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FRA *today*

The magazine of the Fleet Reserve Association

JANUARY 2018

USS PUEBLO

North Korea's War Museum

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USS PUEBLO (AGER-2) sits moored at her current berth on the Botong River, Pyongyang, North Korea.

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USS PUEBLO (AGER-2)

The North Korean Navy hijacked a U.S. Navy ship on January 23, 1968. The USS PUEBLO was in international waters when a North Korean SO-1 class sub chaser opened fire and seized her. The ship has been moored along the Botong River in Pyongyang since 2013 and is used as a Victorious War Museum for North Korea.

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Maintaining Flexibility and Balance

Flexibility gives you immediate and long-term benefits with fewer injuries and less pain. Stretching helps to relieve tension in your body and does help you feel good.



LOYALTY, PROTECTION AND SERVICE

FRA is a congressionally chartered, nonprofit organization advocating on Capitol Hill for current and former enlisted members of the U.S. Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard.

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FRA Profile

TRICARE for LIFE

The lead story in the December 2017 *FRAtoday*, "Milestone Changes Coming to TRICARE" did not address a major concern for our members: TRICARE FOR LIFE. However, we'd like to clarify that TRICARE FOR LIFE will not be impacted by any of the changes. The impacts will be only on those who are age 65 and younger.



NVP Washington

FRA's Legislative Program Healthcare Advisor and long-time staffer, Robert (Bob) Washington, retired from the Fleet Reserve Association as of December 1st. Bob is a loyal Shipmate who

has helped navigate other Shipmates through the myriad changes to veteran health care throughout the years. Bob's tenure spanned two decades providing constant interaction with Shipmates at the Branch, Regional and National levels. Washington is currently serving as National Vice President of the Fleet Reserve Association.

Bob and I got to know each other when I started working at FRA in July 2016. He is a great source of knowledge and an avid sports fan. If I ever had a question, Bob had some advice. I recall once asking him, "Why are their covers red?" Shipmate Washington, I hope to see you in a red hat one day in the very near future! Fair winds and smooth waters to you and your lovely bride, Deborah!

Attention All Retirees and Annuitants

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The old Kentucky PO Boxes will remain open and mail will be forwarded for one year. However, sending mail to the old address will add three to five days to the normal processing time. The telephone and fax numbers are not changing. **FRA**

In Loyalty, Protection and Service, Bill Stevenson
Communications Director, Williams@FRA.org

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Volume 97 Number 1



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"Caregiver, Caretaker, Shipmate, Family!"



Thomas J. Snee
Executive Director

HAPPY NEW YEAR SHIPMATES AND AUXILIARY! For some, this could be a haunting, a new beginning or for some, just another calendar they received in the mail. Either way, FRA has moved into its 94th year. Resolutions can be short lived but attitudes can be very lasting.

This month's feature story is about the zeal and courage surrounding the sailors captured aboard the *USS PUEBLO* 50 years ago in January of 1968. Their apprehension placed our nation on notice with headlines from a tough crew's tenacious actions, frightening experiences but more importantly, the desire to live and serve their country.

As a young sailor just returning from Vietnam, I too had difficulties understanding international law, oceanic territorial boundaries and our political system. However, one inspiration I learned early on was to lead my sailors. CDR Lloyd "Pete" Bucher, CO of *PUEBLO* planted that seed of leadership style. Bucher had personal nurturing or "caregiving/taking" traits.

He was given up at birth and orphaned at three, raised by grandparents and drifted in and out of Catholic orphanages until he was accepted at Fr. Flanagan's Boys' Town in Nebraska. He coined this experience "as his home" of caregivers and takers. He dropped out of high school, enlisted in the U.S. Navy and attained the rank of QM2. Later on, he entered the University of Nebraska with a subsequent commission as an Ensign serving on submarines. Although no one had heard of Ensign "Pete" Bucher, that would change on that dreadful day in January 1968.

I mention this because of his courageous manner in serving others; giving up his own "credentials" for his crew. He didn't worry about money or titles but rather his own character in life. Not as a legacy

but in generosity, integrity, humility and kindness.

"Pete" Bucher just had that nurturing and caring ability and directed those energies toward his crew while in command. Our FRA Preamble spearheads those ideals: *"Our interest in the welfare of those who served and are now serving; Our devotion to our shipmates in good fortune and distress."* Like CDR "Pete" most of us have that fostering and compassion toward others. That's what we call a SHIPMATE. The only difference is the motivation and the attitude that drives us to that course of action.

Caring for others

Coming full swing, now let's talk about family and the caregiving and caretaking for them. Many Shipmates have family members who are struggling and suffering from illnesses. They cope and try to balance a quality of life for their care from making doctor appointments, pharmacy runs, cooking and housekeeping to keeping family members updated. Some work full-time jobs but manage to play it cool. Many times we forget to check-in with those "givers and takers" who really just need a sanity check. Caregiving and caretaking puts a great demand on all of them.

So, as 2018 starts a new page on the calendar for our country and our own lives, let's answer the call to provide caregiving and caretaking to each other, our branches and communities. Set the bar high so as to inspire others to want to join *the welfare of those who serve* in our Association of caregivers and caretakers. Just like CDR Pete Bucher, who was a model of greatness for his crew *in the devotion to his shipmates in good fortune and distress*. Look around you, someone may need a boost in care! **PRESS ON! FRA**

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

He didn't worry about money or titles but rather his own character in life.

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Is TRICARE FOR LIFE Changing?

While I enjoyed the article on TRICARE changes coming in January 2018, I didn't see anything mentioned about TRICARE FOR LIFE.



How could you forget such a large group of your members? They are older and suffering medical issues, and some have memory problems. When they read these informational articles and just see the words TRICARE everything else goes out window. My husband is a retired 100% disabled Veteran and he about had a panic attack (he has early dementia) and he was upset. Please consider the ages of all your members when publishing information that even might concern them.

*Thank you,
Cathy Variano, Michigan*

*FRAtoday: Thanks Cathy and you are spot on with your comments. There are **NO** changes to **TRICARE FOR LIFE this JANUARY**. Sorry for not addressing this important aspect of any new health care changes for veterans. When the article was submitted, I neglected to consider our FRA Shipmates perspective and the questions they may have after reading the article. Thank you for your feedback.*

Branch Communications

Branch 89 has had issues lately in communicating with our Branch members and they tell me that they are always glad to see our Branch activity highlighted in the magazine. That communication issue is currently being remedied. I regularly send excerpts from *NewsBytes* to the Branch now.

And, I have a few compliments lately about *FRAtoday*. You are doing a fine job and the magazine looks/feels great. One thing I did notice, the captions for Shipmate News are no longer under each photo. Now I have to find the photo and

match the number up with the caption. I liked it better when they were together.

*In Loyalty, Protection, and service, God Bless,
Wayne Barron, Branch 089*

FRAtoday: Thank you Shipmate Barron! To all Shipmates please feel free to share pictures with us either for the magazine or by tagging us on all social media platforms. We will gladly share!

The Goat Wall



I thoroughly enjoyed the article in the October issue of *FRAtoday*, "The Wall Story" by Branch 94 President Bill Kasperek. Funny, informative, and celebrates two worthy causes in one short article. Great piece, Bill [Kasperek]!

Sgt. Glenn Cunningham (Ret.) Branch 170

Submit Shipmate Forum letters to *FRAtoday*, 125 N. West St. Alexandria, VA 22314. 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 individual FRA members. They do not necessarily reflect the official position of FRA as a whole. FRA is not responsible for the accuracy of letter content.

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ON & OFF *capitol hill*

News & Notes from the Fleet Reserve Association's Legislative Team

New Year Provides Opportunities to Build on 2017 Success

The FRA Legislative Team prepares for the Second Session of the 115th Congress. Here are our legislative victories from the First Session:



John Davis DLP

- Blocked Senate provision from being part of final NDAA that allowed substantial TRICARE fee increases by repealing the grandfather clause that would exclude retirees who retired before January 1, 2018 from increases;
- Enactment of larger than requested pay increase (2.1% vice 2.4%) requested by Administration (NDAA);
- Successfully extended Special Survivor Indemnity Allowance (SSIA) for widows/widowers (due to expire May 2018) and provided annual COLA increases (NDAA);
- Supported "Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act" (H.R.299/S.422) that clarifies a presumption for filing disability claims with the VA for ailments associated with exposure to Agent Orange;
- Repealed a one-percent cut in Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) in final NDAA, and stopped Senate provision to cut the dependent children rate for dual-military couples;
- Successfully enacted Post 911 GI Bill improvements;
- Boosted military end strength in final NDAA by more than 20,000 (4,000 Navy & 1,000 Marines);
- Mandating in final NDAA that all mobilized Reserve Component members receive premobilization and transitional health care;
- Provided additional measures in NDAA to protect sexual assault victims, including prosecution of perpetrators of non-consensual sharing of intimate images;
- Allowing reimbursement up to \$500 for a spouse's expenses related to obtaining occupational license or certification in another state in final NDAA;
- VA has begun to switch to the DoD Electronic Health Record (HER) system, a major step forward in "seam-

less transition" for personnel wounded or injured switching from active duty to veteran status;

- Enactment of stop-gap funding for VA Choice program;
- Successfully supported legislation that makes VA employees more accountable for their conduct;
- The U.S. Supreme Court ruled a state court may not order a military retiree to indemnify a divorced spouse for the loss in the divorced spouse's portion of the retirement pay caused by the retiree's waiver of retirement pay to receive service-related disability benefits. FRA has repeatedly expressed concern in Congressional testimony that some state courts have been awarding compensation to ex-spouses. A clear violation of the law;
- Successfully defeated efforts to reduce veteran's preference in hiring;
- Persuading DFAS to change their interruption of statute that prohibits those who are divorced with a deceased former spouse to change the SBP beneficiary from the former deceased spouse to a current spouse;
- Supported introduction of bills and an amendment to Senate Defense Authorization bill (S.1519) to expand concurrent receipt; and
- Supported "Military Retiree Survivor Comfort Act" (H.R.3011), which authorizes retention of the full final month's retired pay by the surviving spouse (or other designated survivor) for the month in which the member was alive for at least 24 hours.

