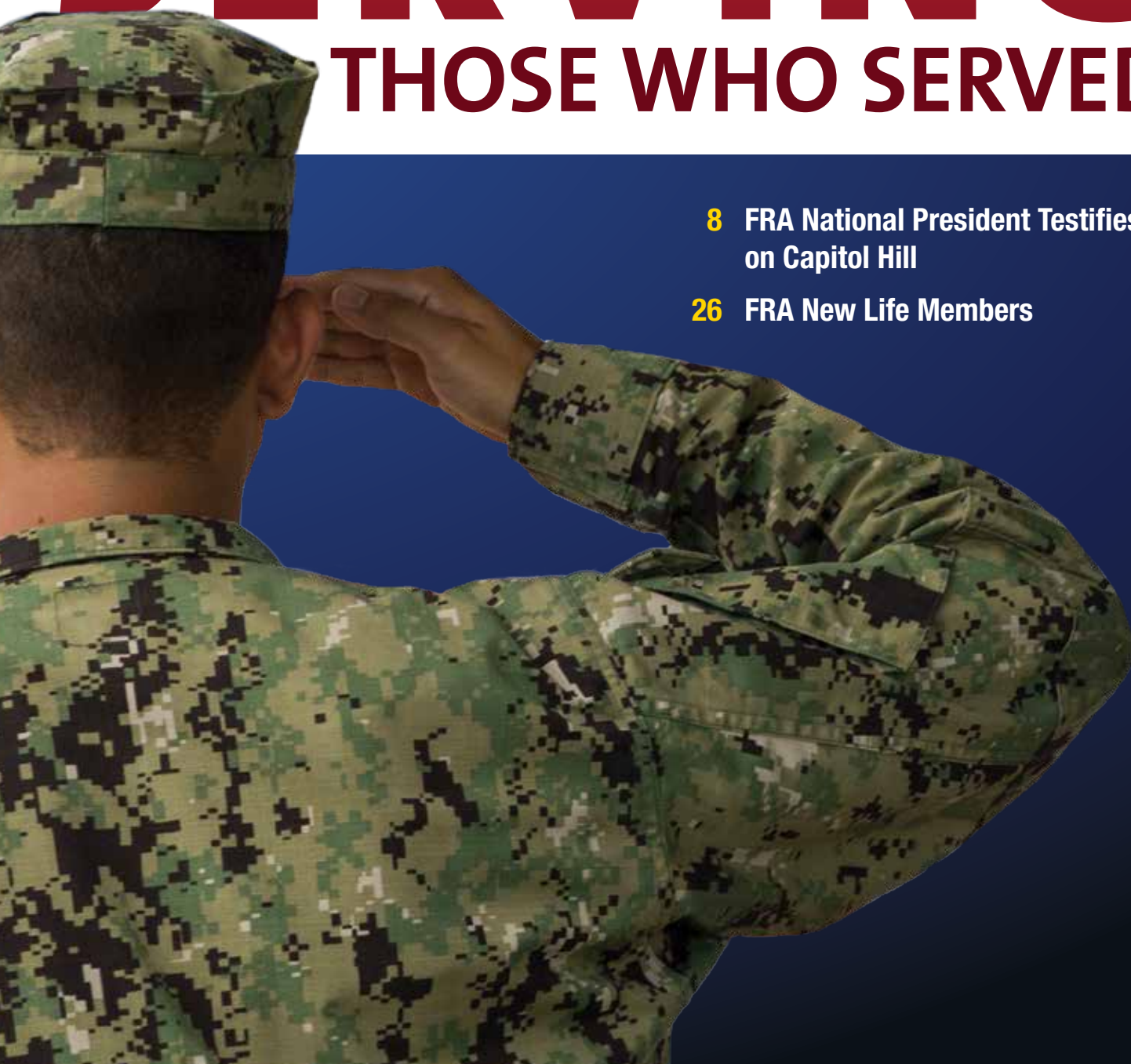
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FRA *today*

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26 FRA New Life Members



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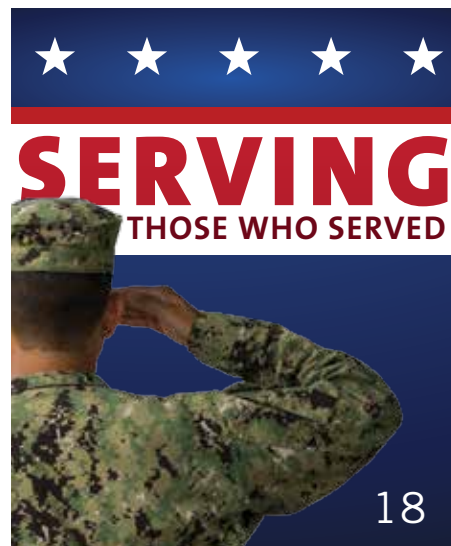
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ON THE COVER

Whether you're currently wearing a military uniform or wore one many years ago, the Department of Labor's VETS program is designed to help you prepare for and find civilian employment.



Lauren Armstrong

I HOPE ALL SHIPMATES are enjoying the mailing labels they received with the April issue of *FRA Today*. The labels are FRA's way of thanking you for being a loyal member and supporting the Association's legislative efforts. Generous donations have already begun to arrive at FRA Headquarters and these gifts will strengthen our efforts on Capitol Hill on behalf of our members. Thank you!

I've received a few calls and letters from members who are disappointed that the labels don't accurately reflect their personal information. I sincerely apologize and regret that we do not have the capability to print new, corrected labels ... at least not until next year's April issue of the magazine. I invite all readers to carefully check the mailing label on the back of this issue of *FRA Today*. The information for the labels comes directly from our membership database and appears on the back cover of this magazine as it will appear on your mailing labels next time. If your name, address, rank/rate or status as a retiree is incorrect, please contact a representative in our Member Service Department today so that we can correct the information in our database. You can call 1-800-FRA-1924 (1-800-372-1924) or you can change your profile information yourself by logging into your account at www.fra.org.

FRA's motto is "Loyalty, Protection and Service" and the staff at your National Headquarters is committed to providing the best possible service to our members. We endeavor to respond to all requests for information, materials or other member-related services as quickly and as professionally as possible, but we aren't mind-readers. We can't address your concerns or problems if we don't know they exist. As I mentioned in last month's Communications column, constructively sharing your concerns often leads to changes and improvements that benefit all shipmates.

It's a team effort and it's an honor and privilege to serve on the FRA team.

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



**Remember
Memorial Day**
May 30, 2016

FRAtoday

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VOLUME 95 NUMBER 5



“A date which will live in infamy.”

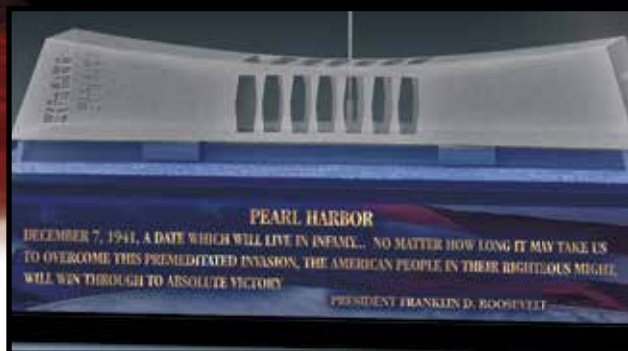
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Memorial Day, a “Decoration Day” of Respect

TEDDY ROOSEVELT ONCE SAID, “No man is worth his salt that is not ready at all times to risk his well-being, to risk his body, to risk his life, in a great cause.”

Memorial Day accentuates that very inner fire of the American service member. Though originally called Decoration Day, it is a day of remembrance for those who have passed on in the service of their country. Over two dozen cities and towns claim to be the birthplace of Memorial Day and, while Waterloo, N.Y., was officially declared the birthplace of Memorial Day by President Lyndon Johnson in 1966, it's difficult to prove conclusively the origins of the holiday.

Regardless of the exact date or location of its origins, one thing is clear—Memorial Day was born out of the Civil War and a desire to honor our fallen warriors. It was officially proclaimed on May 5, 1868, by General John Logan, commander of the Grand Army of the Republic, in his General Order No. 11. “The 30th of May, 1868, is designated for the purpose of strewing with flowers or otherwise decorating the graves of comrades who died in defense of their country during the late rebellion, and whose bodies now lie in almost every city, village and hamlet churchyard in the land,” he proclaimed. The date was chosen because it wasn't the anniversary of any particular battle.

On the first Decoration Day, General James Garfield (who later became the 20th President of the United States) made a speech at Arlington National Cemetery, and 5,000 participants decorated the graves of more than 20,000 Union and Confederate soldiers who were buried there.

The first state to officially recognize the holiday was New York in 1873, and by 1890, it was recognized by all of the northern states. The south refused to acknowledge the day, honoring their dead on separate days until after World War I, when the holiday changed from honoring just those

Offering a genuine
“Thanks for your
service” is the least we
can do for all who've
served, but particularly
for the one percent of
our population that's
currently in uniform.

who died fighting in the Civil War to honoring Americans who died fighting in any war.

It is now observed in almost every state on the last Monday in May with congressional passage of the National Holiday Act of 1971. Several southern states have an additional separate day for honoring the Confederate war dead: January 19 in Texas; April 26 in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, and Mississippi; and May 10 in South Carolina.

This year, 2016, has a special significance because it marks some important milestones of service. On



Tom Snee

March 29 of this year, I was honored to represent FRA and the Navy at a special 50-year remembrance event to mark the start of the Vietnam War. The Vietnam War, though very unpopular with the American people, demonstrated the very fiber of our nation's military. On September 11, 2016, we'll mark the 15th anniversary of the 2001 terrorist attacks on our soil and, on December 7, 2016, we will observe the 75th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor. These events were turning points in our nation's history and the sacrifices made by service members and civilians should absolutely be remembered.

This Memorial Day, as we gather at picnics and family celebrations at the beginning of summer, we need to also acknowledge the commitment and daily sacrifice of all current and former service members. Recognition of these valiant soldiers, sailors, Marines, airmen, and Coast Guard personnel should not be taken lightly. Offering a genuine “Thanks for your service” is the least we can do for all who've served, but particularly for the one percent of our population that's currently in uniform.

