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FRA *today*

The magazine of the Fleet Reserve Association

APRIL 2023/\$3.75

THE CHANGING FACES OF OLD BASES

INSIDE:

- 10** Budget Challenges on Capitol Hill
- 26** Trailblazer Vice Adm. Samuel L. Gravely Jr.
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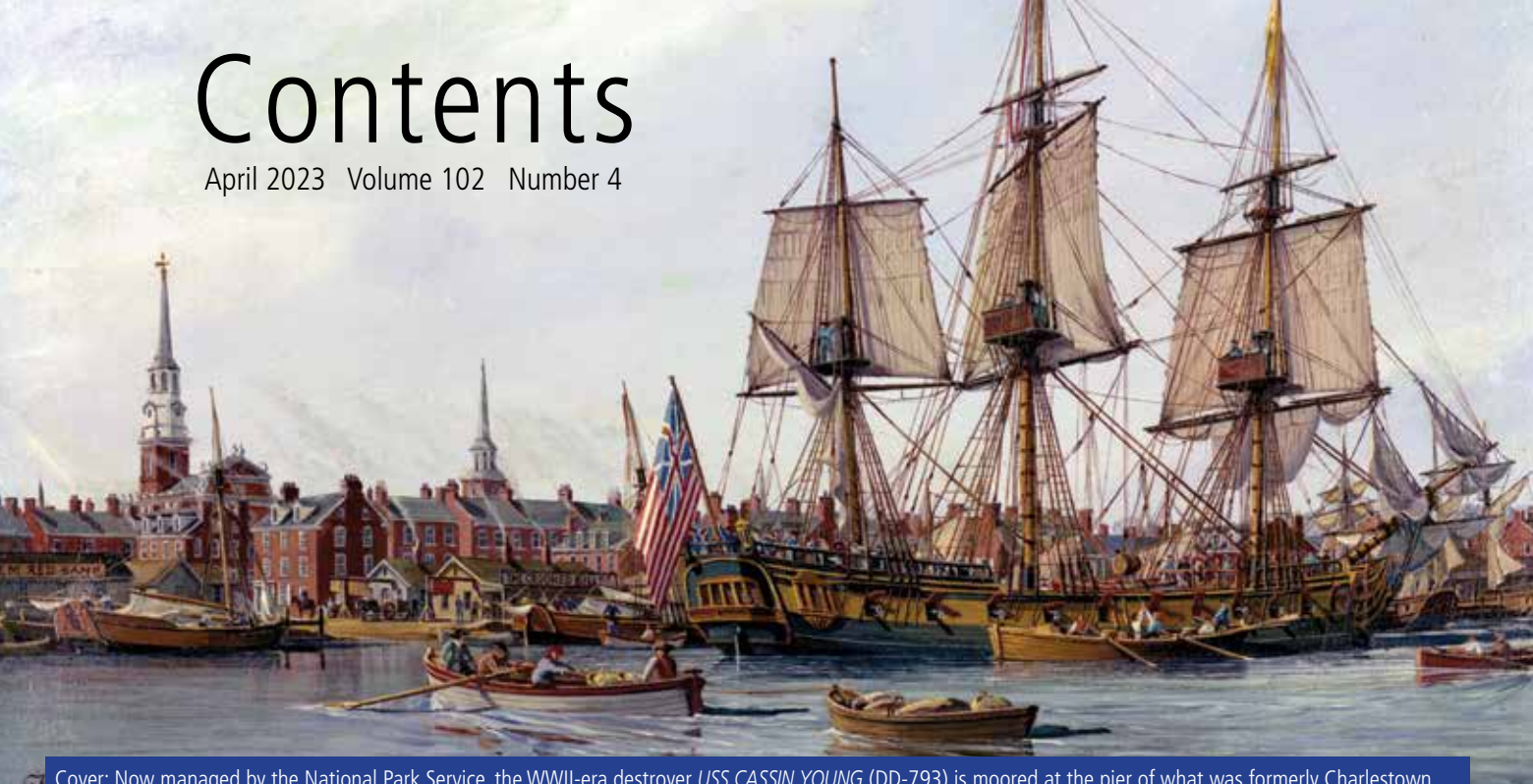


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Cover: Now managed by the National Park Service, the WWII-era destroyer *USS CASSIN YOUNG* (DD-793) is moored at the pier of what was formerly Charlestown Navy Yard in Boston. Although built in California, *CASSIN YOUNG* teaches visitors about the 14 Fletcher-class ships like it produced at Charlestown Navy Yard, which closed in 1974. Photo courtesy of Depositphotos. Above: An oil painting by W. Nowland Van Powell depicts Lt. John Paul Jones raising the Grand Union flag as the continental ship *ALFRED* was placed in commission in Philadelphia in December 1775. Image courtesy of the U.S. Naval History and Heritage Command.

Features

18 **From Wooden Ships to Walking Paths: The Changing Faces of Old Bases**
The needs of the military change with time, including where installations are located and how they are utilized. It might be fiscally wise to close unneeded bases, but it is also a reassuring balm for the history lover's soul to see them reborn.