These successes would not be possible without the support from FRA Shipmates—2017 was a banner year for the FRA Action Center. It generated more than 83,000 messages sent to Capitol Hill. Your continued participation will be an important factor in determining our success. Your participation complements the work of the Legislative Team. A new and improved FRA Action Center will be available in January. It allows members more communication options to reach out to Congress.

Agent Orange Bill Stalls

The House Veterans Affairs Committee (HVAC) scheduled a Committee vote on the "Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act" (H.R.299). It did not occur because HVAC members could not agree how to pay for the bill. First reported in the July 28 Newsbytes, HVAC Chairman

Roe (Tenn.) offered to have a committee vote if the bill could be amended to round down veteran's monthly benefits to pay for the bill. Roe said, "We owe it to our brave veterans who served off the coast of Vietnam, to pass this bill. I have close friends who died in Vietnam. I can't go to another Veterans

Day ceremony without at least trying to get this bill approved. I have spoken to many veterans who said they would be willing to give up less than a dollar a month to do right by Blue Water Navy veterans."

HVAC Ranking Member Walz (Minn.), an original co-sponsor of the bill, argued that "Asking one group of veterans to pay for another group of veterans' benefits is not only bad policy, it is the wrong answer. Finding funds for this bill outside the VA budget is absolutely critical. I will continue to call on Chairman Roe to make that hap-

pen." Walz claims that the HVAC passed and the House approved veteran's legislation without spending offsets. Both the 2014 VA Choice program and the 2008 Post 911 GI Bill passed, also without spending offsets. He argued we should not cut veterans benefits while we enact tax cuts for the rich. Roe did not call the bill for a vote.



The committee approved the following bills:

- H.R.1900, designate museum in Columbus, Ohio, National Veterans Memorial & Museum
- H.R.2123, improve treatment of veterans through telemedicine
- H.R.1133 & H.R. 2601, improve organ transplants at the VA
- H.R.3634 to ensure

veterans using Post 911 GI Bill can verify monthly housing stipend

- H.R.3705 requires VA use certified mail and plain language in debt collection
- H.R.4173 requires VA do a study of the Veterans Crisis Line

FRA wants to thank Shipmates for calling congress and using the Action Center. The Association will continue to work on passing the Blue Water Act.

Help Blue Water Vietnam Veterans

In the wake of failure to vote on the "Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act" (H.R.299 & S.422 respectively), FRA and several other Veteran Service Organizations have dispatched a letter to VA Secretary Shulkin, urging him to implement a regulation to provide Vietnam veterans who served off the coast of Vietnam, the same presumption the "Brown Water" and "Boots on the Ground" veterans have.

FRA supports the Blue Water Veterans Act that would clarify service members serving off the coast of Vietnam during the Vietnam conflict have a presumption for filing disability claims. Studies demonstrate that the desalinization process used on Australian and U.S. Navy ships off the coast of Vietnam magnified the exposure of the Agent Orange in the water.

FRA met with the secretary and were told he is reviewing the policy. Members are urged to use the FRA Action Center to ask the secretary to implement a regulation giving veterans a presumption for filing claims associated to Agent Orange.

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VHA Failed to Address Quality and Safety

A recent Government Accountability Office report (GAO-18-26) accuses VA staffers of failing to report dangerous doctors to authorities. This prompted the House Veterans Affairs, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations to hold a hearing. Subcommittee chair Congressman Bergman (Mich.) stated the VA has approximately 40,000 providers in 170 medical centers treating 9 million veterans a year, so ensuring they provide safe quality care is vital.



Congressman Jack Bergman

Dr. Gerard Cox, Acting Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Organizational Excellence for the VA written comments state, "We are taking three major steps to improve clinical competency and reporting by improving oversight to ensure no settlement agreement waives VA's ability to report providers to the National Practitioner Data Bank or the State Licensing Boards, reporting more clinical

occupations to the bank, and improving the timeliness of reporting." These steps come as a result of the GAO report that criticized the Veterans Health Administration officials for systemic failures in documentation and investigation of complaints against clinical care providers.

The report found that some complaints were ignored until investigators raised concerns. In other cases it took months or years for some complaints to be investigated. "Refusing or failing to adhere to reporting requirements puts not just veterans, but

all patients across the country, at risk of receiving substandard health care," said Bergman.

The report makes recommendations for the VHA to address these issues. The VHA stated it will implement all of the recommendations. Dr. Cox agrees Congressional oversight is important in maintaining a standard of excellence that the VA strives to meet.

NDA Bill Passes Committee

The House and Senate passed the final version of the FY2018 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA-H.R.2810) that focuses on military readiness. The bill authorizes nearly \$700 billion, which is \$26 billion more than the Administration's request and \$80 billion more than sequestration spending caps still in effect. Specific provisions are listed above.

The bill was expected to be signed into law but it does exceed the defense spending budget cap and will require congressional action before enactment. The President and leaders of the House and Senate must strike a

deal to eliminate or raise the sequestration caps for Defense spending. Members are encouraged to go to the FRA Action Center and push to exclude Defense spending from sequestration.





House Passes Gold Star Family Bill

The House passed the "Gold Star Family Support and Installation Access Act" (H.R.3897), sponsored by Rep. Bacon (Neb.). It provides access for Gold Star families to attend services and reunions on military installations. It also extends access to on-base services for surviving spouses who remarry, as long as the dependent

children of the deceased service member remain under their guardianship. This FRA-supported bill now goes to the Senate.

COLA Approved

The House and Senate approved the "Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act" (H.R.1329), sponsored by Rep. Bost (Ill.), to boost next year's veterans benefits by two percent. This is the same cost-of-living-adjustment (COLA) increase as Social Security, and military retirement pay starting in December.

The annual move is a routine step by lawmakers. Under current law, annual cost-of-living increases are automatic for Social Security benefits and military retirees, determined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics without congressional intervention. Veteran's benefits, however, fall into a different category that requires lawmakers to approve an adjustment every year. President Trump is expected to sign the measure into law.

Online Military Exchange Online Shopping Starts November 11

The Veterans Online Shopping Benefit became available on military exchange websites November 11, 2017. The exchanges have stocked up in anticipation of a huge increase in customers. More than 235,000 veterans have been verified, however, as many as 18 million more individuals may be eligible.

Veterans Day/FRA Birthday/Marine Corps' Birthday

Saturday, November 11, 2017 will mark the 99th anniversary of the armistice ending the First World War in 1918 and today recognized as Veterans Day. It is a long-standing tradition for shipmates to participate in ceremonies across the country. Additionally, on November 11, 1924 FRA was founded, marking FRA's 93rd anniversary. FRA NP Starkey attended a U.S. Chamber of Commerce hosted breakfast before going to Arlington Cemetery and participating in the wreath-laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknowns. Vice President Pence spoke at the ceremony.

On November 10, 1775, the United States Marine Corps was founded. DLP Davis and ADVP Condon attended Mack's Marines luncheon in observance of the 242nd anniversary of the Marine Corps. On Saturday, November 4, DLP Davis attended the Commandants Marine Corps Ball.

FRA thanks members for their service in defending our Nation, and their continued membership.

VA Announces Rollout for New ID Card

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced the application process for the national Veterans Identification Card (VIC) is now available. The card has been authorized by legislation since 2015. Veterans can apply for the ID card, which will provide proof of military service. It provides promotional discounts and other services to veterans.

"The new [VIC] provides a safer and more convenient and efficient way for most Veterans to show proof of service," said VA Secretary Shulkin. "With the card, Veterans with honorable service to our nation will no longer need to carry around their DD-214s to get discounts and other services."

The VIC provides a portable and secure alternative for those who served the minimum time in service but did not meet the retirement or medical discharge threshold. Veterans who served, including reserve components, and have a discharge of honorable or general (under honorable conditions) can request a VIC.

To request a VIC, visit vets.gov, scroll to the bottom of the page, click on "Apply for Printed Veteran ID Card" and sign in or create an account. Veterans can check the status of their cards on the vets.gov website as well, and should receive their card within 60 days. A digital version of the VIC will be available by mid-December.



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POW/MIA Commemorative Chair

FRA NED Snee attended the unveiling of the Prisoner-of-War/Missing-in-Action (POW/MIA) commemorative chair ceremony on Capitol Hill. It was unveiled by House Speaker Ryan, who was joined by Senate Majority Leader McConnell, House Democratic Leader Pelosi, Senators Warren, Blumenthal, and Representatives Lynch and Johnson (Johnson spent seven years as a POW in Hanoi). The chair is in the Emancipation Hall of the Capitol Visitor Center and honors American prisoners of war. It is a reminder of the nearly 83,000 service members still missing in action. At the 90th FRA National Convention, delegates unanimously approved the 2018 FRA Legislative Agenda that includes: "FRA work to ensure that the DoD make every effort for a complete accounting of all Prisoners Of War and Missing in Action service members for past and current conflicts."