Shipmates, in addition to acknowledging those who serve or have served, we must also stay true to our mission of protecting the benefits we have all — past, present and future service members — rightfully earned. Place a flower or wreath, salute, or give a pat on the back, but make a personal promise to honor our service men and women and veterans in Loyalty, Protection and Service. Thank you *ALL* for your time, diligence and perseverance. *PRESS ON!*

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

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How Well Did You Sleep Last Night?

Did you toss and turn all night? Did you wake up with a sore neck, head ache, or was your arm asleep? Do you feel like you need a nap even though you slept for eight hours? Just like you, I would wake up in the morning with all of those problems and I couldn't figure out why. Like many people who have trouble getting a good night's sleep, my lack of sleep was affecting the quality of my life. I wanted to do something about my sleep problems, but nothing that I tried worked.

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Mike Lindell
Inventor & CEO
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Lindell has been featured on numerous talk shows, including *Fox Business News* and *Imus in the Morning*. Lindell and MyPillow have also appeared in feature stories in major magazines and newspapers across the country. MyPillow has received the coveted "Q Star Award" for *Product Concept of the Year* from QVC, and has been selected as the Official Pillow of the National Sleep Foundation.

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Michael J. Lindell



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Shipmate Reading Room

I have been intending to send you this message for almost three years now and finally I'm doing it! In the August 2013 issue of *FRA Today*, you recommended a book called *Shadow Divers*. I recognized it right away, since I'd read the book and still have it. You were right; it's a good read.

I'm going to recommend two additional books for you to consider reading and perhaps you will think they are worth passing on to the FRA readership. Both are about the October 25, 1944, battle off the island of Samar in the Philippines. *The Last Stand of the Tin Can Sailors*, by James D. Hornfischer, is an overview of all the Naval vessels involved in the battle. *For Crew and Country*, by John Wukovits, zeros in on the USS *Samuel B. Roberts*, a destroyer escort that happens to be the only destroyer escort out of 563 that was sunk during WWII. To me these two books give the best description I have read about the horror of surface action at sea and the sacrifices made by young men fighting for freedom, their country and each other.

There is a special Memorial to the ships of Taffy 3 at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery on Pt. Loma in San Diego. I visited it last year when I was in San Diego for a ship reunion. This is truly hallowed ground.

Roger Pryor

FRA Response: *We'll do you one better, shipmate. We'll let you recommend the books. Thanks for your suggested reads!*

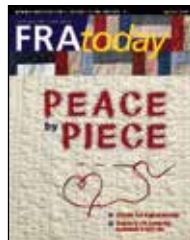
Kudos for Quilts of Valor Foundation

Thanks for including me in your November 2015 article on USMC boot camp. I have shared it with no fewer than 200 family members, friends, colleagues, and total strangers. I'm modest like that.

Coincidentally, a week or so after receiving my March issue [that featured the story about the Quilts of Valor Foundation (QOVF)], I was honored to receive a Quilt Of Valor from QOVF members Jeff and Kathy Thorne of Boyds, Md. What a remarkable organization! I read your great article a couple of times and feel like I could make a quilt now because it was so informative.

Thanks for all you do.

George Kesselring



I enjoyed your article on the Quilts of Valor Foundation. My late husband Tom was presented a Quilt at our church. He was the only one who served more than one or two tours of duty and, when filling out the information, he was in "several" wars during his 27 years in the U.S. Navy. Thanks for the good work.

FRA Auxiliary PNP Carolyn Whitaker

Thank you so much for the article on Quilts of Valor. I saw it last night and immediately read it and sent it on to our QOVF area coordinator, Diane Watters.

My husband Ray and our grandson Brandon each received a QOV a couple years ago. I sewed on both of them and they thought the other was the recipient.

Ray served 28 years on submarines, including the USS Triton, USS Plunger, USS George Washington Carver (with his father as COB), USS Seadragon and USS Shark.

Our grandson served in the Marines — two tours in Afghanistan.

We have an active group of volunteers in eastern Washington and I have also had the privilege of presenting several QOVs to WWII Veterans. One response was, "That's a dandy." We have also had middle school and high school groups sew Quilts of Valor.

Thanks again for your excellent article. My husband just read it and said it was the best he'd ever read.

Donna Kuhn



Ray Kuhn (in vest) and his grandson Brandon were both honored with a Quilt of Valor, made by wife and grandmother Donna, proudly standing between them.

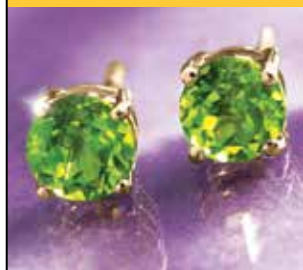
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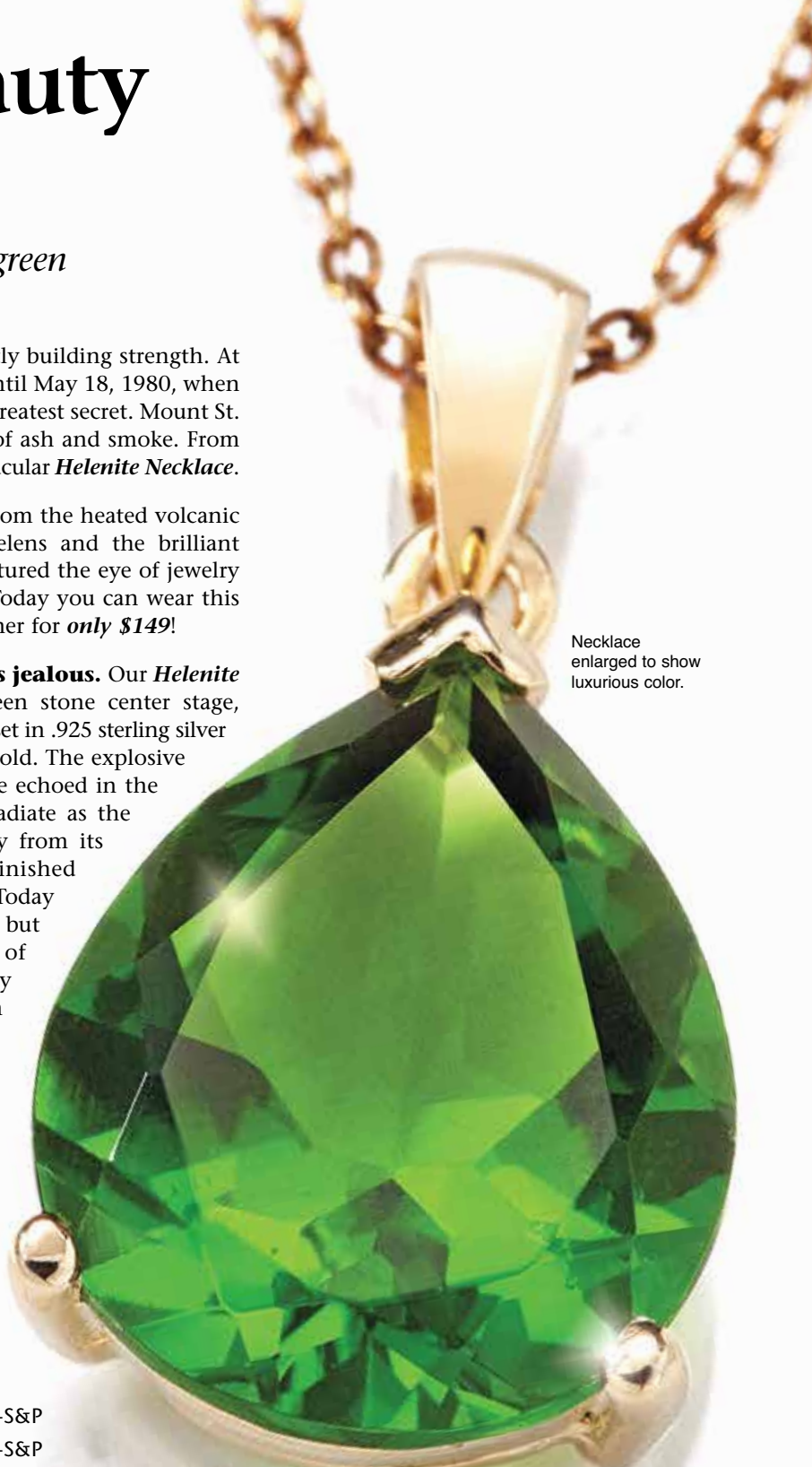
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Contacting Your Legislators is a Cornerstone of Democracy!

THROUGHOUT 2015, FRA MEMBERS used the FRA Action Center to contact their legislators in record numbers. Over the course of the year, this user-friendly website generated almost 75,000 messages to Capitol Hill. Shipmates need to be aware of important legislative activity as the FY 2017 Defense Authorization and other key bills and their impact on military benefits as they move through the legislative process. Many of these legislative proposals could have a significant impact on a Shipmate's pocketbook and quality of life.



John Davis

Members are urged to subscribe to *NewsBytes*, FRA's weekly electronic legislative newsletter to learn more about legislative initiatives that impact them, and check out the FRA Action Center at action.fra.org/action-center to weigh in on these important issues. Letting your elected officials know you are watching their votes on critical legislation is the cornerstone of a functioning democracy.

VETERANS ISSUES

FRA National President Meets with VA Secretary

On Monday, March 21, FRA's NP Virgil Courneya, National Executive Director (NED) Tom Snee and National Service Director (NSD) Chris Slawinski met with Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Bob McDonald to discuss veterans' issues of importance to FRA's membership. Concerns discussed were:

- The backlog in VA appeals and how VA is responding;
- Homeless veterans and the new VA initiatives to eliminate homelessness;
- Agent Orange/Blue Water Navy issues;
- Choice program billings stepped up to ensure that veterans are not paying more than they should; and
- Veterans ID Cards (not Choice Cards) that will allow veterans to take advantage of special discounts at the many stores and services based upon time in service.

At the conclusion of the meeting, FRA invited Secretary McDonald to speak at the FRA National Convention in Jacksonville, Fla., in October.