26 **The Trailblazing Career of Vice Admiral Samuel Lee Gravely Jr.**
Samuel Gravely Jr. left school, enlisted in the Naval Reserve and headed for basic training in September 1942, stepping onto the path that would take him into the history books as the first African American sailor to reach many career milestones in the U.S. Navy.



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LOYALTY, PROTECTION AND SERVICE

The 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.

Forging Resilience

As I read this month's feature about the ways in which some closed bases have found new lives as commercial spaces, I could not help but think of the parallel experience in the lives of service members, who must also find a second career following their military days. On top of the practical challenges of securing a new job, moving to a new home and developing a civilian social circle, the transition requires the extremely difficult work of redefining who you are, especially if you have been investing in your military identity for decades. For so many, fraternal organizations like the FRA have helped them remain connected to their military service while also moving forward into a new civilian life. I hope you are all proud to have played a part — directly or indirectly — in facilitating a Shipmate's successful transition.



Although the shift from military service to civilian life is a major one, it is also true that one of the most important skills the military teaches you is how to adapt to change. My husband and I learned that skill early on. After our honeymoon, my husband returned to work and was told, "The XO needs to see you." He was subsequently informed that he was being cut new orders — thankfully, to the squadron next door. However, this meant that instead of us spending our first year of marriage together as we had planned, my husband would be deploying in 2 ½ months. In a brand-new state with no job, no car, no friends and all of my possessions in boxes, I had to get my act together quickly!

As extreme as that experience felt, I regularly meet military families who have also had their life plans change on a dime. But out of these experiences — and the less extreme, day-to-day unpredictability that permeates military life — are forged a fierce resilience and adaptability that not many possess. And just as an old barracks can become an artist's studio as times change, so too can veterans adapt to whatever life after the military throws at them. So if change lies on the road ahead of you right now, face it confidently, knowing that you are quite literally a seasoned veteran at handling the unexpected.

FRA

In Loyalty, Protection and Service,
Elise M. Howard, Managing Editor

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Shipmates, Are Your Affairs in Order?



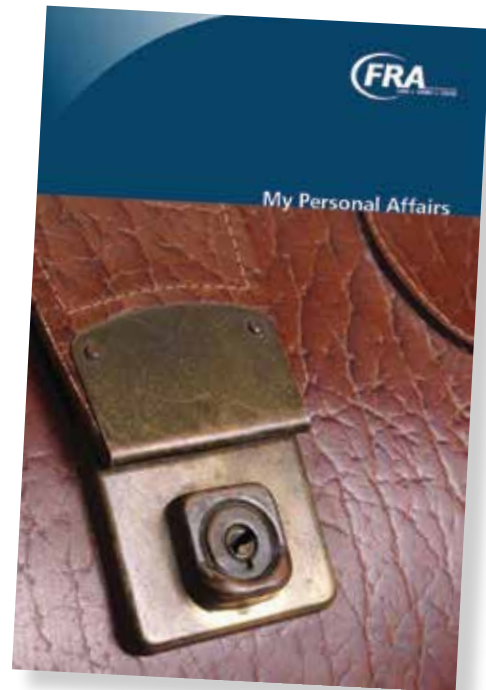
National President
Robbie Robbins

Well, I was in for a shock a little over a year ago when my Uncle Bob passed away suddenly from cancer. He evidently did not listen to the warning signs and put off talking to his doctors about his symptoms. By the time he did, the cancer had spread, and he passed within a month of finding out his diagnosis.

My uncle was a retired chief, having served more than 20 years in the Coast Guard. He had a second career working in the education system at a local community college, where he taught small engine repair and was involved with research in the marine biology department. He was an exceptionally talented artist, photographer and woodworker. I say this only because I always felt as if he was a take-charge type of person and was prepared for any situation.

I wasn't able to go up to be with my aunt till a couple of months after my uncle's death. To my surprise, my aunt had been taken to the hospital just a few days before I arrived. So I spent several days with her at the hospital trying to help her with some of the paperwork that had accrued since Uncle Bob's death. She was very confused about his benefits and was not aware of TRICARE For Life at all. She has since been made aware of which benefits she is eligible for and is now using TRICARE. I learned that my uncle had never communicated with her anything in regards to military benefits or other entitlements. He felt that she didn't need to know because he was taking care of everything. I guess he also felt as if he would be around to take care of things. My aunt has been fortunate to find help with getting everything settled and is doing well.

Shipmates, it is imperative that we not leave our loved ones with no preparation in case we become incapacitated or die. We need to communicate with our loved ones our wishes if something were to happen and equip them



The booklets are sent to current members upon request either by the Shipmate or by the Branch Secretary.

with the information they will need to take care of themselves after we are gone. The FRA has a booklet that is called "My Personal Affairs." This book is a great tool because it has fill-in-the-blanks regarding your affairs, such as banking information and insurance policies, to name a couple. It will just take you a little bit of time to fill out, and it will give you peace of mind that your loved ones will be able to take care of your affairs if something happens to you.

Shipmates, please get your affairs in order now. Don't think that you will be able to take care of everything in due time. Be prepared by talking with your loved ones and hopefully having instructions for them so that they can take care of everything if something happens.

FRA

I remain in Loyalty, Protection and Service,
NP Robbie Robbins

Robbie is the national president of the Fleet Reserve Association and may be reached at: FRANP@FRA.org.