Disabled Veterans May Qualify for Larger Ratings

The U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims issued an opinion in a recent case *Sharp v. Shulkin*, (No. 16-1385) that could make it easier for veterans with injuries to the



back, neck and joints to obtain higher disability ratings. Even in cases where veterans are already receiving disability benefits for such injuries. The case reviewed the VA's system for evaluating the origin and extent of a disability and clarified the responsibilities of Compensation and Pension (C&P) examiners and the Board of Veterans Appeals when giving an opinion on pain flare-ups caused by musculoskeletal disabilities. The court ruled the system was inadequate because not all C&P examiners consider flare-ups and pain when determining what disability rating a veteran should receive.

Tax Credits for Hiring Veterans

FRA signed onto a letter from The Military Coalition, sent to key legislators, requesting to extend the Hire Heroes Act tax credits and the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) for five years. The letter was sent before the House Ways and Means Committee markup of tax reform legislation (H.R.1). The Committee did not vote to extend the credits. The Hire Heroes Act, signed into law

in 2011, strengthened the WOTC by increasing financial incentives for employers who hire (including disabled) veterans. Department of Labor data indicates these incentives improve veteran employment opportunities.

However, the constant expiration cycle and retroactive renewals of the credits causes employer uncertainty. Extending them to five years will provide employers certainty. It would also create more employment opportunities.

VA Complaint Line Gives Veterans Access

President Trump promised during his election campaign, to give veterans direct access to the White House. Veterans can now express their concerns by calling 855-948-2311. The line was opened in June with the hours of 0800-1700 Eastern Time, but it's now available 24/7. The VA will collect data from the line to improve service. Shipmates are encouraged to call and express their VA concerns or problems.

This line should not be confused with the VA Crisis Line, which is for veterans who have feelings of suicide or depression. The Veterans Crisis Line is: 1-800-273-8255 and press 1.

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Calendar of Events

January 27, 2018

Central Liaison Committee Meeting (CLC)
2 p.m. at Branch 24
Annapolis, MD

February 16-17, 2018

East Coast Mid-Year Meeting
Richmond, Virginia

February 22-25, 2018

Southeast Mid-Year Meeting
Courtyard Marriott, 3665 Roosevelt Blvd. Birmingham, AL 35235
Contact Branch 112 at 205-661-2280

March 15-18, 2018

South Central Mid-Year Meeting
Wyndham Garden Shreveport, 1419 E. 70th Street, Shreveport, LA 71105
318-797-9900
*Contact Bruce Talbot 808-781-6542
email: brucetalbotfra@outlook.com*

March 22-25, 2018

West Coast Mid-Year Meeting
Stockton, California
*Contact Roland Shorter, Jr.
email: rpfrawc@att.net*

March 24, 2018

Northeast/New England Mid-Year Meeting
Clarion Inn Toms River, 815 Route 37 West, Toms River, NJ 08755
*Contact Sharon A. Munday 732-567-5258,
732-350-6403
email: samnj124@comcast.net
\$109.00 per night plus tax Reservations: 732-341-2400*

April 8-11, 2018

North Central Mid-Year Meeting
Stone Castle Hotel, 3050 Green Mountain Dr., Branson, MO 65616
417-335-4700
\$69 + tax per night, includes breakfast

July 20-21, 2018

East Coast Regional Convention
Holliday Inn at Solomons Island, 155 Holiday Dr., Solomons, MD 20688
410-326-6311
*Contact: Brian J. Jones 240-925-7818
email: papajones62@hotmail.com*

August 3-4, 2018

Southwest Regional Convention
Laughlin, Nevada
*Contact RPSW Bruce Davis
email: bsnj@cox.net*

CFPB in Turmoil

Chaos and uncertainty engulf the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) when the director of the agency resigned. Before his departure, he appointed CFPB Chief of Staff Leandra English to serve as acting director. The Trump Administration immediately appointed Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Director Mick Mulvany to the same position. In response, English filed suit in the U.S. District Court to block Mulvany's appointment but the court ruled in favor of the Trump Administration's appointment. Ultimately, the individual selected as permanent Director of CFPB will require Senate confirmation.

FRA's Legislative Agenda includes working to ensure that the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA) is enforced by regulatory agencies, including the CFPB, Office of Military Affairs. The agenda also works to ensure active duty personnel are protected from predatory lenders. FRA recently supported a CFPB regulation to make mandatory arbitration agreements in financial contracts unenforceable. Earlier this year, the House passed the "Financial CHOICE Act" (H.R.10), which seeks to dramatically reshape the regulation of banking and other financial activities. This legislation includes a number of provisions weakening the CFPB and its Office of Service Members Affairs. The bill is currently in the Senate for consideration. Members can use the FRA Action Center to ask their Senators to oppose this legislation.

Does AUMF Need Updating?

The deaths of service members in Niger has some in Congress wanting to review, debate, and re-authorize the Authorization for the Use of Military Force (AUMF). Defense Secretary Mattis and Secretary of State Tillerson testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (both Trump appointees) arguing the 2001 and 2002 AUMFs remain a sound basis for U.S. military operations against an expanding and changing threat in the Global War on Terror (GWOT). The Pentagon released a report indicating the Department of Defense spent more than \$1.4 trillion on GWOT since September 11, 2001. **FRA**



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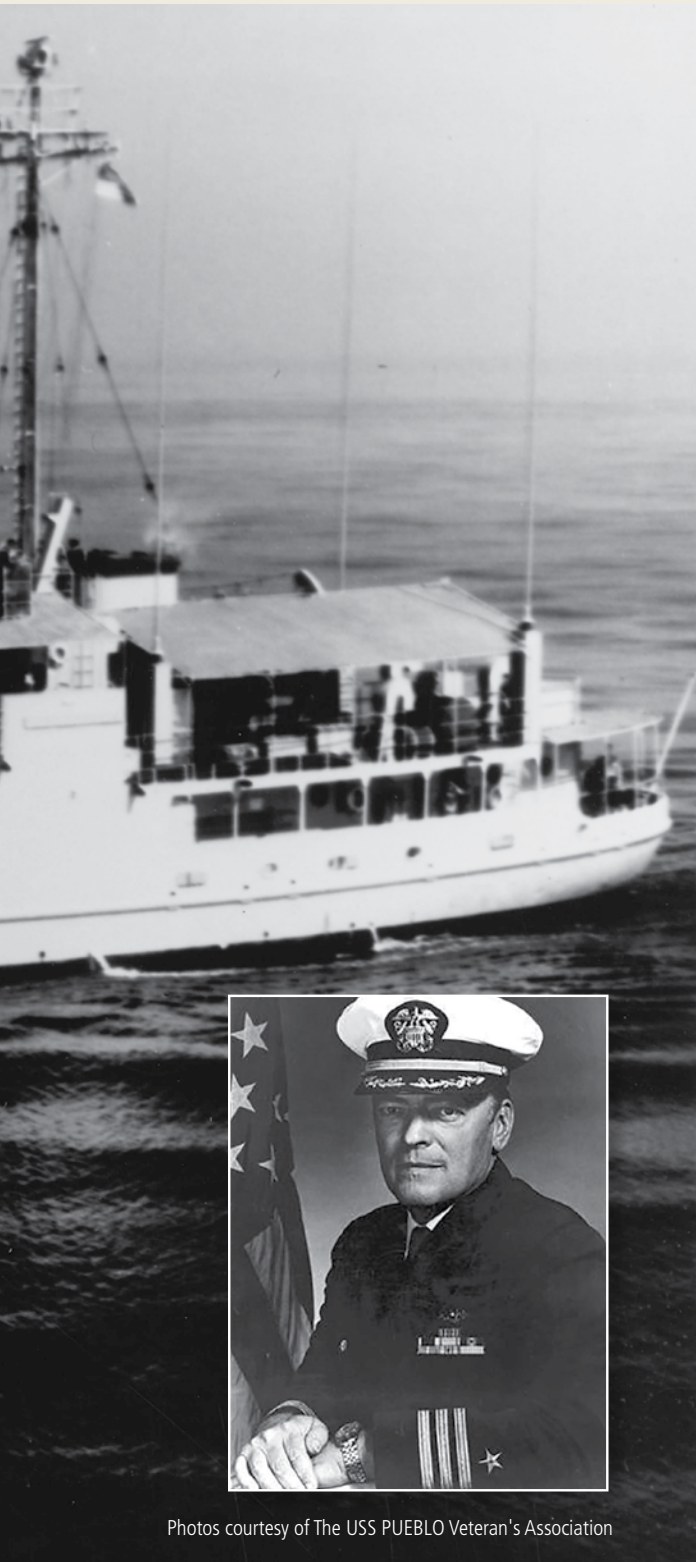
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USS PUEBLO (AGER-2)

By W.D. Stevenson



Photos courtesy of The USS PUEBLO Veteran's Association

The Mission

The primary operational orders listed the mission for the *PUEBLO* to operate in the Sea of Japan, and determine the extent and ability of the North Korean Navy—specifically in the ports of ChongJin, SongJin, Mayang and Wonsan. The SIGINT collector *USS PUEBLO (AGER-2)* was an environmental research ship. It was built in 1944 by the Kewaunee Shipbuilding and Engineering Company, in Kewaunee, Wis., as a freight and passenger ship (FP 344). She was ordered to sample the electronic environment off the North Korean coast, with an emphasis on intercepting and fixing on coastal radars. She was also instructed to intercept and conduct surveillance of Soviet Naval units in the straits of Tsushima, all to determine the purpose of a Soviet presence in that region. It was an intelligence collection mission that some like to call a “spy mission”.