FRA National President Testifies on Capitol Hill

FRA National President (NP) Virgil Courneya testified before a joint hearing of the House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committees on Wednesday, March 16. Courneya was the first person to testify in a panel of nine witnesses from other Military and Veteran Service Organizations, asking Congress to pass legislation (S. 681/H.R. 969) to expand the definition of presumed exposure to Agent Orange for Vietnam veterans who served off the coast of Vietnam. The NP reminded Senate Veterans Affairs Committee (SVAC) Chairman Johnny Isakson (Ga.) of his pledge to have a committee vote on the Agent Orange/Blue Water Navy bill (S. 681). Residents of Georgia are urged to call Senator Isakson's office (202-224-3643) to ask him to honor his pledge to have a committee vote on the Senate bill.

Courneya's testimony also called for Congress to enact legislation to reduce the large backlog of disability claims appeals at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and provide critical oversight for the Veterans Choice program that increases veterans' access to non-VA care. Courneya asked that the VA Caregiver program be expanded to include those who care for all catastrophically disabled veterans; not just those caring for veterans who were disabled after September 11, 2001, as the current program mandates.

NP Courneya's written testimony cited other issues, such as full concurrent receipt of military retired pay and VA disability benefits for all disabled military retirees, expanded suicide prevention programs, enhanced VA programs for women, and reform of the Uniform Services Former Spouse Protection Act (USFSPA). A copy of the written testimony is available on the FRA website, and members can view NP Courneya's testimony on the SVAC website at: www.veterans.senate.gov/hearings/joint-svac/hvac-hearing-multiple-vsos-03162016.



FRA National President Virgil Courneya (left) testifies before a joint hearing of the House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committee on March 16, 2016. (FRA photo by Chris Slawinski).

VETERANS ISSUES

FRA NED Participates in VA/DoD Commemoration to Honor Vietnam Veterans

FRA National Executive Director (NED) Thomas J. Snee participated in a wreath-laying ceremony at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial ("The Wall") in Washington, D.C. on Tuesday, March 29. He was recognized by Defense Secretary Ashton Carter and VA Secretary Robert McDonald.

Authorized by Congress and established under the Secretary of Defense, the 2016 Vietnam War Commemoration recognizes all men and women who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces from November 1, 1955, to May 15, 1975. Nine million Americans, approximately 7 million living today, served during that period, and the Commemoration makes no distinction between veterans who served in-country, in-theater, or who were stationed elsewhere during those 20 years. All answered the call of duty.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), along with many more organizations from across the country, joined with the Department of Defense (DoD) as a commemorative partner to help Americans honor our nation's Vietnam Veterans. The VA conducted events in more than 329 VA medical centers, regional benefit offices and national cemeteries, many in partnership with local Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs).

To see pictures of event at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall, including photos of NED Thomas Snee with DoD Secretary Ashton Carter, go to: www.hultonarchive.com/detail/news-photo/member-of-a-joint-services-honor-guard-stands-by-a-wreath-news-photo/517983542.



Secretary of Defense Ash Carter presents a commemorative pin to FRA NED Tom Snee, a Vietnam veteran, after a wreath laying ceremony to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War. The ceremony took place at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial on Vietnam Veterans Day (March 29, 2016). FRA photo by Chris Slawinski

Agent Orange Blue Water Litigation and IOM Final Report

Oral arguments were heard in the case of Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Association v. Robert A. McDonald in the Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit on March 10. John Wells, FRA member and attorney for the Blue Water Vietnam Veterans Association, argued the federal district court has the ability to review the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) actions under the Administrative Procedures Act. The three panel judges will make a ruling in approximately three months. During the trial, both the attorney and one of the judges pointed out that if Congress passes the Agent Orange Blue Water Acts (H.R. 969 and S.681) and if it becomes law, any ruling by the court would no longer be relevant. FRA continues to seek a legislative remedy so that "Blue Water" Vietnam veterans (those who served off the coast of Vietnam and did not have "boots on the ground") who have health problems commonly associated with Agent Orange herbicide exposure will be eligible for service-related VA medical and disability benefits.

In related events, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) Agent Orange committee released its final report on veterans and Agent Orange. This congressionally-mandated report is the tenth biennial update and there are a few changes to the presumption category. The committee determined that there is a stronger connection than previously thought between bladder cancer and hypothyroidism to exposure of Agent Orange. It has been recommended that Parkinson's-like symptoms be added to the service-connected list and spina bifida be removed from the presumptive list.

HVAC Subcommittee Reviews VA Choice Program

The House Veterans Affairs Committee's Health Subcommittee held an oversight hearing on the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) implementation of the FRA-supported Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act (VA Choice program), which was enacted into law in 2014. This Act provides for non-VA care for veterans who live 40 or more miles from a VA facility or have been experiencing wait times for care of more than 30 days.

Subcommittee Chairman Congressman Dan Benishek (Mich.) stated in his opening comments that, "Our veterans have earned their health care benefits, in many cases through blood, sweat and tears." He stated that the subcommittee wants to ensure that the Choice program will work better and faster for veterans. Representatives from TriWest and Health Net Federal Services provided testimony claiming that since the enactment of the VA Choice program, their companies have handled millions of phone calls and made hundreds of thousands of referrals to community providers.

Dr. Baligh Yehia, VA Assistant Deputy Undersecretary, spoke about improvements that have been made in billing and how, in some cases, a veteran can have more options than the average health care plan due to the integration of the VA system and community care. Unfortunately, there are still processes that need improvement.

Subcommittee member Congressman Phil Roe (Tenn.) said, "They have made the easiest thing unnecessarily complicated," referring to some cases where the VA's bureaucracy acts as a "middle man" when a veteran just wants to schedule an appointment to be seen. It may be years before the Choice program works as efficiently as intended, but there was a general consensus at the hearing that it is heading in the right direction. FRA welcomes congressional oversight and sees this program as a permanent part of VA. Outsourced care has been available for many years, but has not been well planned or coordinated by the VA.

VETERANS ISSUES

Quicker Benefits for Veterans

The "Quicker Veterans Benefits Delivery Act" (H.R. 1331 and S. 666) has been introduced by Rep. Tim Walz (Minn.) and Senator Al Franken (Minn.) in the House and the Senate respectively. The bill requires (current law allows) the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to accept, for purposes of establishing a claim for veterans disability benefits, a report from a medical examination administered by a private physician. If the report is sufficiently complete, it no longer requires confirmation by a Veterans Health Administration (VHA) physician.

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

Subcommittee Approves FY 2017 MilCon/VA Spending Bill

The House Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs (MilCon/VA) approved the FY 2017 MilCon/VA appropriations bill, which sets funding levels for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Department of Defense (DoD) military construction programs. The still unnumbered bill increases VA funding by three percent over the current FY 2016 VA budget and includes resources to improve VA's medical services, disability claims process and oversight. The bill also includes \$170.3 billion in advance appropriations for FY 2018. FRA will continue to monitor this legislation to help ensure adequate funding for the VA.

VA Health Care Enrollment for Post 9/11 Combat Veterans Available by Phone

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) recently announced that post-9/11 combat veterans are now able to complete their VA health care enrollment applications by calling VA's Health Eligibility Center (1-855-488-8440), without the need for a signed paper application. VA plans to expand this option to all veterans by July 5, 2016. This change increases the ways veterans can enroll in VA health care. However, veterans can continue to enroll by submitting paper copies of VA form 10-10EZ, or enroll online at: www.1010ez.med.va.gov.

VA Community Care Call Center to Help Veterans with Choice Program Billing Issues

Veterans can now work directly with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to resolve debt collection issues resulting from inappropriate or delayed Choice Program billing. In step with MyVA's efforts to modernize VA's customer-focused, veteran-centered services capabilities, a Community Care Call Center has been set up for veterans experiencing adverse credit reporting or debt collection resulting from inappropriately billed Choice Program claims. Veterans experiencing these problems can call 1-877-881-7618 for assistance.

The new call center will work to resolve instances of improper veteran billing and assist community care medical providers with delayed payments. VA staff is also trained and ready to work with the medical providers to expunge adverse credit reporting on veterans resulting from delayed payments to providers. VA is urging veterans to continue working with their VA primary care team to obtain necessary health care services, regardless of adverse credit reporting or debt collection activity.

For more details about the Veterans Choice Program and VA's progress, visit: www.va.gov/opa/choiceact. Veterans seeking to use the Veterans Choice Program can call 1-866-606-8198 to find out more about the program, confirm their eligibility and schedule an appointment.

VA Failed to Contact Veterans with Pending Health Care Applications

The VA recently confirmed that it failed to contact tens of thousands of the more than 800,000 veterans who have applications for health care pending, nearly 300,000 of whom died before getting a resolution. VA is required by law to notify veterans of incomplete applications, but could not verify that this had been done in the cases of 545,000 living veterans and 288,000 deceased veterans with pending claims. It remains unclear whether the veterans and their families will qualify for compensation. The findings are from the VA report that concurs with an Office of Inspector General (OIG) report released more than six months ago. This was among the many issues raised by FRA NP Courneya when he FRA raised this issue when he testified before a joint hearing of the House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committees on March 16, 2016.

Scott Davis, a VA program manager and the whistleblower who first reported the problem of pending applications, said most of them were erroneously marked as incomplete because they called for an income test or were missing a military service record called DD214, which the VA specifically told applicants not to include. "When we've done reviews before, we have found that a high (number) of these incompletes were because of mistakes made by the VA, not the veteran," said Davis, who was assigned to the enrollment office with an inside view of the process.

Davis urged the VA to enroll veterans on the pending list who qualify and said the department is delaying because it could be forced to pay hundreds of millions of dollars in compensation to veterans who were wrongly deprived of care. "It's not because it can't work, it's because they don't want it to because it's going to cost a lot of money," Davis said.

Rep. Jeff Miller (Fla.), chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, said the VA now must now look to discipline senior leaders responsible for the breakdown in the enrollment system. "While I'm glad VA is finally doing something to address this problem, I'm baffled as to why it took the department so long to acknowledge it," Miller said in a prepared release.

In response, the VA issued a statement indicating it will "extend the healthcare enrollment application for one year" to 545,000 veterans who have applied for VA health care to allow time for VA to contact them and for the veterans to furnish the required information. By law, the VA must notify applicants with incomplete applications, and if the veteran receives the notice but does not provide the information, the department closes the request.