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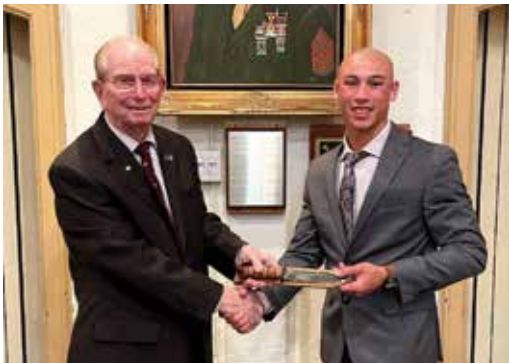
Branch 70 K- Bar Award

Bill, I instituted the K-Bar award for the 3rd honor graduate for each graduating class from Drill Instructor School, at MCRD, San Diego. I'm the current Branch 70 President, Poway Valley, California. Several years ago, I found out that one of the FRA members [at our branch] died. He had been doing the DI School presentation and was awarding a ceramic plate of the *USS ARIZONA*.

Having been a DI twice (1967-1970, and 1971-1974), I was also an instructor at DI school during the end of my second tour. I decided to take the award presentation over. I didn't think the plate was what I would award so occasionally I award a personally inscribed K-Bar. It is awarded by our branch on behalf of the FRA.

If you have any other questions, please feel free to contact me by email or phone.

Louis Irvin



Branch 70 President and retired Marine Corps Master Gunnery Sgt. Lou Irvin, presented an engraved K-Bar knife to a graduate of the U.S. Marine Corps Drill Instructor School in San Diego on Dec. 19, 2022.

February Article on Carl Brashear

I received my February copy of *FRAtoday* in the mail and opened it up to see a picture of me dressing Master Chief Carl Brashear for his dive on page 16. He was one of my diving instructors in 2nd class diving school in 1967. After 2nd class school, I continued to 1st class diving school and was certified in mixed gas to 300 feet.

I can relate to his shocked students. The first day I was in diving school, he was doing calisthenics with us and on the second day, he ran to the pool with us for our swim qualifications. I was surprised to turn around and see that he had a wooden leg, which I did not realize until he took his sweatpants off to get in the pool. He took that leg off and put on a different leg for swimming. The

swimming leg had his foot pointing in such a way that his fin could be placed on it for a more efficient kick.

Thank you for sharing this article with Fleet Reserve members. He was a great guy and the article does him justice.



CE2/DV1 Charlie Dunn, MCB-62

Member of the Fleet Reserve Club in Annapolis, Maryland

February Photo is Not a Good One

Hi,

On page 22 in the *FRAtoday* dated February, 2023 the picture shows the Master Chief Petty Officer of the NAVY.

He is out of regulations:

1. Bottom row of ribbons from left to right shows the Navy Overseas Ribbon, then the Sea Service, then the Fleet Marine Force Ribbon. These are wrong.

The correct precedence is Fleet Marine Force, Navy Sea Service, then the Navy Overseas.

2. Top row is also wrong, The "E" ribbon is correct, but the Meritorious Unit and Navy Unit are in the wrong order.

Not a good picture in my book.

Thanks,

*AT1 Leo S. Lessard, USN (Ret.)
Life Member*

A Divided Nation

Dear sir,

We are a divided nation and you have strayed from Navy articles of interest to politics.

I refer to your June issue where a writer [in the Shipmate Forum section] tried to change your advertising content — this was from a pro-climate change activist.

Now, THIS is a Knife!

This 16" full tang stainless steel blade is not for the faint of heart —now **ONLY \$99!**

In the blockbuster film, when a strapping Australian crocodile hunter and a lovely American journalist were getting robbed at knife point by a couple of young thugs in New York, the tough Aussie pulls out his dagger and says "That's not a knife, THIS is a knife!" Of course, the thugs scattered and he continued on to win the reporter's heart.

Our Aussie friend would approve of our rendition of his "knife." Forged of high grade 420 surgical stainless steel, this knife is an impressive 16" from pommel to point. And, the blade is full tang, meaning it runs the entirety of the knife, even though part of it is under wraps in the natural bone and wood handle.

Secured in a tooled leather sheath, this is one impressive knife, with an equally impressive price.

This fusion of substance and style can garner a high price tag out in the marketplace. In fact, we found full tang, stainless steel blades with bone handles in excess of \$2,000. Well, that won't cut it around here. We have mastered the hunt for the best deal, and in turn pass the spoils on to our customers.

But we don't stop there. While supplies last, we'll include a pair of \$99, 8x21 power compact binoculars, *and* a genuine leather sheath **FREE** when you purchase the **Down Under Bowie Knife**.

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And to your September issue with [Shipmate Forum] letters from two anti-second amendment activist. Those letters may have angered many readers. But you have the right to publish political B.S. [and] I have the right not to read such B.S.

Please cancel all future *FRAtoday* magazines. You may keep your controversies.

Thank you,

CTRC Gary A. Wittmuss, USN (Ret.)

FRAtoday: Dear Shipmate Wittmuss, I am sorry you were so offended by what has appeared in the pages of your magazine. The letters you refer to were written by your fellow Shipmates, and have not replaced the sea service-related articles written by our own staff, which we continue to publish each month.