The estimated risk levels of the mission were initially “minimal” since the *PUEBLO* had been ordered to operate in international waters for her entire deployment. Risk assessment is only one value that decision makers use when deciding whether a mission should be conducted. Some say the higher the risk assessment the lower the chances the mission would happen, but in this case the value of information gained may have suspended the risk assessment. The assessment process at the time of the *PUEBLO* hijacking, was defined by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The process normally starts by the 12th of the month leading up to the actual mission. The Operational Commander, Commander U.S. Naval Forces Japan (COMNAVFORJAP) acting as the Commander Task Force (CTF 96), was responsible for scheduling and proposing the mission, thus being the first commander to assign a risk assessment.

The loss of the *PUEBLO* was an embarrassment to the U.S. Navy. Not a single shot was fired from her in defense and she was caught unprotected. This was the first time in 160 years a navy vessel was seized. It resulted in significant losses, from the life of the sailor to the classified materials and U.S. cryptologic technology that fell into the hands of North Korea and Russia. It was largest loss in cryptology history. Another SIGINT collector, *USS LIBERTY*, was fired upon by Israeli forces in the Mediterranean June 8, 1967 but the ship was not seized.

Hijacked

On January 23, 1968 *PUEBLO* was operating 16 miles out at sea, in international waters, when they encountered a North Korean SO-1 class sub chaser who opened fire, at approximately 12:35am. In addition to the vessel that opened fire, two sub chasers, three P-4 torpedo boats and a couple of MiG-21 fighters entered the



The *PUEBLO* now sits, moored on a canal and is a North Korean museum.

battle, or rather the hijacking. No real battle ensued since the *PUEBLO* was not fitted properly for heavy battle—a 176-foot, 890 ton ship, the second smallest ship in the U.S. Navy with a max speed of 15 knots.

The battle was very one sided, lasting almost two hours with 57 millimeter cannon fire coming from the sub chasers and machine guns from the torpedo boats. No warning shots across the bow or rockets riding low over the water. The aluminum superstructure of the *PUEBLO* offered little if no resistance to the onslaught. One sailor was killed, three others sustained severe injuries and 16 others experienced shrapnel wounds. The ship was defenseless.

The crew tried to buy time as they conceived how to make it to open sea and wait for a rescue—a carrier, battlegroup, or other type of support. The Fifth Air Force was in Okinawa, Japan as well as several squadrons and the *USS ENTERPRISE (CVN-65)* was in the Sea of Japan. The North Koreans' plan was to coral the ship in shallow waters and take possession of the ship, its crew and contents. The crew did what it could to quickly destroy and dispose of as much classified and secret material and crypto equipment as possible.

Shipmate Rich Brune, Branch 181, was on the *USS YORKTOWN (CVS-10)* with Commander Antisubmarine Warfare Group-1. "Rear Admiral Ralph Weymouth was in charge, I think" said Brune. "We were on our way to Japan after leaving the Gulf when the *PUEBLO* was attacked. I was in the staff



operations radio room when the TTY and Crypto machines went crazy. I relayed the information from the machines to the admiral. The preparations were all in place and we waited for the word to go in and help the *PUEBLO*, but it never came."

Shipmate Earl Phares was in the Galley doing mess duty at the time of the attack. "When General Quarters was sounded, I remember sliding through the portal and down the port side when a shell hit. It struck the starboard side of the *PUEBLO* and fatally wounded Fireman Duane Hodges. I always wonder, 'what if I went down the starboard side?'" recalled Phares.

Shipmate Carl "Skip" Schumacher, Jr., recalled, "During the gun battle none of Captain 'Pete' Bucher's choices looked good. We did have two 50 caliber machine guns on board—a last minute addition generated by the attack on the *USS LIBERTY*. The rapidly added gun mounts had no armor protection; so even if the guns were brought up and installed, the gun crew would have been defenseless. Other weapons were limited—maybe eight 45 caliber side arms and a couple of small Thompson machine guns. Enough, it was thought, to dispel normal boarders but not enough to resist the forces we were facing."

Shipmate Ralph McClintock recalled, "I had worked the previous mid watch in the special operations detachment crypto room (SOD) Hut, so I relieved CT3 Brad Crowe for noon chow. We knew there was a sub chaser about 300 yards off our starboard bow, which arrived a few minutes before. We all thought it was a normal harassment opera-



tion by the North Koreans. We heard that all their guns were manned and trained on us. I stayed in the SOD Hut after Brad returned. Our NAVSECGRU (Naval Security Group) officer LT Steve Harris was talking with the bridge the entire time. There was total confusion in the blind SOD Hut, when we finally received the order to *'Begin Emergency Destruction!'* Catastrophe reigned! An enclosed space with little room, trying to destroy U.S. Government grade A 12-gauge steel encased electronic equipment along with crypto, an absolute ton of Secret and Top Secret pubs and manuals. All of which we never should have had on board. Swinging fire axes as far as we could in the small space resulted only in paint chips. That equipment is what you see today in the propaganda photos of *USS PUEBLO* at Pyongyang.

While destroying the ton of classified paper material, the North Koreans saw us jettison lead waited bags over board. They fired their 57mm guns directly into the space, which resulted in the one death and 10 casualties including the Skipper. We were burning as much as we could in trash barrels in the passage way but with no ventilation. During GQ all ventilation and water is shut. The area filled with smoke, blinded and breathless we continued until word reached us from the 1MC speaker. *"BM-1*

Klepac, lay aft to assist boarders!" This was about two hours after the North Koreans first began firing.

Photos courtesy of The
USS PUEBLO Veteran's
Association

POWs

The ship was taken into Wonsan and eventually the crew was placed on a train, taken to Pyongyang, the North Korean capital, and placed in barracks. The officers were isolated from the crew who were berthed in eight man rooms. The immediate focus of the North Koreans was on our Commanding Officer, Commander Pete Bucher and the subsequent beatings on all of us were severe. After 24 hours the officers were told they would be shot at dawn as spies, not captured military. That night, Bucher was escorted to another building where he witnessed the beatings administered to an alleged South Korean spy. When he returned to the barracks, he was told to admit that his ship was spying, apologize for it and give his assurances that he would never do this again. These were the so-called "three A's." After CDR Pete resisted, they put a revolver to his head, and said he wasn't worth a bullet, but they would shoot his crew in front of him, one by one starting with the youngest. With the youngest sailor in front of him, a revolver to his head, Bucher capitulated and signed their document.

After spending six weeks or so in downtown Pyongyang the prisoners were moved to the country and into a newer building that appeared to be a military training facility. They were guarded by 17-year-old North Korean soldiers who were raised to detest Americans as their arch enemies. They would often—usually at night—inflict their own

beatings. Though they were somewhat less severe than those ordered from on high, they were just as painful.

In August, the North Koreans staged a phony news conference where the prisoners were instructed to praise their humane treatment. The Americans thwarted the Koreans by inserting innuendoes and

Crewmember List

This list gives the names of all personnel assigned to the *USS PUEBLO (AGER-2)* and their rates at time of capture. Included are two honorary crew members.

Officers

CDR Lloyd Mark "Pete" Bucher, Commanding Officer
LT Edward R. Murphy Jr., Executive Officer
LT Stephen R. Harris, Research Officer
LT (JG) F. Carl Schumacher, 1st Lieutenant, Operations
ENS Timothy L. Harris, Supply Officer
CWO-4 Gene Lacy, Engineering Officer

Chief Petty Officers

CTMCS Ralph D. Bouden
ENC Monroe O. Goldman
CTTC James F. Kell

First Class Petty Officers

CT1 Don E. Bailey
HM1 Herman P. Baldrige
CT1 Michael T. Barrett
EN1 Rushel J. Blansett
YN1 Armando Canales
SK1 Policarpo Polla Garcia
CT1 Francis J. Ginther
EMI Gerald W. Hagenson

BM1 Norbert J. Klepac
QM1 Charles B. Law
CT1 James D. Layton
PH1 Lawrence W. Mack
CT1 Donald R. Peppard
CT1 David L. Ritter
EN1 William D. Scarborough
CT1 James A. Shepard

Second Class Petty Officers

CT2 Michael W. Alexander
CT2 Wayne D. Anderson
BM2 Ronald L. Berens
SGT Robert J. Chicca, USMC
IC2 Victor D. Escamilla
SGT Robert J. Hammond, USMC
RM2 Lee R. Hayes
CT2 Peter M. Langenberg
SM2 Wendell G. Leach
CS2 Harry Lewis
CT2 Donald R. McClarren
ET2 Clifford C. Nolte
CT2 Charles R. "Joe" Sterling
GM2 Kenneth R. Wadley
CT2 Elton A. Wood

Third Class Petty Officers

CT3 Charles W. Ayling
CT3 Paul D. Brusnahan
BM3 Willie C. Bussell
RM3 Charles H. Crandell
CT3 Bradley R. Crowe
CT3 Rodney H. Duke
CT3 Joseph Fejfar
CT3 John W. Grant

CT3 Sydney (Jerry) Karnes
CT3 Earl M. Kisler
CT3 Anthony A. Lamantia
CT3 Ralph McClintock
QM3 Alvin H. Plucker
CS3 Ralph E. Reed
CT3 Steven J. Robin
CT3 John A. Shilling
CT3 Angelo S. Strano
EN3 Darrel D. Wright