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ACTIVE DUTY/RESERVE ISSUES

Extension of Foreclosure Safeguard Act Sent to President to Sign

President Obama recently signed the "Foreclosure Relief and Extension for Servicemembers Act" (S. 2393) into law. The new legislation extends the foreclosure safeguard provision of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA) through December 31, 2017. As part of the bill, eligible veterans are now protected from any sale, foreclosure, or seizure of their property without a court order or waiver agreement signed by the service member for a one-year period after their active military service. FRA works to ensure that SCRA is enforced by regulatory agencies and that active duty personnel are protected from predatory lenders.



Upon passage of the bill in the House, Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs Committee, Rep. Jeff Miller (Fla.) stated "Those who volunteer for active-duty military service shouldn't have to worry about financial hardships at home. This bipartisan bill will help provide that peace of mind by giving returning troops a year to get themselves onto steady financial footing following active-duty service, while keeping their property safeguarded from foreclosure."

MCPON Shares Sailors' Anxiety About Retirement

Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (MCPON) Mike Stevens recently completed an 11-day East Coast fleet stopover, where he visited 16 different Navy installations. He stated he is sensing a lot of anxiety about changes to the military retirement system and smaller-than-expected annual pay increases for the sailors in the fleet. In March, Stevens testified before a House subcommittee, stating that low pay and benefit cuts "create a level of anxiety that's not healthy for the force." In response to sailors' concerns, the new retirement law mandates that the Department of Defense (DoD) provide financial literacy training.

During the fleet stopover, Stevens announced his own plans to retire from the Navy in September. He became the 13th Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy on September 28, 2012. The position of MCPON was created by legislation in 1966 that was strongly supported by FRA. MCPON is the senior enlisted member of the U.S. Navy and is appointed by the CNO to serve as an advisor to the highest positions in the Navy on issues impacting enlisted personnel.

HASC Reviews the Administration's FY 2017 Defense Budget

The House Armed Services Committee (HASC) held a hearing on March 22 to review the Defense Authorization Request for FY 2017 and future years' Defense spending. Witnesses included Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter, Undersecretary of Defense (Comptroller) and Chief Financial Officer Michael McCord, and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Joseph Dunford.

In the wake of the terrorist attacks in Brussels, Belgium, HASC Chairman Mac Thornberry (Tex.) raised the issue of military readiness. Thornberry said that the "U.S. faces a wide range of serious threats, more than at any time in our history. Currently-serving senior commanders have stated that the military is currently minimally adequate. Service members have stated that they are cannibalizing boneyard and museum aircraft in order to get a current aircraft ready to fly an overseas mission. Service members aren't getting the minimal training required. They are also buying basic supplies such as pens and paper towels with their own money, because if they don't, it'll take three or four months to arrive."

FRA provided the Committee with a statement-for-the-record on pay and benefit issues in the FY 2017 Defense budget request. The FRA statement stresses the need to remove Defense spending from mandatory budget cuts (sequestration) and opposes the Administration's request for large increases to TRICARE fees and pharmacy co-pays. In addition, the statement asks for concurrent receipt reform, repeal of the Survivor Benefit Program/Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (SBP/DIC) offset for military widows/widowers, maintaining the commissary benefit, and an adequate increase in active duty pay. A copy of the statement is available on the FRA website at www.fra.org/testimony



Have a BIG TIME in Jacksonville!!

Shipmates and Auxiliary members are gearing up for our national conventions, scheduled for October 11–16th.

The Lexington Hotel and Conference Center (1515 Prudential Drive, Jacksonville, FL) has reserved a block of room at a special rate of \$89 (plus tax) per night, which includes two hot breakfasts per double-occupancy room.

Call 904-396-5100 to make hotel reservations. (Be sure to mention the group code "Fleet Reserve" when making your reservations.)

Visit www.fra.org/nc2016 or more information. Plan now to be part of the fun!

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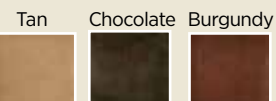
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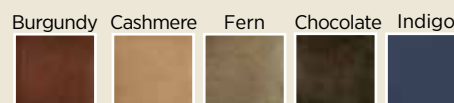
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FRA NEEDS YOU!!

FRA is looking for volunteers to represent their fellow shipmates on one of FRA's national standing committees. Shipmates will be considered to fill openings on the following committees for the 2016–2017 Association Year:

- Americanism-Patriotism
- Budget and Finance
- Constitution, Bylaws and Resolutions
- Future Planning
- Hospitals, Welfare and Rehabilitation
- Legislative Service;
- Membership and Retention
- Public Relations Committee
- Youth Activities Committee

Interested shipmates should contact National Vice President Don Larson at (361) 548-8919 or dla9397195@aol.com.



RETIREE ISSUES

Sub Chairman Opposes Delay in Matching Retirement Benefits and Small Pay Increase

FRA staff (ADVP Brian Condon and DLP John Davis) attended a hearing of the Senate Armed Services' Personnel Subcommittee (SASC-P) on the Defense Department (DoD) FY 2017 authorization request. Subcommittee Chairman Lindsey Graham (S.C.) expressed disappointment that DoD proposed additional changes to military retirement only one year after Congress enacted a major overhaul of the military retirement system. Last year, lawmakers created a "blended" retirement system, which is mandated for all service members who join the military after January 1, 2018, and is optional for current service members who joined between January 1, 2006 and January 1, 2018.

Specifically, Chairman Graham took exception with the Pentagon request to delay matching funding for Thrift Saving Program (TSP) from after two years of service to after five years. "We (Subcommittee members) unanimously rejected that call last year and we will continue to reject requests from the Department of Defense that would delay government contributions until five years of service," Graham said.

Graham also said that a smaller pay raise for active duty personnel "misses the mark." At the hearing, Chief of Naval Personnel Vice Admiral William Moran said the smaller pay raise is needed to "achieve a proper balance of compensating the force with costs for training and equipping them." He also added that the change is not expected to hurt recruiting and retention.

FRA provided a written statement for the record that opposes the delay in matching retirement contributions and opposes the smaller pay increase for active duty and reservists. The statement is available on the FRA website (www.fra.org/testimony).

Access to TRICARE Patient Info

The Military Health System (MHS) wants recipients of military health care to know that when it comes to a TRICARE beneficiary's health, information is important. Doctors need information about patients' medical history and the need for information continues as long as patients need care. The Military Health System (MHS) is making it easier for beneficiaries and their providers to get the information they need, all from one resource—the Virtual Lifetime Electronic Record (VLER) Health Information Exchange (HIE) Initiative.

Access to patient information is important to all of a patient's providers, regardless of where the patient receives care. Through the MHS private and secure network, only authorized healthcare professionals will have access to patient information. The information exchanged is already part of beneficiaries' TRICARE benefit. If a recipient is on active duty, his or her information is already shared through VLER HIE.

Non-active duty beneficiaries can choose if they want to participate. If they don't want their information accessed by their doctors in VLER HIE, they can opt out. Once a beneficiary opts out, the MHS will not be able to share information, even in case of an emergency.

To opt out, you can go to www.TRICARE.mil, download and complete the VLER Opt-Out (In) Letter template, then mail it to the address provided on the letter. If you choose to opt out now and change your mind later, you may opt back in.

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 Brian Condon and National Veterans Service Director Chris Slawinski.



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Setting the Standard

AS WE BEGIN THE 2016–2017 recruiting year, all branches should set goals for membership and retention. This includes projecting how many new or previous members will be recruited and what methods will be used to retain current members. Believe it or not, this past year was a good year for recruiting, which accounted for 3,451 new or lapsed members joining the ranks of the FRA. Our recruiting incentive program, which provides a free membership for shipmates who recruit five or more members, brought in 1,132 of those new members! Of the Association's 212 branches, 48 had gains or no loss in membership during the past membership year, which is an increase over the 36 branches that met this criteria last year. Please see the list of growing branches below.

Our challenge continues to be our difficulty in retaining members, many of whom simply choose not to pay their dues for the coming year. "Nonpayment of dues" accounted for 4,869 members leaving the FRA, along with 1,366 who passed to the Staff of the Supreme Commander.

With these stats in mind, let's consider some of the ways we can rejuvenate the FRA membership.

On any given week, there are many planned outreach activities for military personnel and veterans in your community. Check your local papers for these types of events where you can participate and show your fellow veterans how FRA is relevant to their lives. Or even better, you can organize and host your own event. Be sure to advertise these events and other branch activities in the base and local newspapers. Normally, there is no charge to advertise and remember military and local newspapers are always looking for newsworthy information to

include in their pages. And don't forget digital news outlets. Many towns and cities host online community pages that highlight things going on in the local area.

Many sea service commands recognize outstanding performers during Navy Sailor of the Quarter/Year or Coast Guard Enlisted Person of the Quarter/Year events. These programs identify enlisted personnel who have done great things. Branches and individual shipmates can play a part by presenting certificates, plaques, or coins to the honorees. This brings highly positive visibility to the FRA and involvement helps boost retention.

Our Youth Activity program is an excellent way to capture the minds of young men and women participating in the Sea Cadets, NJROTC, or Young Marines. Acknowledge their participation and provide guidance when the opportunity arises. Youth sports and scouting programs are always in need of support from the community, including organizations like FRA. Think about supporting these programs through donations or providing mentorship for the participants.

Please don't forget to remind prospective and current members about branch meetings and activities. Communication builds interest and keeping members engaged is important to the sustainability of the FRA.

Penny Collins is FRA's Director of Membership Development and a member of FRA Branch 24 in Annapolis, Md. She can be reached at penny@fra.org.