Our magazine respects the free speech rights of our readers by publishing letters we receive expressing a variety of political viewpoints. We like to think of the Shipmate Forum section as a discussion between Shipmates across branches, and just as a discussion at your local branch might include political or controversial topics, so too does our Shipmate Forum section when we receive letters on such subjects. If you wish to cancel your subscriptions, please reach out to FRA membership services at: member_services@fra.org.

Thank you for your service.

Questionable USPS Mail

I recently received 2 cards via USPS from Fleet Reserve Association Oral History Project, 737 Regal Row, Dallas, Texas, requesting me to call them at 1-800-767-5595 to confirm my status.

The card is not signed but has the name; Christopher J. Slawinski as National Executive Director.

That telephone number is not listed in FRA's website or magazine.

I have received these mailings in the past years but did not respond to them.

Is this organization part of FRA or a scam?

Best Regards,

LCDR Carl A. Hodge, USN, (Ret.)
FRA Life Member

FRAtoday: Hello Shipmate, To commemorate our 100th Anniversary, our upcoming engagement campaign will compile a unique oral history archive, uniting Fleet Reserve Association members. We have partnered with Publishing

Concepts (PCI) to help collect stories from as many members as possible and produce the Fleet Reserve Association 2024 Oral History Publication.

The Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP)

SBP currently only pays 55% of base amount. Is there any move or legislation to increase it to 100% of base amount? If not, there should be.

Kerry Goodwin, Life Member

FRAtoday: Your concerns about the Survivor Benefit Plan benefit are noted. I have checked and I have been unable to find legislation in past sessions of Congress to increase SBP benefits to 100%. Retirees have the option to enroll in SBP when they retire. The cost of spouse SBP coverage is 6.5% of retired pay, deducted automatically from retired pay. If FRA were to propose increasing the SBP benefit, there would be an effort to increase the premium. I should mention that the FRA-supported SBP/DIC offset repeal has been completely phased in as of Feb. 1, 2023.

Thank you for your e-mail,

Director of Legislative Programs John Davis.

January FRAtoday Digital Version

Dear *FRAtoday*,

I wish to get my *FRAtoday* in the mail, not electronically. Please see that this happens by the February issue.

Thank you.

John Browning

FRAtoday: Dear Shipmate Browning, I am sorry to inform you that the leadership of the FRA decided to only print and mail six magazines each year. The issues that were chosen align with several key events that happen each year. One example is the convention review that typically runs in the December issue. FRA leadership felt that the magazine's print and mail expenses were getting too high.

On a positive note, we will still write, design and produce 12 magazines each year, but only six will get printed. **FRA**

Letters published in Shipmate Forum reflect the opinions and views of individual FRA members. They do not reflect the position of the FRA. The FRA is not responsible for the accuracy of letter content. To **submit** letters to *FRAtoday* for consideration, please send them to: 125 N. West St., Alexandria, VA 22314 or fratoday@fra.org.

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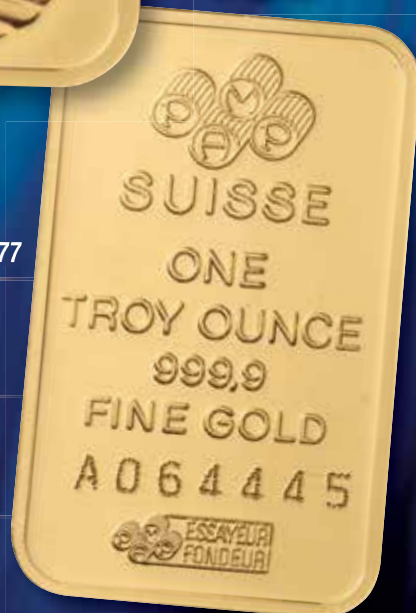
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ON & OFF *capitol hill*

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



John Davis
Director, Legislative Programs

Added Challenges for FY2023 Budget Could Threaten Benefits

Typically, a presidential administration releases its annual budget for the upcoming fiscal year in early February. But this year, the administration's budget request for FY2024, starting Oct. 1, 2023, has been delayed. By the time you get this issue of *FRAtoday*, the administration's FY2024 budget should have been submitted to Congress. An added complication to the budget process this year is that the debt limit has been reached, and Congress must either raise or suspend the debt ceiling. Congress is reluctant to increase the debt ceiling without some kind of spending restraint.

Further, the Social Security trust fund is running low. According to the Congressional Budget Office, the fund will

be depleted by 2033. That places Social Security insolvency inside the 10-year budget window for Congress. It's a gloomy milestone, turning something that has always been a future generation's problem into a here-and-now certainty. These and other funding issues will put pressure on Congress and the president to find ways to reduce the deficit, which could include more TRICARE fee increases or other benefit cuts.

The FRA wants to thank the members who participated in the FRA's pay and benefits survey. These survey results have been shared with Capitol Hill staff, legislators, and the House and Senate Military Personnel subcommittees, and help bolster the FRA's position on various issues.

FRA Urges SecDef to Protect TRICARE Benefits in FY2024 Budget

The FRA and several other groups have submitted a letter to Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin requesting that as the Department of Defense undertakes the FY2024 budget process, it protects the TRICARE benefit to ensure it provides the low out-of-pocket costs, comprehensive coverage and access to quality care that service members and retirees have earned. The FRA stands ready to further advocate for member

benefits as soon as the DOD's budget is released.