Non-rated

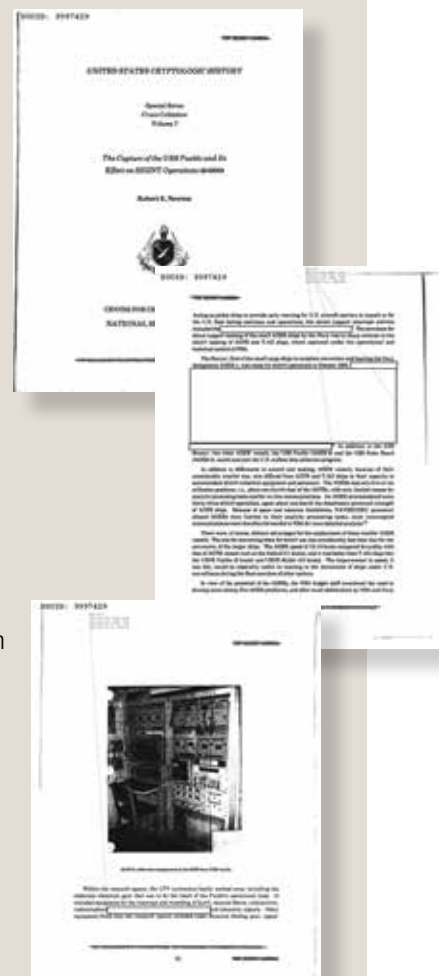
Steward Rogelio P. Abelon
Steward Rizalino L. Aluague
Fireman Richard E. Arnold
Fireman Richard I. Bame
Fireman Peter M. Bandera
Fireman Howard E. Bland
Seaman Stephen P. Ellis
Fireman John C. Higgins
Seaman Robert W. Hill Jr
Fireman Duane Hodges
Seaman Roy J. Maggard
Seaman Larry J. Marshall
Fireman Thomas W. Massie
Fireman John A. Mitchell
Fireman Michael A. O'Bannon
Seaman Earl R. Phares
Seaman Dale E. Rigby
Seaman Richard J. Rogala
Seaman Ramon Rosales
Seaman Edward S. Russell
Seaman John R. Shingleton
Fireman Norman W. Spear
Fireman Larry E. Strickland
Fireman Steven E. Woelk

Civilian Oceanographers

Harry Iredale, III
Dunnie R. Tuck, Jr.

Honorary Crew Members

Marcee (Rethwish) Gregory
Ralph Hostetter





Photos courtesy of The USS PUEBLO Veteran's Association

sarcastic language into their statements. Things recognized by folks in the U.S. as signs of resistance. Some prisoners also rebelled during propaganda photos by casually sticking out their middle finger. A gesture North Koreans didn't understand. This came to be known as the Hawaiian Good Luck salute. Later, the North Koreans caught on and beat the POWs for a week.

CDR Pete was instructed to record a final departure message. He recalled the Korean word *paean*, which translates to praise when read, but when spoken in English, has an entirely different connotation! When Bucher's speech was widely broadcasted, he clearly described the prisoner's desire to "pee on the North Korean Navy, pee on the North Korean Army but most of all pee on the Great Premier Kim Jong Il himself."

Coming Home

President Johnson considered options ranging from mining Wonsan harbor or organizing a naval blockade, to launching a battalion-sized ground attack on part of the demilitarized zone and air strikes. Ultimately, however, he chose to go with a show of force, deploying hundreds of combat aircraft and three aircraft carriers to South Korea, and mobilizing fourteen thousand Air Force and Naval reservists. Soon the Soviet Union offered to aid in securing the release of the *PUEBLO*'s crew if the United States drew its forces back down.

Prior to Vietnam, Shipmate Richard Dickerson was recalled to active

duty and attached to a group of about 75 Seabees who had just come from Gulfport in August of 1968. They were all sent to the Naval Amphibious Base Coronado in the San Diego Bay.

Dickerson and the Seabees were assigned to refurbish some dormant barracks—a training exercise. "The Seabees worked at night and under some level of secrecy, drawn shades and covered windows," said Dickerson. The accommodations had to be ready for families, kids, reporters and some of the crew of the *PUEBLO*. "When we started getting kids things, like toys, female hygiene products etc., some of the crew started to really push me about what's going on," said Dickerson. "Well I had to say something, so I asked them if they could keep a secret and told them, 'The Navy is developing a new program for the WAVES.' The next day Master-at-Arms called Dickerson in and said, "There had been a breach of security, 100 WAVES were coming to base. How the hell did you pull that off?"

On December 23, 1968, exactly 11 months after the *PUEBLO*'s capture, U.S. and North Korean negotiators reached a settlement to resolve the





Photos courtesy of The USS PUEBLO Veteran's Association

crisis. Under the settlement's terms, the United States concedes to the "three As" and pledged to cease any future action. That day, the surviving 82 crew walked one by one across the "Bridge of No Return" at Panmunjon to freedom in South Korea. They were hailed as heroes and sent home in time for Christmas.

The word spread on Christmas Eve, "they are on their way." All the electrical, water, furniture, plumbing had to be ready when 'they' arrived. When the crew of the *PUEBLO* arrived, they were accompanied by a couple of Marines on both sides of each of the crew members. The newspaper headlines all said "Just Released" but all the planning, construction, outfitting and security that went into getting the crew of the *PUEBLO* settled had taken quite some time. It was all very organized and controlled. The location picked was ideal because they could easily shut off access to this part of the island.

Though the crew was welcomed home, Commander Bucher had to sit before a court of inquiry. "Don't give up the ship!" is something the U.S. Navy firmly believes in. Regardless of the fact that any resistance would have led to the slaughter of the crew and civilians aboard, Bucher was in direct violation when he surrendered his virtually unarmed ship. The admirals recommended a court-martial even though a classified report found that Navy leadership was on the hook for sending the *PUEBLO* unprepared and unsupported, into a high-risk mission. Captain Bucher hoped a court-martial would conduct an ex-

tensive investigation than what was currently under way. The Secretary of the Navy John Chafee, however, overruled the courts recommendation, stating on record, "There was plenty of blame to go around for the incident and that whatever the results, the crew of the *PUEBLO* has suffered enough."

Resolution

North Korea transferred the *USS PUEBLO* from Wonsan, around the Korean peninsula, 1000 nautical miles to the Taedong river in Pyongyang on the west coast—in open waters. This was during the Clinton Administration in the late 1990's. Secretary Albright met with Kim Jong Il and thought she could forge a nuclear program deal with North Korea. The U.S. Navy was commanded not to interfere. McClintock said, "The second oldest commissioned ship in the United States Navy is the *USS PUEBLO*, docked on a sewer they call a canal, in Pingpong North Korea. There is never a cruise missile around when you need one." When asked what he thought the U.S. should do, Shipmate Phares, swiftly and simply replied, "Nuke it!"

North Korea regards the *USS PUEBLO* as their greatest Cold War prize. Today, she is a restored centerpiece in a North Korean war museum, as an attraction for vacationers to visit. I wonder how close you have to be for a Tomahawk missile malfunction to happen? **FRA**

Thanks to The USS PUEBLO Veteran's Association for providing their resources found at: www.usspueblo.org

Anniversary Price!
LOW AS
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each



Actual size
is 38 mm

30 Years of Purity: 2018 Silver Maple Leafs Now Available

First issued 30 years ago, the Canadian Silver Maple Leaf has become one of the world's premier silver bullion coins. Millions are struck each year and quickly secured by collectors and silver stackers alike. They are second only to the U.S. Silver Eagle in terms of unit sales, but are superior in terms of purity, legal-tender value and security. Best of all, excitement is white-hot for 2018's 30th anniversary issue.

Special 30th Anniversary Issue

2017 marked Canada's 150th anniversary, and with it came a number of special issues. Collectors around the world discovered the benefits of Canada's precious metal coins. Combine that discovery with this coin's 30th anniversary, and you've got a release that even casual stackers can't afford to miss!

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The Canadian Silver Maple Leaf is one of the world's purest silver coins, struck in a full ounce of 99.99% ("four nines") pure silver, its content, purity and \$5 Canadian legal-tender value guaranteed by the Canadian

government. By contrast, the U.S. Silver Eagle is only struck in 99.9% purity and carries only a \$1 U.S. legal-tender value.

Advanced Security Features

While the Silver Maple Leaf still displays the same immortal symbol of Canada that it did 30 years ago, a few changes have been made along the way. Radial lines were added to the design's background, and laser technology was used to add a micro-engraved, textured maple leaf, complete with a tiny number "18" visible under magnification.

These updated security features make the Silver Maple Leaf nearly impossible to forge, turning one of the world's purest silver coins into one of its most secure. For both stackers and collectors, this is an incredibly important benefit of owning Canadian Silver.

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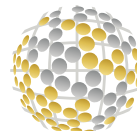
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Maintaining Flexibility & Balance

By Denny Marshall, Professional Trainer

Let's first tackle flexibility. Flexibility gives you immediate and long-term benefits with fewer injuries and less pain. Stretching helps to relieve tension in your body and does help you feel good. Stretching improves circulation to your arms and legs, muscle control and improves your balance and coordination. In addition, stretching adds to your range of motion and decrease the risk of injury.

I have never been the most flexible person in the world, so I **MUST** stretch daily to maintain the flexibility I **DO** have. One of the simplest stretches I do and one you can try yourself is done before I even get out bed every morning. Imagine jump-starting your day before you even leave the comfort

of your own bed! Before rolling out of bed, lie on your back and reach to your headboard, straighten your legs and imagine yourself being pulled from your fingers to your toes. Keep your feet flexed and point your toes up to avoid cramps. Hold this pose for at least three deep breathes, release, relax and get your day started!