Penny Collins

List of Growing Branches

Branch 24 – Annapolis, MD
 Branch 46 – Honolulu, HI
 Branch 181 – Arlington, VA
 Branch 103 – Yokosuka, Japan
 Branch 18 – Seattle, WA
 Branch 162 – New Orleans, LA
 Branch 268 – Oklahoma City, OK
 Branch 4 – Washington, DC
 Branch 137 – Minden, NV
 Branch 13 – Atlantic City, NJ
 Branch 334 – Osage, AR
 Branch 186 – Hernando, FL
 Branch 226 – Staten Island, NY
 Branch 382 – Boise, ID
 Branch 192 – Fallon, NV
 Branch 115 – Lehigh Valley, PA
 Branch 127 – Bicol Nabua, PI
 Branch 307 – Gulfport, MS
 Branch 104 – Puyallup, WA
 Branch 57 – South Jersey, NJ
 Branch 130 – Indianapolis, IN
 Branch 247 – Dagupan City, PI
 Branch 154 – Baguio City, PI
 Branch 292 – Lehigh Acres, FL
 Branch 112 – Birmingham, AL
 Branch 44 – Columbia, TN
 Branch 34 – Tallahassee, FL
 Branch 171 – Southern Luzon, PI
 Branch 257 – Portsmouth, VA
 Branch 250 – Sarasota, FL
 Branch 294 – Crossville, TN
 Branch 113 – Stockton, CA
 Branch 37 – Portsmouth, VA
 Branch 227 – Springdale, AR
 Branch 315 – Joplin, MO
 Branch 204 – Rocky Mount, NC
 Branch 278 – Huntsville, AL
 Branch 62 – San Diego, CA
 Branch 285 – Syracuse, NY
 Branch 274 – Reno, NV
 Branch 12 – Chicago, IL
 Branch 222 – Slidell, LA
 Branch 031 – Peabody, MA
 Branch 364 – Houston, TX
 Branch 283 – Elsmere, KY
 Branch 335 – Port Orange, FL
 Branch 377 – Terre Haute, IN
 Branch 242 – Davenport, IA

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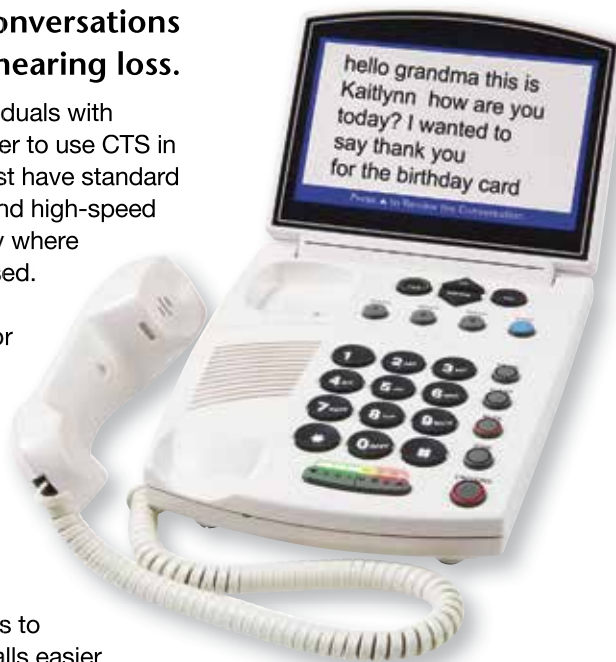
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Mike Michaud, the Department of Labor's assistant secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training, shares his perspective on providing our nation's heroes with the employment services they deserve.



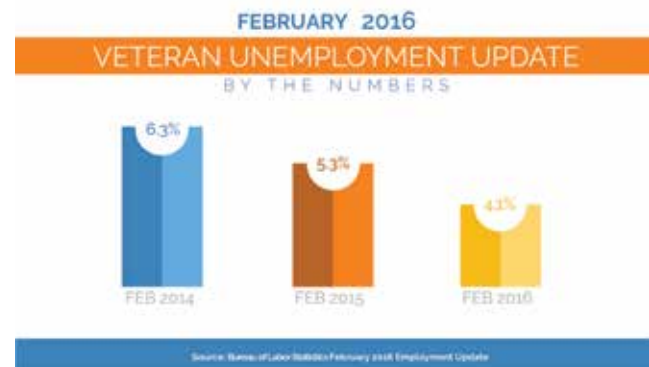
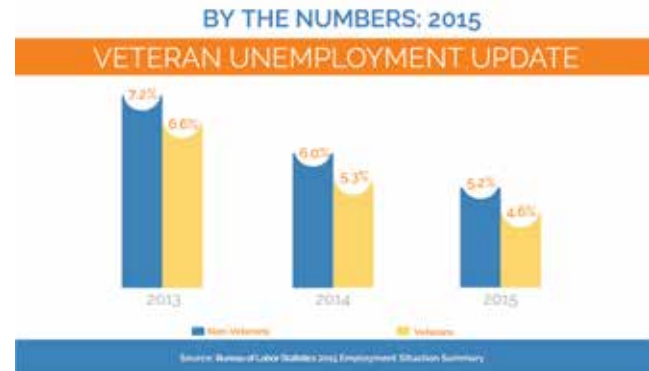
After 12 years in Congress, where I worked extremely hard to make sure that our nation took care of its veterans, I am honored to continue that work as the Assistant Secretary of the Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) within the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) — the federal government's leader on issues relating to veterans' employment. VETS' mission of assisting our veterans in finding good jobs also applies to uniformed service members, spouses and caregivers.

Throughout the past year, we recorded the lowest rates of veteran unemployment since 2007, and the overall employment picture continues to look positive for most veterans. But there is still much work to be done.

In the latest annual employment report on veteran employment released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), we saw an average unemployment rate of 4.6 percent for all veterans (2015). The report showed that among the approximately 495,000 unemployed veterans in 2015, 57 percent were age 45 and over. About 37 percent were age 24 to 44, and five percent were age 18 to 24, adding greater clarity to our understanding of generational impacts. The report also highlighted some key points:

- Among Gulf War-era II veterans, the unemployment rate for men was not statistically different from the rate for women in 2015, countering the perception that our recent women veterans face more severe employment challenges than their male veteran peers.
- The unemployment rate for male Gulf War II-era veterans (5.7 percent) was little different than the rate for male nonveterans (5.3 percent) in 2015, countering the argument that today's veterans are disadvantaged in employment because of their military service.

Each month we publish a veteran employment update in our *By The Numbers* online newsletter and we invite you to subscribe for free to stay current: <http://tinyurl.com/dol-gov-vets-newsletter>



Getting It Done

DOL's mission is to "foster, promote and develop the welfare of working people, to improve their working conditions, and to enhance their opportunities for profitable employment." VETS executes this mission for veterans through what I refer to as the four "P"s: we prepare, provide, protect, and promote veterans' employment.

VETS **P**repares separating service members to transition from the military to the civilian workforce and we **P**rovide separating service members and veterans with the crucial resources, expertise, and training they need to locate and obtain meaningful careers. Our staff helps **P**rotect the employment rights of women and men who serve this nation and VETS **P**romotes

veteran hiring and best practices to employers around the country.

We recognize the sacrifice through service that veterans have made while wearing the uniform and make it a top priority to help veterans find employment in the civilian world. With our recently launched employment website, www.veterans.gov, and programs like the Transition Assistance Program (TAP), VETS offers a variety of tools and resources that veterans, transitioning service members, and their families can use before, during, and after they have fulfilled their military service commitment.

VETS also recognizes the specific needs of veterans with special backgrounds and challenges. Our Homeless Veteran Reintegration Program (HVRP) and Women Veteran Program (WVP) are tailored to address employability gaps to make sure all veterans are equally served. VETS also works to ensure that veterans not only have the resources to find employment, but that they are protected from discrimination or retaliation in the civilian workforce by their employers based on their military service, as mandated in the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA.)

Finding Local Assistance

It is vitally important that each veteran understands what employers are looking for in the current civilian job market. Local American Job Centers (AJCs) nationwide are staffed with highly skilled professionals to help veterans understand both sides of the equation — the needs of the job seeker and the needs of employers. Nearly 2,500 AJCs offer employment services, programs and initiatives. Find your nearest AJC at <http://veterans.gov/>. VETS leverages these vast resources of the U.S. Department of Labor and its state workforce agency partners to provide free training, one-on-one job search assistance, educational resources, and even on-the-job training and Registered Apprenticeship programs. Our counselors provide one-on-one intensive services to meet the employment needs of disabled veterans and other eligible veterans facing significant barriers to employment. Working

americanjobcenter®
VETERANS EMPLOYMENT SERVICES GUIDE

Location	Nearly 2,500 local American Job Centers (AJC) nationwide	Online Phone	www.servicelocator.org 1-877-US2-JOBS
		Hashtags	#HireVETS #AJC

NEED HELP FINDING A JOB? WE'RE HERE TO HELP!

Whether you're looking for a civilian job similar to your military specialty, or you're ready for a new challenge, get started for FREE at your local AJC!

Explore Careers

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- Find salary information
- Discover employment trends
- Access online job finder

Resume Building

- Translate your military skills into a tailored civilian resume
- Post your resume online and get noticed by employers

Interview Skills

- One-on-one coaching
- FREE employment workshops
- Learn how to market yourself

Job Training

- Skill builder courses
- Schools, scholarship, and certification finder
- Find Registered Apprenticeship programs and on-the-job training

Find Local Help & Resources

Your local American Job Center is your source for career exploration, training, & jobs. Find FREE career tools, tips and best practices, scholarships, certification programs, and even entrepreneurship opportunities at nearly 2,500 AJCs nationwide.

HOW TO GET STARTED?

1. Log on to www.servicelocator.org or call 1-877-US2-JOBS to find your local AJC.
2. Make an appointment for one-on-one help, or explore your career options online.
3. Build your resume, grow your skills, and find your path to meaningful employment.
4. Start your new journey and career path with the right tools, skills, and support.

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www.dol.gov/vets | www.veterans.gov | www.servicelocator.org

with the AJCs, both veterans and employers can effectively navigate the hiring process from start to finish. All veterans receive priority of service for all employment and training programs funded directly by DOL.

VETS' grants also support local AJC staff who help conduct community outreach to employers across the country and engage in advocacy efforts with hiring executives to increase employment opportunities for veterans, encourage hiring of disabled veterans, and assist veterans in gaining and retaining employment. We are partnered with the White House and its Joining Forces initiative and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation's Hiring Our Heroes program to provide transitioning service members, veterans, and family members with the opportunities to connect to committed employers at hiring fairs on military installations and within local communities.

Women Veterans: Equally Served, Equally Valued

Our Women Veteran Program (WVP) was established in the fall of 2013 to bring a data-driven focus to the realities surrounding women veterans in the workplace. The WVP monitors the overlapping employment considerations of working women and working veterans through ongoing analysis. Findings are used for both internal policy recommendations and external education through stakeholder engagement. The WVP ensures that DOL employment services and resources are meeting the needs of women veterans and also serves in an advisory capacity to its partner agencies and organizations.