As noted in the March 2023 issue of *FRAtoday*, the Congressional Budget Office recently issued a report outlining options for various fee increases for TRICARE For Life. The FRA will oppose any new TRICARE fee increases and members are urged to use the FRA Action Center at www.fra.org to tell their legislators to oppose these CBO proposals.

NewsBytes is the FRA's weekly legislative update. If you would like to subscribe, please email: NewsBytes@Fra.org. Include your name and contact information in the body of the email. If you are a member of the FRA or LA FRA, please include your member number.

The Current State of Concurrent Receipt Reform

A top priority for the FRA is concurrent receipt reform. Reducing a retiree's retired pay because they are disabled is an injustice! The FRA supports the payment of full military retired pay and veterans disability compensation for all disabled retirees, including those who were unable to complete 20 years of service due to combat-related injuries.

There are currently two programs that provide concurrent receipt for select groups of disabled retirees. Combat-Related Special Compensation is paid to military retirees who have a combat-related disability. All CRSC beneficiaries with 20 or more years of service concurrently receive their retired and disability pay. In 2008, Congress expanded CRSC eligibility to Chapter 61 retirees — those medically retired with less than 20 years of service — rated 100% disabled. Retirees must apply for CRSC.

Since Jan. 1, 2014, Concurrent Retirement and Disability Pay has provided full retired and disability pay for military retirees with 20 or more years of service and a VA disability rating of 50% or higher. In 2008, CRDP eligibility was extended to retirees with an Individual Unemployability rating from the VA. Veterans with a disability rating of less than 50% and all those medically retired with less than 20 years of service (Chapter 61 retirees) are not eligible for concurrent receipt through

CRDP. Enrollment in CRDP is automatic.

The FRA supports legislation to further expand concurrent receipt. Such bills currently before Congress include:

- The Major Richard Star Act, S.344 (introduced by Sen. Jon Tester, Mont.). This bill would expand concurrent receipt through CRSC to medically retired veterans with less than 20 years of service.
- The Retired Pay Restoration Act, H.R.303 (introduced by Rep. Gus Bilirakis, Fla.). This bill would extend CRDP eligibility to retirees rated less than 50% disabled.
- The Disabled Veterans Tax Termination Act, H.R.333 (introduced by Rep. Sanford Bishop, Ga.). This comprehensive concurrent receipt legislation would provide concurrent receipt through CRDP to retirees whose disability ratings are below 50% and to Chapter 61 retirees with less than 20 years of service.

More than two-thirds of Congress co-sponsored the Major Richard Star Act in the last session of Congress, demonstrating a will among lawmakers to work toward change on this issue. Members can urge their legislators to support this session's concurrent receipt bills through the FRA Action Center, located on the website at www.fra.org.

Bills Introduced to Remove DOD Hiring Delay

Sen. James Lankford (Okla.) has introduced FRA-supported legislation (S.334) in the Senate, and Reps. Blake Moore (Utah) and Derek Kilmer (Wash.) have introduced companion legislation (H.R.939) in the House. These bills would repeal the requirement for those retiring from military service to wait 180 days before entering civilian general schedule positions at the Department of Defense for pay grades GS-13 and below. The FY2021 National Defense Authorization Act included a temporary 3-year pilot program for removing this restriction at depots and industrial activities. The FRA welcomed this improvement, but more work needs to be done.

The 180-day waiting period has resulted in a talent management problem for hiring officials at the DOD, who are grappling with an antiquated hiring process that takes too long to hire a qualified candidate with a current security clearance. Members can weigh in on this issue



A DOD hiring fair on Aug. 13, 2020, at the Fort Bliss Centennial Banquet and Conference Center. Photo by Michelle Gordon.

by going to the FRA Action Center located on the website at www.fra.org.

Veteran Homelessness Decreasing

In December, the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness released a report, "All In: The Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness," with encouraging data on veteran homelessness. The report cited the preliminary results of the Department of Housing and Urban Development's 2022 point-in-time count of homeless individuals, which indicated that the number of veterans experiencing homelessness had decreased by 11% since January 2020. The council noted that this is the biggest drop in veteran homelessness in over five years. In total, the estimated number of veterans experiencing homelessness in America has declined by 55.3% since 2010.

The report attributes this success to the VA's efforts to reach out to every veteran experiencing homelessness to understand and address their unique needs. The VA's strategy has been modeled after the evidence-based "Housing First" approach, which focuses on getting homeless individuals into housing before providing the other wraparound services they need to stay housed — including health care, job training, legal and educational assistance, and more.

The recently released point-in-time count data was collected in January 2022, and does not include the VA's efforts throughout 2022. The Department of Veterans Affairs reports that it provided safe, permanent housing to 40,401 homeless veterans in 2022, exceeding the department's goal of housing 38,000 veterans by 6.3%.

The FRA has supported the initiatives of the VA and other agencies that enhance and invest in efforts to ensure that veteran homelessness is rare, brief and nonrecurring.