The two main types of stretches are Static Stretching and Dynamic Stretching. Static Stretching is when you hold a stretch in one position without movement. Dynamic Stretching, on the other hand, refers to stretches that involve movement during the stretch. I use both types of stretches daily with my clients. A lot of times I'll have my athletes perform a routine of Dynamic Stretches

prior to our sessions, and we perform a routine of Static Stretches post workout. Static Stretches slow down muscle activation for about an hour after the session. The reason for this is because I'm training athletes, and our sessions involve a lot of movements. This is not ideal for athletes prior to a sport game or training. Dynamic Stretching helps to increase your body's blood flow and temperature. It also loosens up your muscles and joints in the range of motion you are engaging in.

Now that I have explained the two types of stretching, you now know Static Stretches should not be done when engaging in athletic activities but should be done every day, or at least three to four times a week, to increase the flexibility of your muscles. Here are a few Static Stretches you can do daily in your home or in the gym.

1. Shoulder Stretch – Hold a belt or a necktie above your head with your elbows straight. Your hands should be shoulders width apart. Keep your wrists straightened and pull gently. Hold for at least 10 seconds then widen your grip on the belt. While maintaining the pull, allow one hand to drop behind you to waist height. Raise both hands and allow the other hand to drop behind you to waist height. Finally, lower both hands behind you and hold the stretch.

2. Hamstring and Back Stretch – Lie down flat with your back on the floor and your legs up against a wall. Straighten your legs until you feel a slight stretch in your back and hamstrings. To increase the stretch, scoot yourself closer to the wall as you leave your legs up against the wall.

3. Calf Stretch – Stand up and face a step. Place your right foot firmly on the step. Arrange your left foot so that the front half of the foot is on the edge of the same step and the back half is hanging off the edge. Once your balanced let the left heel drop so that you feel the stretch in the back of your left leg. Don't bounce but maintain the stretch for 10 to 30 seconds then switch feet.

4. Spine Stretch – Lie flat on your back with your legs straight, toes pointed down and arms stretched overhead with your palms together. Rock your arms up and down. You can feel your spine stretching between your shoulder blades.


5. Hip and Back Stretch – Sit in a comfortable position on the floor with your legs crossed, right leg on top of your left. Lean your upper body forward and walk your arms out in front of you. If you can, place both elbows on the floor. Lean forward until you feel a gentle stretch in the hips and back, then stop. Reverse your legs, placing the left on top and repeat.

You may be surprised that the best workout I have implemented for myself and my clients is Yoga! Yoga has been around for more than 5,000 years. My clients and I do yoga two to three times a week for 30 to 45 minutes with a great yoga instructor, Zaineb “ZiZi” Hassan, Ph.D, at ZiZi yoga. It has made a significant difference not just in my own performance but in my athlete clients as well. Yoga helps with both flexibility and balance while helping lower your stress level. It also provides many other health benefits. There are many different styles of yoga, so you should find out which style will benefit your goals. Yoga may seem overwhelming and slightly trendy but it is for every age not just the young and fit. Adopt a yoga practice to address your specific medical condition. Use the mind-body connection, self-acceptance and calming effect to find the perfect balance. Whatever type of flexibility program you choose to integrate in to your exercise programs, keep it consistent.

Now We Are Going to Tackle Balance

When your muscles and joints are flexible, it is easier to keep your balance. A limber body can control its muscles and react quickly—keeping you upright even if you trip or slide. When muscles are tight, they don't easily adjust to sudden changes of position and the accidental trip on the stairs could very well turn into a serious fall. Poor balance can be the side effect of certain medications, medical complications or serious disorders. For example, dizziness—which can cause difficulty in balancing—can be a result of disease in the inner ear balance system. It can also be due to the side effects of medication or interactions between different medicines, problems with a poorly-balanced diet or trouble with high or low blood pressure.

As men and women age, they tend to have poor balance, brittle bones, weak muscles and joints that just don't flex. These problems can result in injuries



There are slight changes that happen when your body ages. The hairs in your inner ear lose sensitivity, which decrease balance. Your nerve cells are less sensitive and reaction times slow down. You can help maintain your balance by utilizing resistance training routines.

that make everyday living difficult. Balance gives you the confidence to enjoy life, do every day chores and maybe even take up more intense activities such as hiking or biking. There are slight changes that happen when your body ages. The hairs in your inner ear lose sensitivity, which decrease balance. Your nerve cells are less sensitive and reaction times slow down. You can help maintain your balance by utilizing resistance training routines. Try adding resistance training into your regular routine as often as you can. If you need to, hold onto a wall for stability. After a while and with some confidence, you won't need any props at all.

1. Stand next to a wall, face sideways and place your feet hip-width apart. Do not bend your knees but do shift your weight to your toes. Lean forward as far as you can without falling. Don't let your heels come off the ground. Shift your weight back to your heels and move backwards. Don't lift your toes. Keep your feet flat and sway to your left and then to your right. Bring your feet closer together, close your eyes and repeat.

2. Try to touch your rear. Stand straight and hold the back of a chair for extra balance. Flex or bend your right knee and stretch your calf as close to the back of your thigh as you can. Hold, then lower your leg and repeat with the left leg.

You can also try some simple stretching and balance exercises, yoga, or formalized balance programs. Visit your local gym and find out what stretching and flexibility programs they offer. Forget your age! You should utilize these programs at any age to keep yourself flexible, balanced and free from falls or injuries. Enjoy a healthy lifestyle! **FRA**

Denny Marshall operates 360 Fit Performance with his business partner Myron Flowers. They believe everyone is an athlete and strive to bring that athletic aspect out of every client. Fitness 360 takes a grassroots approach in training student athletes from youth sports to high school, college and even at the professional level. Fitness 360 has some notable clients such as the National Football League's Vernon Davis, Vontae Davis, Steffon Diggs, Ronald Darby, Tahir Whitehead, Muhammad Wilkerson and Blake Countess.

Branch 101 Helping Others

The Veterans Home of California is located in Yountville, California and was founded in 1884. The facility is the largest of its kind in the United States and currently has a population of 1200 aged and disabled veterans from World War II, Korean War, Vietnam War, Gulf War, War in Afghanistan and Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom. There are several levels of care offered to the veteran residents. They range from domiciliary services, residential care for the elderly, intermediate nursing care, skilled nursing care, adult day health care and outpatient clinic.

There is a wealth of activities available for veterans. The grounds of the facility include a 1,214-seat Lincoln Theater (home of the Symphony Napa Valley, Orchestra Institute Napa Valley as well as a robust education program), a 9-hole golf course, baseball stadium, bowling alley, swimming pool, U.S. Post Office and a Military Base Exchange branch store. All of these facilities are available for use by resident veterans at no additional cost. Additionally, the home offers services specifically for residents including a fitness



Top (L to R) Kate Blanton, Deborah Brownell and Karen Webster

center, a resident operated television station, auto hobby shop, a 35,000 volume library, creative arts center and a multi-faith chapel. A wonderful historic aspect of this facility is the cemetery on the grounds with graves dating back to the Spanish-American War of 1898. The burial ground is the final resting place of more than 5,500 veterans and their spouses.

Shipmates, as you know, there are plenty of ways to give back to fellow veterans. FRA Branch 101 Board Member Kate Blanton, Yountville Director of Volunteer Service Deborah Brownell and Unit 101 LA FRA President Karen Webster presented gift bags filled with essentials to the veterans at this California location. All necessities were purchased with donations from 101's annual Yountville Picnic (sponsored by The American Legion). This year the event was held July 30, 2017. **FRA**

Yountville is an incorporated town in Napa County, California in the North Bay portion of the San Francisco Bay Area. For more information about this Veterans Home, please contact them at 800-952-5626, or by visiting their website at: <https://www.calvet.ca.gov/VetHomes/pages/yountville.aspx>

Honoring Our Heritage and Forging the Future!



Christina Murray

Happy New Year! My wish is that each and every one of you has a year filled with an abundance of blessings and happiness! In keeping with the theme of Honoring Our Heritage and Forging the Future, my membership project this year recognizes those members who recruit or reinstate three members. The first 165 members to recruit three members will receive a beautiful gold rooster pin. Here is a little heritage history: During her vice-presidential year (1997-1998), PNP Barbara Sherwood encouraged everyone to “Crow” about the LA FRA. The number one reason others join is because they were asked. As I write this, I am preparing to send pins to five members who accepted the challenge: PNP Sandra Robbins, PNP Gini Larson, PRPSW Deanna Lewandowski, Nancy Hunter and Gwendolyn Wild. Hopefully by the time you read this, the MSA records will reflect my three or more new recruits. The monthly “New member” report will be the official tally record.

The “idea” of the LA FRA is to have a strong membership in order to have a solid voice on Capitol Hill. The Unit is designed to encourage social activities for members of the Fleet Reserve Association and their eligible family members, support patriotic works and provide welfare support to our local communities.

The question then becomes, do we seek members to provide actions or seek actions that would encourage others to become members?

Finding out what a potential member’s interest is, provides an opportunity to tell the Auxiliary story. Do they like to be in the know? Tell them about FRA action on Capitol Hill. Do they like to help others? Tell them about the welfare projects. Are they in need of a friend or a place to share their skills? Tell them about Unit

social activities. Some Units have a multitude of activity while others have a more subdued climate. This is not a cookie cutter organization where all Units must recruit the same way. The key is to share

the story of the Auxiliary to recruit and more importantly to maintain. After they are recruited we must nurture the needs of each new member. Did we welcome them? Did we call them? Offer a ride? Are we keeping the meetings positive and activities fun? Do we encourage a diverse membership? Are we open to new ideas?