While women veterans comprise 10 percent of the veteran population, they only make up two percent of all working women in America. They are minorities of both the veteran population and the working-women population. Overall as a population, women veterans are more likely to be college-educated and more likely to be in the civilian labor force than male veterans. However, women are still more likely than men to be concentrated in low-wage occupations, to earn

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

minimum wage, and experience poverty — risks that do not discriminate by veteran status. Additionally, women veterans experience the same transition challenges as male veterans. Because of all this, VETS makes it a top priority to ensure its employment services are meeting the needs of women veterans.

The WVP recently developed a free webinar highlighting employment assistance for women veterans. The short webinar is located on the VETS' website at www.dol.gov/vets/womenveterans/ and is also available as both a YouTube video and as self-paced, downloadable slides. It offers valuable information about no-cost online educational opportunities, individualized in-person services offered in their local area, and more intensive case management for veterans who have greater challenges with employment. We

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01-22405-001-E27942



honor the many contributions women veterans make in the civilian workforce and our WVP continues to encourage veteran service organizations to consider issues commonly experienced by all working women when addressing the needs and challenges for America's heroes.

Safeguarding Veteran Employment Rights

In addition to providing employment services and assisting veterans through their transition into the civilian workforce, VETS also helps educate veterans on their rights under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA). USERRA protects civilian employment rights and benefits for veterans and members of the active and Reserve components of the U.S. Armed Forces and applies to virtually all employers, both public and private, regardless of size. The law generally prohibits an employer from taking any adverse action against a service-member or veteran due in any part to that individual's past, present, or future military service.

In addition, the law specifies that eligible service members who wish to return to their employers once they have completed their service commitment must be promptly reinstated in the same positions of status, seniority, and pay they otherwise would have attained had they remained continuously employed. USERRA is complex, and also protects employees' entitlement to benefits of employment including health insurance and pension benefits. VETS is responsible for interpreting, administering, and enforcing the law, and investigates complaints received from service members and veterans who believe their employment rights were violated. It has been our experience that employers want to do the right thing, and support our service members. To help them do this, VETS has a robust outreach and education program to help employers, veterans, and service members better understand their rights and obligations under the law. You can learn more about USERRA by visiting our website at: www.dol.gov/vets.

Commitment to Serve

VETS has partnered with other federal government organizations like the Small Business Administration (SBA), Department of Transportation (DOT), Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Department of Energy (DOE) to provide industry-specific resources on www.veterans.gov. Veterans can use veterans.gov to search job postings on the National Labor Exchange (NLx) and to access free, online training. Employers can use the site to post jobs on NLx and seek out qualified veterans. Our new website helps link employers with veterans and offers employment services at your fingertips. Visit www.veterans.gov to learn about all that we offer.

DOL VETS is dedicated to serving those who have served, and provides robust and relevant resources to help our veterans succeed in the civilian workforce. We will continue to provide programs and employment services that meet the needs of veterans looking for good jobs. The skills, expertise, and experience America's veterans have attained throughout their years of service are invaluable to the civilian workforce and America's economy. Whether you are transitioning from active-duty, or you served many years ago, DOL VETS is here to help you and all veterans get the resources you need and afford you the opportunities you deserve. To stay up to date on these and many other resources, please subscribe to our free monthly employment newsletters by visiting:

<https://goo.gl/FvtwyY> OR
www.dol.gov/vets/newsletter

Thank you for your service. On behalf of everyone at DOL and VETS, I wish you fair winds and following seas throughout your civilian career. Please visit us at your local America Job Center today!



Mike Michaud was sworn in as the Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans' Employment and Training on December 2, 2015. Now the head of the Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS), Assistant Secretary Michaud has also represented the 2nd Congressional District of Maine (2003 to 2015), where he served as the ranking Democrat on the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

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January

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Sherman A Willis	046	Robert Delmonico	MAL	Robert Emerson	MAL	Steven R Denson	109
Mark L Conrad	093	Patrick J McGonigle	093	Claude N Moore	MAL	T L Schuster	091
Harry E Flood	175	John C Kotheimer	338	Milton D Smith	382	John J Veneziano	MAL
Frank Strunk	269	Earl A Dwire	338	Frank G Lagula	084	Stanley A Jalowiec	046
Dale L Parent	290	Ralph R Seeley	285	Dale I Bailey	163	Gregg L Billman	MAL
Lloyd A Reed, Jr.	106	Isidro L Alibudbud	171	Harold M Grimmett	MAL	Henry L Gilson	MAL
James I Lint	261	Jerry E Young	MAL	Roy C Stoddard	015	Thomas W Lawson	269
Matthew Perry	024	Charles Laberde	MAL	Robert E Dunn	018	Harry C Walton	017
Sam Caruso, Jr.	371	Theodore Wilson	290	Samuel E Marcum	MAL	Steven Koch	269
Donald Baldwin	MAL	Kenneth E Barnette	068	William M McDowell	126		

February

Teotimo V Ortales	127	Peter D Fava	260	Edgar W Pippin	204	Jeffrey G Borgrud	MAL
Joseph V Radecki	020	John H Sunde, JR., Jr.	070	Grover E Macey, Jr.	024	Susan M. Sylvester	264
Graydon Watkins	MAL	Jack L Lehman	MAL	Sara Hefty	101	Henry W Hutcherson	053
Joseph B Williams	099	David Roy Krogh	244	Marion G Bright	MAL	Dominador V Borillo	154
Richard E Shaffer	MAL	William D Campbell	MAL	Donald R Sceifers	346	Lloyd E Polk	061
Ryan S Adkins, Sr.	210	Ralph E Wilson	126	Ricardo Diuco	084	Lawrence Waugh	MAL
Michael A Martelli	115	James E Hill, Sr.	MAL	Henry Mack	219	Raymond A. Liss	162
Lee A Jeter, Sr.	098	Archibald Harvey	229	Roger R Bardsley	018	Carl M Edson	MAL
John L Armour	232	Barbara A Hvizdo	020	James R Hanzakos	294	Donald Wayne Tingle	269
Jack N Hayden	023	Carl R Sosna	077	Paul R Macleod	101	Francis E Warren	070
Timothy Leland	060	John A Aldredge	MAL	Richard W Brown	269	Joyce M Elter	090
Frank Strickland	010	Karen Snow	162	Joseph W Bransfield	046	Jerome M Mills	029
Mark Douglas	137	Carrey J Nelson	MAL	Gerald L Russo	046	Daryl R Martin	126
John R Webb	MAL	Allen M Langteau	070	Benjamin L. Parnell	MAL	Lloyd A Weathersby	367
Robin L Fetterman	MAL	Stanley R Dame	MAL	Amos E Garnto	MAL	Laura K May	278
Andrew Gula	230	Steven B Longwell	046	Bruce H Davis, II	070	John P Berryhill	278
Daniel D Dahl	310	Clyde A Bierly	MAL	Max R Bassett	MAL	Jerald A Christmas	006
Paul C Altenburg	MAL	Raymond Hacecky	070	Mark D Cochran, Sr.	183		
Isaac E Witherell, Jr.	156	Willard L Davis	022	Bridget Kelley	024		

March

Mark D Hughner II, II	290	Patrick D Romero	014	Ronald J Brunner	269	Neil A Jurgena	145
Russell W Kraeger	117	Ronald K Fulton	020	Fred L. Robinson	024	Robert W Lindner	MAL
James W Freeman	061	Don M Dell	029	Kenneth Christ	MAL	Michael Allen Knowlton	MAL
George W O'Brien	161	David L Buist	298	Frederick Bolz	269	Germain J Pierce	020
William R Abbott	287	Harry Bryan	MAL	Leo H Kelley, Sr.	269	William K Creed	248
John W Rodgers, Sr.	293	Romeo E Bilodeau	175	David G Bentz	161	Teodorico S Cheng	154
Bruce A Lewis	MAL	William Etheridge	MAL	Patrick J Pesik	MAL	Michael McNally	MAL
Albert J Wass	028	Floyd F Bailey	MAL	Roger Pryor	MAL	Robert A Moose	367
Thomas E Weld	147	John A Smeby	MAL	Ronald Rogers	MAL	Gerald Carlon Starr	269
Charles H McKown	296	Calvin R Lucas	MAL	Sib A Northrip Jr.	MAL	John Valentine	MAL
Richard D Brenden	MAL	John W Schauland	MAL	Rogelio F Palomar	MAL	George R Mikulski PhD	024
Mitchell A Dittebrand	103	William T Denette	MAL	Paul M Grdina	061	William R Moller	042
Henry E Jackson	212	George T Price	MAL	Jefferson L. Yoder	124	Peter L Duncan	120
Luther B Morris, Jr.	280	Georgia E Spellman	MAL	James H Melhorn	MAL		
Robert Palmer	258	Billy L Scronce	MAL	William L Allen	307		
Robert Russell	170	William H. Trawick	162	Hilton C Hooks	202		

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Drivers' Alert: Driving can expose you to more dangerous glare than any sunny day at the beach can... do you know how to protect yourself?

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Protecting your eyes is serious business. With all the fancy fashion frames out there it can be easy to overlook what really matters—the lenses. So we did our research and looked to the very best in optic innovation and technology.

Sometimes it does take a rocket scientist. A NASA rocket scientist.

Some ordinary sunglasses can obscure your vision by exposing your eyes to harmful UV rays, blue light, and reflective glare. They can also darken useful vision-enhancing light. But now, independent research conducted by scientists from NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory has brought forth ground-breaking technology to help protect human eyesight from the harmful effects of solar radiation light.



Slip on a pair of Eagle Eyes® and everything instantly appears more vivid and sharp. You'll immediately notice that your eyes are more comfortable and relaxed and you'll feel no need to squint. The scientifically designed sunglasses are not just fashion accessories—they are necessary to protect your eyes from those harmful rays produced by the sun during peak driving times.

This superior lens technology was first discovered when NASA scientists looked to nature for a means to superior eye protection—specifically, by studying the eyes of eagles, known for their extreme visual acuity. This discovery resulted in what is now known as Eagle Eyes®.