Open Enrollment for VA Health Care

As part of implementing the Honoring Our PACT Act, the Department of Veterans Affairs has expanded health care eligibility for certain veterans who were discharged after Sept. 11, 2001, and before Oct. 1, 2013. The open enrollment period is for veterans who have not previously enrolled in VA health care and served in certain theaters of combat operations after the Gulf War, regardless of disability claim status.

Open enrollment ends on Oct. 1 for this group of veterans. Once the open enrollment period has closed, these veterans will be eligible for VA health care as part of a phase-in process that varies by discharge date. For more information about eligibility for the open enrollment period, go to www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/includes/viewPDF.cfm?id=5826. Instructions for applying for VA health care can be found at www.va.gov/health-care/how-to-apply/.

VA Counters Claims Spike with Increased Hiring

The Department of Veterans Affairs has reported a surge in disability claims (up 17%) since the enactment of the Honoring Our PACT Act, a comprehensive veterans' toxic exposure law. The surge in claims was not unexpected, and the FY2023 VA budget approved by Congress included both funding and flexibility for increased staffing at VA medical centers to counter a possible increase in enrollment. The VA has reported hiring more than 2,700 new claims processing employees in the past two years, and has a goal of onboarding about 52,000 new hires this fiscal year to replace departing staffers and add medical personnel to high-demand areas.

VA Undersecretary for Health Shereef Elnahal told the Federal News Network in late January that the Veterans Health Administration was already halfway to its hiring goal for FY2023. He also said that approximately 144,000 veterans had

enrolled in VA health care between the month the PACT Act passed, August 2022, and mid-January 2023. That number represented about 21,000 more veterans than had enrolled in the previous year.

Contributing to the spike is the VA's decision to grant all veterans immediate eligibility for benefits, rather than phasing in eligibility through 2026, as the law allowed. The PACT Act allows for the first time all veterans who were at risk of toxic exposure, including 3.5 million Iraq and Afghanistan veterans, to obtain immediate and lifelong access to health care from the VA — one of the largest expansions of health care eligibility in the VA's history. Among many other provisions, the bill added 23 respiratory illnesses and cancers, hypertension, and monoclonal gammopathy to the lists of illnesses presumed to be associated with toxic exposure during various military conflicts.



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Supreme Court Decision on Delayed Disability Claims

In a unanimous decision, the U.S. Supreme Court recently upheld a 2021 federal court ruling that no back pay is owed to Navy veteran Adolfo Arellano and others like him who failed to file for disability benefits within one year of separation from the service.

The case — Arellano v. McDonough — had the potential to award tens of thousands of dollars to some

veterans. Arellano's personal back pay would have totaled in the hundreds of thousands for the period spanning from his medical retirement in 1981 to his application date in 2011.

Arellano was seriously injured in an accident aboard an aircraft carrier in 1980, resulting in schizoaffective disorder

bipolar type and post-traumatic stress disorder. His mental health conditions resulted in him spending years living either on the street or under the care of family members. After applying for disability benefits in 2011, Arellano was awarded a monthly support stipend based on his service-connected injuries. However, if Arellano had applied for benefits within a year of his discharge, he would have been eligible for back pay dating back to his discharge date, and his lawyers argued that the

same policy should apply to the 30 years it took him to file his claim. Arellano's attorneys argued that it was unfair to expect Arellano to file for disability benefits within a year of his discharge because the mental health symptoms resulting from his accident made it impossible for him to complete the paperwork on his own.

However, the Supreme Court unanimously rejected the argument that the one-year back pay period could be extended for reasons not specified in the text of the law.

"The structure of §5110 reinforces Congress's choice to set effective dates solely as prescribed in the text," Justice Amy Coney Barrett wrote in the court's opinion. "The statute sets out detailed instructions that explain when various types of benefits qualify for an effective date earlier than the default. There are 16 such exceptions . . . [that] do not operate simply as time constraints, but also as substantive limitations on the amount of recovery due. . . . If Congress wanted the VA to adjust a claimant's entitlement to retroactive benefits based on unmentioned equitable factors, it is difficult to see why it spelled out a long list of situations in which a claimant is entitled to adjustment—and instructed the VA to stick to the exceptions 'specifically provided.'"



Photo courtesy of Depositphotos.

Debt Ceiling Issue Returns

The U.S. government's spending has reached the debt limit, forcing the Treasury Department to resort to extraordinary measures to pay the government's expenses while lawmakers decide how to address extending the cap. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen

has said the "X date" on which the U.S. would default on its loans without a debt limit increase could be as soon as June.

Speaker

Kevin McCarthy is pushing for a fast pace on debt-limit negotiations with President Joe Biden, aiming for a deal well before this summer's deadline. McCarthy has said that Republicans will not support a debt-limit deal without finding ways to reduce spending.

Congress created the debt ceiling in 1917 to give the government greater borrowing flexibility and must approve each increase to ensure that the United States meets its debt obligations and avoids a catastrophic default. The system, in theory, is meant to control the rise in the nation's debt but has not been an effective tool in recent decades. The Treasury Department can take steps to alter the government's cash flow and stay below the ceiling to keep the government operating for a while.



Photo courtesy of Depositphotos.

“I haven’t been this excited since I got my first bicycle!”