What action(s) will your Unit take in 2018 to promote and maintain membership in the Auxiliary of the Fleet Reserve Association?

Please share pictures of your activities and events. Photographs tell a story and it is amazing how a person can relate and be encouraged to get involved. It takes all of us to forge the future of this organization. **FRA**

Yours in Loyalty, Protection and Service
Christina Murray

Christina Murray is the LA FRA National Vice President

“An idea can only become a reality once it is broken down into organized, actionable elements.”

—Scott Belsky,
Making Ideas
Happen:
Overcoming the
Obstacles Between
Vision and Reality



PNP Barbara Sherwood (1997-1998)

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1. BRANCH 23, BUFFALO, N.Y.

Congratulations to Shipmate Joe Ratke, who celebrated his 100th birthday! Ratke was also awarded his 65-year membership pin and certificate. Present were PRP NE/NEng Floyd Hunt, Branch 214, PRP NE/NEng Donna Jansky, Branch 31 and Shipmate Abe Zino, Branch 23, as well as family and friends.



1

**2. BRANCH 154, BAGUIO CITY, PI**

Two students (K-11 and K-12) of Baguio City High School were presented a Certificate of Scholarship by Branch President Glenn Lacaman along with the Branch Scholarship Committee Chairman Rudy Dulce and Branch Secretary Eduardo L. Narvaez (not pictured).

3. BRANCH 124 LAKEHURST, N.J.

NED Tom Snee presented Branch Secretary Sharon A. Munday (Secretary, Branch 124) the "Business of the Year 2017 Plaque" awarded by the Borough of Lakehurst, N.J. to FRA Branch 124 at the NE/NEng Regional Convention.



5

4. BRANCH 101, SANTA CLARA, CALIF.

(L to R) LA FRA Unit President Karen Webster, FRA Branch President Richard Ruiz and Shipmate Kate Blanton present at the September 11th, Memorial Remembrance Day at Oak Hill Memorial.

5. BRANCH AND UNIT 84, SAN DIEGO, CALIF.

LA FRA NT Bea Parco along with other members celebrated their 80th year with FRA at a Filipino Branch located in the FAVA (Filipino American Veterans Association) Hall in San Diego.



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6. BRANCH 162, NEW ORLEANS, LA.

Seated (L to R) Shipmate Kevin Streitmatter and Branch President David Campobasso. Standing (L to R) PRPSC Dave Field and Shipmate Jorge Sanchez manning a recruiting and information booth during a local festival.

7. BRANCH 208, JACKSONVILLE, N.C.

Branch President Raymond Applewhite, Camp Lejeune, recognizes Shipmate and Mrs. Amos Brantley for his 40 years of loyal and faithful service, during their October business meeting.



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8. BRANCH 29, BREMERTON, WASH.

(L to R) Branch Secretary/Treasurer John Casper, Shipmate Ivey, Branch President Stephen Talkington, and Branch Vice President Randy Warren presented Shipmate Ivey with his 50-year continuous membership pin.

9. BRANCH 166, VIRGINIA BEACH, VA.

MCPO Susan Bates Hippen (Ret.), Branch President S. D. Martin and LA FRA NVP Christina Murray attended the Veterans Care Center ground breaking ceremony.

10. BRANCH 136, MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.

Branch President Thomas Dooley (L) presented a 50-year certificate & pin to Shipmate Sander Erickson. Erickson celebrated his 99th birthday September 28th.

11. BRANCH 307, GULFPORT, MISS.

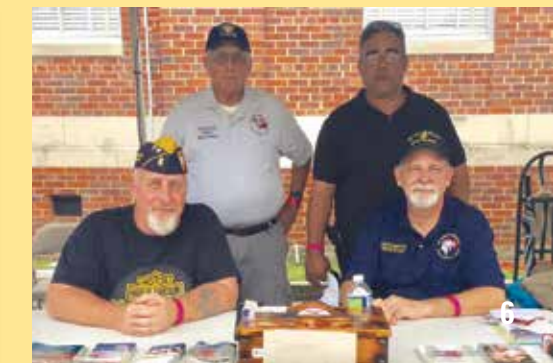
Branch President "Pete" Petersen presented Shipmate Bill Boots with a 40-year continuous membership award, assisted by MAA Diana Dopps (L).

12. FRA STAFF

(L to R) Commanding Officer Captain Goszkowicz of the NROTC Unit Memphis and FRA National Executive Director Tom Snee. NED Snee spoke at the University of Memphis in November.

13. BRANCH 18, SEATTLE, WASH.

Branch Treasurer Jim Blanton presented a challenge coin to Branch 18 Senior Salt Shipmate Merlin Jones who joined the FRA in August of 1949.



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To submit a photo for Shipmate News, please email 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.

In Memoriam

Name	Rating	Branch						
Amoranto, Armando D.	PO1, USN	171	Gheesling, Billy F.	ENCM, USN	MAL	Morin, Richard A.	HMC, USN	24
Archer, Arthur C.	ADJC, USN	261	Glasser, Michael M.	ADRC, USN	358	Mussari, Aloysius L.	CPO, USN	1
Aubin, Ronald L.	PNCs, USN	MAL	Gonyo, James A.	HMC, USN	MAL			
			Gratzon, Peter	YNCS, USN	115	Nichols, Robert R.	SK1, USN	281
Bailey, Howard W.	ABHC, USN	MAL						
Bandong, Rudolfo Q.	MSGT, USMC	67	Haas, Phillip E.	LCDR, USN	MAL	Ozvar, Frankie	BT1, USN	60
Barnett, Vernon P.	YN1, USNR	105	Hanna, John	USN	MAL			
Beals, Ronald E.	SK1, USN	105	Higgins, John E.	AECs USN	22	Peace, Namon	CWO4, USN	MAL
Blair, James	ENCs, USN	342	Hobart, Donald A.	USN	MAL	Pilgrim, Bennett	BTCS, USN	216
Borjas, Tony	SGT, USMC	161	Holcomb, Walter M.	EMCS, USN	60			
Brooks, Sidney G.	QMCM(SS), USN	MAL	Hopkins, Richard F.	AMCS, USN	MAL	Quenga, Antonio C.	HT1, USN	73
Buck, Duane	LCDR, USN	MAL	Hughes, Harold D.	HMC, USN	MAL			
Burgess, Henderson L.	MMC, USN	112				Reavis, Arthur W.	TM1, USN	40
			Johnson, Wooder	AKC, USN	MAL	Revels, John B.	ABFC, USN	MAL
Carroll, Errol	AMCS, USN	MAL	Jones, Rick D.	PO1, USN	269	Roemer, John M.	GSR, USN	166
Cathcart, William D.	MCPO, USMC	275	Jones, Francis J.	BTCS, USN	89			
Chapura, Andrew M.	MSGT, USMC	MAL				Schecter, Lawrence P.	GYSgt, USMC	MAL
Colley, James W.	EMCS, USN	MAL	Kennedy, Gerald R.	MMCS(SW), USN	276	Seesholtz, Donald L.	PO1, USN	MAL
Cox, Dale J.	HMC, USN	99	Klopf, Edward R.	PO1, USN	MAL	Shaddrix, Willis B.	MMC, USN	MAL
Crasco, John F.	CSC, USN	MAL				Smith, Virgle L.	MACM, USN	MAL
Creel, Timothy E.	QMSNCS, USN	44	Laughlin, James F.	AMS1, USN	70	Smoot, Richard L.	USN	101
			Lechtenberg, William C.	HMC, USN	382	Spencer, Gellespie	POC, USN	MAL
Denham, Royce M.	HM1, USN	182	Livingston, Richard L.	OS1, USN	MAL			
Denson, L.V.	SKCM(SS), USN	MAL	Lord, Ralph W.	ADJ1, USN	MAL	Varisco, John J.	PNC, USN	70
Diskin, Charles E.	USN	55	Louden, Jerry	CPO, USN	MAL	Weston, Ervin P.	ENC, USN	MAL
Doolittle, William H.	CECS, USN	MAL	Lyda, James	YN1, USN	269	Whitfield, James C.	CPO, USN	MAL
						Wieskus, William A.	EM2, USN	124
Egolf, James E.	DKCS, USN	106	Mallicoat, Tom	RD3, USN	316	Williams, Donald F.	RMCM(SW), USN	346
Evasco, Comrautor E.	SKC, USN	99	McCoy, Harlan	CS1, USN	MAL			
			Merrell, Jimmie M.	ENC, USN	68	Zihala, Richard J.	RMCS, USN	MAL
Forcade, Wayne G.	YNC, USN	161	Metts, Marvin L.	MSCS, USN	MAL			
Foster, Frank E.	ADJ2, USN	161	Misdorn, John F.	SSGT, USMC	126			
Franklin, Harold Gene	DTC, USN	MAL	Mitchell, Donald Russell		298			

Any names in **red** indicate 50 year continuous members.
Any names in **bold** indicate past national officers.