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Studies by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) show that most (74%) of the crashes occurred on clear, sunny days



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To learn more, contact FRA National Headquarters at 1-800-672-1924 or 703-683-1400, or via e-mail at Lauren@fra.org

Veterans and Active Personnel Set to Get Free Survival Food.

Farmers vow to keep up with the rush to supply all service members who call toll free and beat the deadline to claim up to four free 72-hour survival food kits.

In a crisis, your number one need is food. But not just any food. What everyone needs is a supply of real good-for-25-years survival food that you can rely on when the time comes that food is scarce.

Well, right now – in what is truly an unprecedented move – thousands of 72-hour survival food kits are being given away by a company called Food4Patriots to readers of this publication, as long as they call a special toll-free hotline and beat the program deadline.

“This is all happening because we’re worried that some people in Washington may want to control more than just guns and ammo,” explained Frank Bates, a spokesman for the company. “We already know that some of those folks may want to take away our guns. What’s next?”

It’s already been reported that there is an effort underway to determine how much survival food is currently available and exactly where it is stored. Truthfully, we don’t really know why this information is being gathered, but it’s got a lot of folks pretty concerned. After all, you don’t ever want to rely on others to keep your family fed in a crisis.”

Experts say that everyone needs at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food on hand. So, to help ensure all personal

have emergency food available when they need it, Food4Patriots is giving away up to four 72-hour survival food kits to any active or retired service member who requests them.

Understand, this is real food and it’s ready in minutes. It not only tastes good, it’s good for you – unlike the MREs you’ve probably had. Plus, this food lasts for 25 years, far longer than MREs.

Each kit contains enough meals for three days. You’ll get four servings each of such familiar dishes as Liberty Bell Potato Cheddar Soup, Blue Ribbon Creamy Chicken Rice, Travelers Stew, and the always-loved Granny’s Homestyle Potato Soup.

The usual price for the 72-hour kit is \$27.00 plus shipping. But, through this special offer, personnel who act quickly can receive as many as four free kits and pay only a \$9.95 shipping and handling fee for each kit claimed through this offer.

Bates pointed out that the foods in these kits are all packed in durable, resealable Mylar pouches that guarantee they’ll stay fresh and delicious for at least 25 years. Because the last thing you need is food that’s gone stale or is filled with bugs and maggots.

In an emergency, a 72-hour kit could actually save your life. In fact, many folks like to keep a kit or two in the trunk of their car – just in case.

“We’re trying to ensure none of these brave folks gets left out, but they have to hurry as we only have a limited supply of 72-hour kits we can give away,” Bates warned. This survival food giveaway will be ended no matter what at midnight, May 31, 2016.” ■

HOW TO GET YOUR FREE 72-HOUR SURVIVAL FOOD KITS:



Retired and active personnel from all branches are rushing to claim up to four free 72-hour kits before the deadline.

Food4Patriots is committed to giving up to four free 72-hour kits to all personnel who call their toll-free hotline. However, the response to this survival food giveaway has been so great that additional agents had to be brought on to handle the volume of calls. As a result, the company’s free kit inventory is disappearing fast.

If you wish to claim up to four free 72-hour survival food kits, you must do so immediately. Simply call the toll-free hotline and give the agent the approval code shown below. Provide your delivery instructions and agree to pay the \$9.95 shipping and handling fee for each kit claimed. It really is that easy.

Approval Code: 72FREE

Toll-Free Hotline:

1-800-660-8994

Deadline: 05/31/2016



Please note: Food4Patriots says they will continue to give away these 72-hour kits for as long as their supplies last. Unfortunately, due to media exposure, their phone lines may be busy when you call. The company advises that if this happens, you should just keep calling and you will get through.

NAME	BRANCH	NAME	BRANCH
Adams, Frederick S, GYSGT, USMC	MAL	Johnson, Ryle G, ADC, USN	MAL
Aull, Donald T, SR, USN	105	Jones, Charles C, UTC, USN	194
		Kalscheuer, Raymond B, SKC, USN	MAL
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		McCormick, Robert J, RMCM, USN	MAL
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Costantino, George W, EMCS/SS, USN	020		
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Davenport, Hubert H, ENC, USN	060	Ramsey, Ray B, L1C, USN	MAL
Davis, Stanley A, TMC, USN	020	Rectenbaugh, Robert D, SKCS, USN	060
Deese, David S, LCDR, USN	029	Reesman, L J, DKCM, USN	166
Dewhirst, James J, LCDR, USN	MAL	Ripka, Alfred M, EMC, USN	MAL
		Rotner, Melvin B, CAPT, USN	070
East, Eldridge O, CS1, USN	MAL		
Egger, Victor A, CDR, USN	011	Schaefer, Kenneth P, CS1, USN	MAL
Elbert, George W, ADRC, USN	MAL	Schlosky, Richard D, YNC, USN	MAL
Everett, William H, GMTC, USN	MAL	Schwegler, James G, SKCS, USN	MAL
		Seaman, Charles E, TD1, USN	245
Farak, Stanley M, DPCS, USN	MAL	Serrano, Honor Norm D Leon, CPO, USN	127
		Simon, Dominador J, PO1, USN	010
Garman, Ronald J, ADCS, USNR	024	Simonelli, Charles, BMC, USN	020
Gillespie, Ezra D, ADR1, USN	136	Smyth, Thomas H, EMC, USN	110
Gorobao, Salvador O, PO1, USN	127	Stykes, Robert K, ADJC/TAR, USNR	089
Grindstaff, Lawson, CS1, USN	MAL		
		Tart, Kyle, MMCM(SS), USN	MAL
Haley, Eugene J., QM3, USN	024	Trunell, Robert L, EMC, USN	MAL
Hall, Joseph J, MMC, USN	259		
Helton, Martin W, SMC, USN	008		
Hernandez, Edward, POC(SS), USNR	MAL		
Hollier, Anthony R, MSGT, USMC	371	Wheeler, Robert O, PNCM, USN	053
Hollingshead, Dale D, GYSGT, USMC	344	White, Marion E, YN1, USN	011
Hughto, Eugene A, RMC, USN	MAL	Wildes, Edward L, ADJC, USN	091
Hurlbert, Lloyd V, RMCM, USN	MAL	Wilusz, Edward J, DKC, USN	MAL
		Wittman, Wayne C, HM3, USN	136
Jacobs, Robert M, CWO4, USN	093	Woolsey, Jack H, ETC, USN	061
Jenkins, Charles A, RP3, USN	MAL		
Johnson, Malcolm N, BTCM, USN	110		

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



*The toll of the ship's bell
reminds us of the reverence
we owe to our departed Shipmates
and to those who guard the honor
of our country
upon the sea,
under the sea,
in the air
and upon foreign soil.
Let it be a reminder
of the faith they
confide in us.
Let us who gather here
not forget our obligations
and in silence
breathe a prayer
for our absent Shipmates.*

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digital display

Stop watch
function

Built-in alarm

LCD complications

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backlight



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

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

New technology usually starts out at astronomical prices and then comes down years later. We skipped that step to allow everyone the chance to experience this watch's brilliant fusion of technology and style. We originally priced the Stauer **Compendium Hybrid** at \$395 based on the market for advanced sports watches... but then stopped ourselves. Since this is no ordinary economy, we decided to offer the **Compendium Hybrid** at **92% off**. That means this new technological marvel can be yours for only \$29⁹⁵!

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

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The Compendium: The spectacular face of the latest watch technology.

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Smart Luxuries—Surprising Prices™

performance and innovation of the Stauer **Compendium Hybrid** for \$29⁹⁵, simply return the watch within 30 days for a full refund of the purchase price. The unique design of the **Compendium** greatly limits our production, so don't hesitate to order! Remember: progress and innovation wait for no one!

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- Stop watch function - Fits 6 3/4"-8 3/4" wrist
- 2 year warranty on movement

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American Association of Navy Hospital Corpsmen

September 20–24, 2016, San Diego, CA. Contact Chuck Kraut at 817-229-5194

Aviation Logistics Marines

October 6–9, 2016, MCAS Beaufort, SC. Contact Don Davis, 6211 Ingalls St., Melbourne, FL, 321-978-5147, GREYGL@EC.RR.COM

MCB 11 & 11th NCB (Seabees)

September 27–October 2, 2016, Tucson, AZ. Contact Larry Hagler, 21012 Boggy Ford Rd., Lago Vista, Texas 76864-6973, 512-267-8873, mcb11.reunion@earthlink.net

RTC Orlando

October 12–16, 2016, Orlando, FL. Contact PO Box 1254, El Mirage, AZ 85335, 407-630-8940, rtorlandoreunion@gmail.com

USS Abraham Lincoln (SSB(N)-602)

September 29–October 2, 2016, Groton, CT. Contact George Dolgos at 610-395-5472 or USSAbrahamLincoln@aol.com

USS Begor (APD-127)

September 25–29, 2016, Reno, NV. Contact Rich Pardy, 315 W. Evans Creek RD. #50, Rogue River, OR 97537, 541-299-0035, rogriv12@charter.net

USS Benner (DD/DDR-807)

October 3–7, 2016, New Orleans, LA. Contact Tony Sawyer, 24 Chamale Cove, E. Slidell, LA 70460, 410-483-2823, tahoesawyer@aol.com

USS Glover (FF-1098, AGFF-1, AGDE-1, T-AGFF-1)

February 13–17, 2017, Cape Canaveral, FL. Contact Jay Conti Sr., 5398 N. Bedstrow Blvd., Beverly Hills, FL 34465, 352-287-1400, jconti3547@aol.com

USS Hassayampa (AO-145)

August 25–27, 2016, Branson, MO. Contact 405-590-3717 or normbaron145@aol.com

USS L. Y. Spear (AS-36)

September 7–11, 2016, Buffalo / Niagara Falls, NY. Contact Patty Kelso, 6916 Lamar Avenue, Overland Park, KS 66204, 913-677-1837, pattykelso@usslyspear.org

USS New Jersey (BB-62)

August 10–14, 2016, 30th Annual Reunion, Philadelphia, PA. Contact Ernest Dalton at 210-275-7886 or ps159@sbcglobal.net

USS Sea Cat (SS-399)

October 2–5, 2016, Pigeon Forge, TN. Contact Ed Hymer, 1114 Elm Ave., Norwalk, IA 50211, 515-981-3006.