Introducing **ZOOMER!**

The portable, folding, battery-powered chair that offers easy one-handed operation

Remember when you were a child and got your first bicycle? I do. It gave me a sense of independence . . . I felt like I could go anywhere, and it was so much easier and more enjoyable than walking. Well, at my age, that bike wouldn’t do me much good. Fortunately, there’s a new invention that gives me the freedom and independence to go wherever I want . . . safely and easily. It’s called the **Zoomer**, and it’s changed my life.

My Zoomer is a delight to ride! It has increased my mobility in my apartment, my opportunities to enjoy the out-of-doors, and enabled me to visit the homes of my children for longer periods of time. The various speeds of it match my need for safety, it is easy to turn, and I am most pleased with the freedom of movement it gives me.

Sincerely, A. Macon, Williamsburg, VA

After just one trip around your home in the **Zoomer**, you’ll marvel at how easy it is to navigate. It is designed to maneuver in tight spaces like doorways, between furniture, and around corners. It can go over thresholds and works great on any kind of floor or carpet. It’s not bulky or cumbersome, so it can roll right up to a table or desk- there’s no need to transfer to a chair. Its sturdy yet lightweight aluminum frame makes it durable and comfortable. Its dual motors power it at up to 3.7 miles per hour and its automatic electromagnetic brakes



stop on a dime. The rechargeable battery powers it for up to 8 miles on a single charge. Plus, its exclusive foldable design enables you to transport it easily and even store it in a closet or under a bed when it’s not in use.

Why spend another day letting mobility issues hamper your lifestyle? Call now and find out how you can have your very own **Zoomer**.



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DOD Pay and Benefits Review Begins

The Pentagon has indicated that it has begun its review of military pay and benefits known as the Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation. The QRMC is conducted every four years to examine whether or not military pay and other benefits are suitable. Its goal is to make certain that service members' pay is comparable to what they would receive in the civilian market and that they can afford necessities, such as food and housing. The new pay and benefits review began just weeks after the Pentagon announced the largest year-to-year

increases in food and housing allowances in decades. The department said food allowances would increase by 11% for 2023 and housing payments by an average of 12%.

The FRA has been invited to submit a statement for the QRMC. Previous compensation reviews have led to significant changes in military pay and benefits, such as raising hazardous duty pay and using different criteria to calculate the housing allowance. This QRMC final report is to be finished by January 2025.

SVAC Reviews Nominee for VA Undersecretary for Benefits

The Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee held a hearing to consider President Joe Biden's nominee for undersecretary for benefits at the Department of Veterans Affairs, Joshua Jacobs. Jacobs has served as acting undersecretary for benefits since July of 2022. As the VA's top official heading the Veterans Benefits Administration, the undersecretary for benefits oversees the delivery of critical benefits to millions of veterans and beneficiaries, and is responsible for tackling the disability claims backlog. A claim that has not been adjudicated within 125 days is considered to be part of the backlog. Currently, the VA has more than 194,000 such claims.

Prior to rejoining the VA, Jacobs was a senior associate at the consulting firm Booz Allen Hamilton.

He previously served as a senior adviser for policy in the Office of the Secretary of the VA and as a special assistant in the VA's Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs. He also served for nine years in the U.S. Senate, including two years as deputy staff director for the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee. The position of VA undersecretary for benefits requires Senate confirmation.



Joshua Jacobs, VA acting undersecretary of benefits. Photo courtesy of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Senate Approves Defense Assistant Secretary for Health Affairs



Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs Lester Martinez-Lopez at the Pentagon on Feb. 24. Army photo by Leonard Fitzgerald.

The Senate approved President Joe Biden's nominee for the Department of Defense Assistant Secretary for Health Affairs, retired Army Maj. Gen. Lester Martinez-Lopez. Martinez-Lopez was born in Puerto Rico in 1955 and joined the Army in 1978 after graduating from medical school. While serving in the Army, he

obtained a master's degree in public health from Johns Hopkins University in 1983. During his service, he became the first Latino to head the Army Medical Research and Materiel Command, directing the Army's global program for medical research, acquisitions and logistics.

He retired from the U.S. Army in 2005 and served as the senior vice president and administrator of Lyndon B. Johnson Hospital in Houston, Texas. He also served as the chief medical officer at Brandon Regional Hospital in Brandon, Florida.

He replaces acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs Seileen Mullen. Martinez-Lopez will supervise all DOD health and force health protection policies, programs and activities, including TRICARE.

FRA

If your tired, achy legs and feet are preventing you from moving easily...

Now, a prickly herb has been discovered to....

BOOST BLOOD FLOW TO YOUR LEGS, FEET, AND HANDS WITH A 95% SUCCESS RATE VERIFIED BY CLINICAL STUDY

A re-discovery from the 1600s is causing a frenzy within the medical system. A weird herb has been shown in six clinical studies (and by thousands of users) to be very effective for leg and feet pain, burning and numbness – with no side effects – at low cost – and with no doctor visit or prescription needed.

This weird herb comes from a 12-foot tall tree that grows in Greece and other countries in Europe. In the old days, people noticed that when their horses who had leg and feet problems ate this herb – it was almost like magic how quickly their problems got much better. They called it the “horse herb”. Then somehow with Europe’s ongoing wars, this herbal secret got lost in time.