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 Contact: Tom Thaggard, 1147 Idlewood Dr.
 Waco, TX 76705
 Telephone: 254-366-3187
 Email: tthagard1@hotmail.com

USS Bluefish (SSN-675)

04/26/2018-04/29/2018, Myrtle Beach, Va.
 Contact: John Wittenstrom
 Telephone: 910-235-0191
 Email: jwittenstrom@nc.rr.com

USS CONSERVER (ARS-39)

04/26/2018-04/29/2018, Jacksonville, Fla.
 Contact: Kevin Weaver, 160 Haddon Drive
 Macungie, PA 18062
 Telephone: 610-780-5484
 Email: kdwrdc@yahoo.com
 Website: www.doubletree3.hilton.com
 www.ussconserver.org

Navy Postal Clerks

04/29/2018-05/03/2018, San Antonio, Texas
 Contact: Patrick Huston, 455 Wimpole Ln., SW.,
 Palm Bay, FL 32908-3374
 Telephone: 321-984-2293
 Email: phuston001@cfl.rr.com

USS Kearsarge (CV/CVA/ CVS-33/LHD-3)

04/30/2018-05/04/2018, Jacksonville, Fla.
 Contact: C.V. Lindley
 Telephone: 850-712-4664
 Email: cvjan78@gmail.com
 Website: www.kearsargeassociation.com

USS Manatee Naval Reunion

05/08/2018-05/10/2018, Deadwood, S.D.
 Contact: Darrell Rosenau
 Telephone: 623-398-4074
 Email: ddrjr@sbcglobal.net

Old Antarctic Explorers Association (OAEA)

05/09/2018-05/11/2018, San Antonio, Texas
 Contact: J. L. West
 Telephone: 210-651-3650
 Email: OAEA2018reunion@aol.com

USS Andrew Jackson (SSBN-619)

10/21/2018-10/28/2018, Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.
 Contact: Jack (doc) Mcallister
 963 Harbor Town Drive
 Venice, FL 34292
 Telephone: 941-493-7488
 Email: patiopapa37@yahoo.com
 Website: www.ussvicruise.com
 www.ussandrewjacksonreunion.com

USS Henry L. Stimson (SSBN-655)

10/11/2018-10/14/2018, Oklahoma City, OK
 Contact: Charles Hladik, 2605 S.E. 39th St.,
 Moore, OK 73160
 Telephone: 405-793-1420
 Email: chkjoy1@sbcglobal.net
 Website: http://www.ssb655.org/

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Help Retirement Savings Last Longer with Flexible Spending Strategies

A key question most pre-retirees wrestle with is, “How do I know if my retirement savings will last?” An important first step is to get a handle on what your expenses will look like in retirement.



Carl M. Trevisan, CFP®

You may be familiar with one rule-of-thumb that suggests your retirement expenses be 80% of your pre-retirement expenses. This is a good starting point, but as you think seriously about retiring, it's important to be precise in planning your budget and expenses. You can ask your Financial Advisor to provide a budget worksheet, there are sample worksheets online or you can create your own. The most important thing is to be thorough in your analysis of your current and projected expenses.



Stephen M. Bearce

Once your list is complete, bucket your expenses into two main categories – essential (i.e. mortgage, food, medical expenses, etc.) and discretionary (i.e. travel, charitable contributions, entertainment, etc.). This helps determine what percentage of your expenses you could eliminate or delay if you were faced with an unexpected large expenditure or your portfolio experienced a meaningful decline. This is referred to as your adaptable or flexible spending percentage.

You can help mitigate the risk of depleting your

assets too early by adapting your spending. Reducing your spending in difficult market periods to preserve your assets that could potentially rebound when the market recovers is referred to

as adaptable or

flexible spending. Implementing adaptable spending strategies involves revisiting your essential and non-essential expenses, adjusting your discretionary spending and delaying major purchases.

On the flip side, adaptable spending allows you

to increase your spending when market returns are strong. This strategy helps extend your savings as well as increase the total income generated over time.

The hypothetical example shows the power of adaptable spending. Both the Smiths and the Joneses have a \$1.5 million portfolio. They plan on annual portfolio income of \$60,000 and withdrawing 4.0% annually to fund their spending needs. The only difference between them is the flexibility of their spending—the Jones have 30% flexibility, the Smiths' is only 10%.

When they faced unexpected expenses, their spending flexibility required them to react differently. The Jones' higher spending flexibility enabled them to reduce discretionary spending by postponing trips and not eating out. But because the Smiths had less spending flexibility, they were forced to liquidate more savings during a down market. As a result, the remaining savings in their portfolio wasn't able to make up the difference even when the market recovered.

The Jones' portfolio generated nearly \$250,000 more than the Smiths' over the course of their 30-year retirement, which can be attributed to spending flexibility.

Building flexible spending into your retirement is likely to help you have greater retirement income over time and to reduce the chances of outliving your savings. Whether you want to go it alone or work with a Financial Advisor, conducting a detailed inventory of your projected retirement expenses, determining what percentage of spending flexibility is right for you, and adjusting your spending can go a long way to help ensure your retirement savings last.

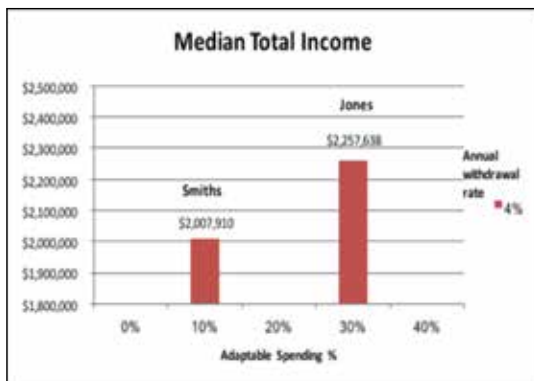
FRA

This article was written by/for Wells Fargo Advisors and provided courtesy of Carl M. Trevisan, Managing Director-Investments and Stephen M. Bearce, First Vice President- Investments in Alexandria, VA at 800-247-8602.

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als. We studied several videos from similar organizations and heeded the advice from 6:6 about the final product.

The video is brief by design, but you can see historic pictures coupled with recent pictures that reflect what FRA represents. Some footage of the CPO-elects who visited our office August 31, 2017 was included. NED Tom Snee participated in the “long time tradition” of signing their “charge books” and giving

Shipmates, 2017 was a great year at FRA. We have been taking innovative steps to bring the Association to the next level, while remaining true to the values of FRA. Some time ago, PNP Virgil Courneya had requested a video about the Association be produced. We chose the production company “6:6 Six Half Dozen Design Studio” to produce our video. You might notice major differences between the new video and the previous DVD produced in 2009.

We understand the hustle and bustle of everyday life and envisioned something that was brief and to the point. We wanted to capture FRA’s motto of Loyalty, Protection and Service, as well as perk the curiosity of our main target audience: millenni-

some foresight into continuing their careers to be great leaders and a resource “hub” for their troops.

We hope you join us in sharing the video with others. You can find it on our website www.fra.org or our newly created YouTube channel: Fleet Reserve Association <https://youtu.be/Zqni8BhO8IM> and Facebook page: www.fra.org/fb. Be sure to share it on your FRA Branch website by clicking the share or download option on video. Don’t forget to click that “like” button and “share” it on social media. Your support as always is greatly appreciated!

We would like to thank Penny Collins and Brian Condon for their time and dedication during the production. As always, if we can be of further assistance please email us at: marketing@fra.org. **FRA**

Chicago Doctor Invents Affordable Hearing Aid

Outperforms Many Higher Priced Hearing Aids

Reported by J. Page

CHICAGO: A local board-certified Ear, Nose, and Throat (ENT) physician, has shaken up the hearing aid industry with the invention of a medical-grade, affordable hearing aid. ***This revolutionary hearing aid is designed to help millions of people with hearing loss who cannot afford—or do not wish to pay—the much higher cost of traditional hearing aids.***

“Perhaps the best quality-to-price ratio in the hearing aid industry”

— Dr. Babu, Board-Certified ENT Physician

The doctor knew untreated hearing loss could lead to depression, social isolation, anxiety, and symptoms consistent with Alzheimer’s disease. **He didn’t know why hearing aids were so expensive when the prices on so many consumer electronics like TVs, DVD players, cell phones, and digital cameras had fallen.**

Since Medicare and most private insurance plans do not cover the costs of hearing aids, which can cost between \$2,000-\$6,000 for a pair, many of the doctor’s patients could not afford the expense. The doctor’s goal was to find a solution that would help with the most common types of hearing loss at an affordable price, similar to the **“one-size-fits-most” reading glasses** available at drug

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stores. He evaluated numerous hearing devices and sound amplifiers, including those seen on television. Without fail, those were found to amplify bass/low frequencies (below 1000 Hz) and were not effective amplifying the frequencies related to the human voice.

Inspiration from a Surprising Source

The doctor’s inspiration to defeat the powers-that-be that kept inexpensive hearing aids out of the hands of the public actually came from a cell phone he had just purchased. **“I felt that if someone could devise a smart phone for about \$700 that could do all sorts of things, I could create a hearing aid at an affordable price.”**

Affordable Hearing Aid-Superb Performance

The high cost of hearing aids is a result of layers of middlemen and expensive unnecessary features. The doctor concluded that it would be possible to develop a medical-grade hearing aid without sacrificing the quality of components. The result is the **MDHearingAid®** starting at \$199. **It has been declared to be the best low-cost hearing aid that amplifies the range of sounds associated with the human voice without overly amplifying background noise.**

Tested by Leading Doctors and Audiologists

The **MDHearingAid** line of aids has been rigorously tested by leading ENT physicians and audiologists who have unanimously agreed that the **sound quality and output in many cases exceeds more expensive hearing aids.**

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“I have a \$2,000 ReSound® Live hearing aid in my left ear and the MDHearingAid® in my right ear. I am not able to notice a significant difference in sound quality between the two hearing aids.”

—Dr. May, ENT physician

“They work so great, my mother says she hasn’t heard this well in years, even with her \$2,000 digital! It was so great to see the joy on her face. She is 90 years young again.”

—Al P.

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