USS Seadragon (SSN-584)

August 18–20, 2016, Reno, Nev. Contact Jerry Gruenhagen, 3376 Pebble Beach Ct., Green Bay, WI 54311, 920-469-0176, jgruenhagen@new.rr.com

USS Shangri-la CVA-, CV-, CVS-38

September 21–26, 2016, St. Louis, MO. Contact Mike Theisen, 3206 7th Ave, W. Hibbing, MN 55746, 218-263-4817, mechandy10@gmail.com



USS Sperry (AS-12)

September 21–25, 2016, New Orleans, LA. Contact David Jackson at 507-658-3387.

USS Valcour (AVP-55/AGF-1)

October 5–9, 2016, Herndon, VA. Contact Don Cloud, 7710 Barclay Ave., North Charleston, SC 29418, 843-552-9992, dwcloudsr@gmail.com

USS Wiltsie (DD 716)

09/24/2016, 09/28/2016, Branson, MO. Contact Ted Laurila, , 360-736-3858, DD716TED@comcast.net

VP-68 and Affiliated Units

May 21, 2016, Patuxent River, MD. Contact George (doc) Durity, 108 Reeves Street, Walterboro, SC 29488, 843-538-1122, gdurity1492@yahoo.com

All reunion notices must be submitted in writing. Members can post reunions online at www.fra.org, submitted via e-mail to WilliamK@fra.org or in writing to FRA Reunions, 125 N. West St., Alexandria, VA 22314. Please include your FRA member number and a daytime phone number. Questions regarding reunion submissions should be directed to 1-800-FRA-1924, ext. 124.

LOOKING FOR...

Commissary Crew of USS Kiluea (AE-26)

who knew my late husband, Dave Walker. There was a picture taken of his crew and I would like a copy if possible. Please contact Beatrice (Betty) Walker at 765-642-6549 or 2307 W. 16 St, Anderson, IN 46016.

NCCM "Rip" VanOrsdale

Last known duty assignment was as Chief Recruiter at NRD Indianapolis in 1982. Contact NCCS Roger Schirmer, USN (Ret.) at 4591 Kawilla Crest Pl., Winter Park, FL 32792-7638 or 407-645-1999.

HTC Richard J. Ganz, USN (Ret.) and SKCM Henry E. O'Neil, USN (Ret.)

I served with these two shipmates during my Navy career. HTC Ganz was last known to be in the San Diego, Calif. area. I served with SKCM O'Neil on the USS *Plymouth Rock* (LSD 29). Please contact Jerry S. Whitlock, 757-851-6775 or 304 Apollo Dr, Hampton, VA 23669.

Gerald F. Dantoni

Navy veteran Dantoni was last known to be in the New Orleans area. Please contact Frank Vines at 540-639-5673 or PO Box 176, Belspring, VA 24058.

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 Looking For... submissions should be directed to 1-800-FRA-1924, ext. 126.

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Our exclusive navy blue fleece jacket brings meaningful Navy artistry to the casual look of a fashionable hooded jacket. Boldly displayed on the back of the black woven hood is an American flag graphic and the sentiment "The United States NAVY, Established 1775."

A round patch with a montage of air and sea images, embroidered with the words "UNITED STATES NAVY" commands attention on the front of the jacket. Tailored with off-white side panels appliqué with NAVY in a hip-length cut, the jacket provides comfortable, everyday wear. The front-zip jacket has a U.S. flag patch on the sleeve, two vertical zip front pockets, and metal toggles on the hood's cords.

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The "Navy Pride" Hooded Fleece Jacket is a remarkable value at \$129.95*, and you can pay in four easy installments of \$32.49. To order yours in men's sizes M-XXL, backed by our unconditional, money-back, 30-day guarantee, send no money now; just fill out and send in your Reservation Application. You won't find this jacket in stores, and it's only available for a limited time, so order today!

www.bradfordexchange.com/navyhoodedfleece

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☐ XL (46-48) 01-21312-013
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Zip

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E27942

BRANCH 22 PENSACOLA, FLA.

Branch President Jim Richmond (middle) poses with members of the local chapter of the Air Force Sergeants Association at Eglin Air Force Base in Mary Ester, Fla. Shipmate Richmond was invited to network with AFSA and addressed the group about FRA's 2016-2017 legislative agenda. AFSA is a fellow member of The Military Coalition with FRA.

**BRANCH 26 BAKERSFIELD, CALIF.**

Shipmate Larry Allen was presented with his 40-year continuous membership pin and certificate by RPSW Don Kelly.

**BRANCH 72, FALL RIVER, MASS.**

RPNE/NEng Donna Jansky was surrounded by fellow shipmates at February's branch meeting. Shown (seated, l to r) are Donald Bernardo and Tony DiBenedetto; (standing, l to r) are Allan Given, Jansky, Larry Bierola and Bill Roderick.

**BRANCH 117 ORLANDO, FLA.**

Shipmates (l-r) Russ Luby, Russ Kraeger, Steve Miglionico, and Jim Middlekauff man a recruiting booth during the 14th dedication of the Lone Sailor Navy Memorial.

**BRANCH 284 LEXINGTON, KY.**

Branch President Chuck Meade (r) presents Master-at-Arms Kenneth Reeves with his pin and certificate commemorating 50 years of continuous FRA membership.



SW REGION

FRA's Southwest Region proudly supported the CNSF Sea and Shore Sailor of the Year Awards. Pictured at the at the San Diego Zoo Kick-off (l to r) are FRA NP Virgil Courneya, Shore SOY YN1 (SW/AW) John F. Singleton, Sea SOY HM1 (SW/AW/IDW) Corey D. Smith, and PRPSW Mick Fulton.



BRANCH 285 SYRACUSE, N.Y.

Branch President Lynn Swetland (l) and Membership Chairman Robert Deming (r) congratulate Shipmate Nicholas J. Zingaro (middle) and present his 40-year continuous membership pin and certificate.



BRANCH 344 PORTLAND, MAINE

Branch President Don Parker (r) congratulates two new members, Tony Batchelor and June Escott. Tony presented a USCG flag to the branch, and June is the first female and WAV member to join since incorporation in 1978. Welcome, Shipmates!



BRANCH 293 ELIZABETH CITY, N.C.

SA Austin B. Turillo, USCG, class N-192, was presented his graduation certificate from Cape May Training Center, Cape May, N.J. on April 1, 2016, by his grandfather, LCDR Franklin C GATES, USN (Ret.), a 30-year veteran. SA Turillo, age 19, is also being sponsored into Branch 293 by his grandfather and branch members.



BRANCH 296 AUBURN, CALIF.

Branch leaders presented awards to (l to r) Past Branch President John Lozano (40-year pin), Past Branch President Elmer Frank (35-year pin), and Charles "Mac" McKown (plaque for three years as Branch President).

To submit a photo for *Shipmate News*, 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 Regional President East Coast

IT DOES NOT SEEM possible that this year is more than half over! It is the time of year that National, Regional and Units are recruiting members to run for election later this year. Please consider offering your valuable time and energy to leading our organization into the coming year!

I had the honor of installing Unit 67's (Suitland, Md.) officers in February. The new officers are enthusiastic and motivated to keep their unit on a successful path. They sponsored an Easter Egg Hunt for the area children and fun was had by all.

East Coast Region members have been very busy working toward the goals of LA FRA. Their efforts include working with their communities and with organizations such as National Night Out, whose purpose is to acquaint families with their local Police Officers and Firemen. Each of the police and fire departments set up hands-on exhibits of their equipment and gear. Also, Unit 24 (Annapolis, Md.) is working with American Vet Dogs with their 5th Annual Vet K-9 5K run. The money donated to the run goes toward the training of guide and service dogs for veterans with disabilities. Some Units provide nonperishable food items to organizations who feed the poor and homeless, holiday food baskets to needy families, support homes for abused spouses, help ill and lonely members and shipmates. Members participate in holiday services and parades. Members of Unit 93 (Patuxent River, Md.) have taken over the maintenance of the library for the residence of Charlotte Hall Home for Veterans. Shirley Vatter (Unit 93) has been recording old movies on to DVDs so residents will be able to enjoy them on a personal device as part of the Music and Memory Program. These are only a few of the ventures undertaken by East Coast units and members.

Recruiting new members is critical to our future, but retaining our current members is also one of our top priorities. It's always helpful to make personal contact with members; particularly those who have been absent from meetings, to show that someone is concerned and misses them. If possible, offer to provide transportation to meetings or help them in other ways. We shouldn't only reach out when a member is behind in their dues, but it doesn't hurt to remind them to remain a member in good standing.

To attract and retain new members, they should be made to feel included and welcome. A good way to do this is to start a mentoring program, where an experienced member can answer any questions that may arise. Also, encourage new members to participate in the unit's meeting and activities. Find ways they can contribute, but don't forget to also offer instruction and assistance when needed. New members can be recruited by inspiring the FRA shipmates to encourage their eligible family members to join the auxiliary. Let's make this a family affair.

Attending Regional and National Conventions is a good source of information about the LA FRA organization and how it operates. The East Coast Regional Convention is being held in Williamsburg, VA, August 25–28, 2016. The 2016 National Convention is in Jacksonville, Fla., October 9–16, 2016. Branch and Unit 91 (Jacksonville Fla.) will be our host. Please mark these dates on your calendar. Looking forward to seeing you there.



Unit 93, Patuxent River, Md.

Members purchased items for Charlotte Hall Veterans Home residents. Shown (l to r) are Shirley Vatter, Cindy Jones, Karen Brobst, Marylou Siebenkas and Charlotte Hall Veterans Home Volunteer Coordinator Katie Richards. Unit 93 also maintains the Home's library and Shirley Vatter has spent many hours working on the Music & Memory Program for Alzheimer Patients by downloading hundreds of music CDs for use on personal devices.



KATHY BEARDEN
Regional President East Coast



Unit 67, Suitland, Md.

RPEC Katherine Bearden installs Unit 76 President Melinda DeLoatch, Treasurer/Secretary Ashley Speight and Vice President Helen Campbell.

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Nationwide Coverage	YES	YES
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