“It works for people who’ve tried many other treatments before with little or no success. Other doctors and I are shocked at how effective it is. It has created a lot of excitement” says Dr. Ryan Shelton, M.D.

Its active ingredient has been put into pill form and improved. It is being offered in the United States under the brand name Neuroflo.

WHY ALL THIS EXCITEMENT?

Researchers have found an herb originally from Greece that has been shown in six placebo-controlled medical studies (543 participants) to be effective and safe. This natural compound strengthens blood vessel walls and reduces swelling to stop the pain and suffering.

95% Reduction in LEG SWELLING, Verified in Clinical Study

Says Dove Medical Press & Development and Therapy

... meaning, discomfort, water retention, leg swelling, tiredness and circulation improved in 95% of test subjects



Swollen legs are a warning sign. They mean blood and fluid is forced out of the blood vessels into the surrounding tissue. This causes non-stop pain. This is where Neuroflo’s active ingredient is such a big help.

Poor blood flow in the legs and feet is one of the common problems that develops as we age. Millions of Americans suffer from neuropathy and chronic venous insufficiency (CVI), edema, and other leg/feet problems – millions have these but are undiagnosed.

Today’s treatments don’t work for a high percentage of people – and they have side effects that make them hard to tolerate or that people do not want to risk. This includes prescription drugs, over the counter pain pills, surgery and compression.

HOW IT WORKS

Here’s why you have pain now: Your arteries have weakened. Your arteries can’t carry enough blood, nutrients and oxygen down to your legs and feet. This damages your nerves and causes your burning, tingling and numbness.



The herbs in the pill Neuroflo strengthen your arteries that carry blood, nutrients and oxygen to your feet and legs. It improves your circulation so oxygenated blood goes to the nerves and repairs them.

This makes your nerves grow stronger so your pain fades away and your legs and feet feel much younger again.

Katerina King from Murrieta, California says, “I had hands and feet tingling and snapping and burning feeling. It made my life very uncomfortable. I had a hard time walking, my legs felt like they each weighed 50 pounds. Once I got in my car and my feet felt so heavy I couldn’t even drive the car. With Neuroflo I have no more tingling, cold or burning painful legs and feet. It went away.”

WHAT DOCTORS ARE SAYING

“Now I finally have a natural solution I can recommend to my patients who suffer from leg and feet problems and pain. I’m delighted because previous treatments were not effective, but Neuroflo has worked for every one of my patients with no side effects” says Dr. Eric Wood, N.D.

Dr. Ryan Shelton, M.D. says “This is new and different. It works for people who’ve tried many other things before. It is natural with no side effects. Don’t give up hope for your leg and feet pain, burning, tingling and numbing. This pill is working for countless people after other treatments have failed them. I highly recommend it.”

“Neuroflo is a terrific choice for people with leg and feet issues. The clinical trials in support of this herb show it is very effective for safe and fast relief,” said Dr. Wood, a Harvard trained



WORKS IN AMAZING WAY: A prickly plant was used in Europe in the 1600s to revitalize ailing legs. Lost over the centuries, it is now making a comeback as US doctors rediscover its impressive results – sending relief to thousands of users with:

- **Burning, Tingling, Numbness**
- **Painful Legs & Feet**
- **Swollen, Achy Feet**
- **Varicose Veins**

doctor who has appeared on award winning TV shows.

Now you can get a good night’s sleep - peaceful, restful sleep – with no pain, tingling, zinging, itching or zapping. Improve your balance and coordination. No side effects – safe to take with other medications. Enjoy your favorite activities and hobbies again. Be more active, have more fun, enjoy life more. Don’t risk irreversible damage to your feet and hands. Don’t get worse and wind up in the hospital or a nursing home.

Neuroflo is GUARANTEED to work for you – or you will get full refund with a 90-day unconditional money-back guarantee. It is NOT sold in stores or online. No prescription or doctor visit is required.

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This is the official release of NeuroFlo for Fleet Reserve Association readers. Therefore, everyone who calls within the next 10 days will receive 50% OFF their first order. A toll-free hotline number has been set up for local readers to call for this 50% OFF savings. The number will be open starting at 7:00 am today and only for the next 10 days.

All you have to do is CALL TOLL FREE 1-877-719-8719 and provide the operator with the special 50% OFF discount approval code: **NEF158**.

Important: Due to Neuroflo’s popularity and recent media exposure on ABC, CBS and FOX NEWS, phone lines are often busy. If you call and do not get through immediately, please be patient and call back. Those who miss the 10 day deadline for 50% OFF will have to pay more for Neuroflo.

FEATURE

1998

2005

A before and after image from the Naval Training Center Orlando main base planned development project that began on July 27, 1998. Photos courtesy of Richard C. Bernhardt Planning and Development.

From Wooden Ships to Walking Paths

The Changing Faces of Old Bases

By Jessica Brodtkin Webb

The needs of the military change with time, including where installations are located and how they are utilized. The proving grounds of yesterday might be a schoolyard tomorrow, and the gutted remains of officers' housing could very well be transformed into sleek apartments with a modern rebuild. While some closures spell death for regions that depend on federal presence for economic stature, like the area surrounding Naval Air Facility Adak in Alaska, many others have been a source of rebirth for communities where a large swath of land in a major metropolitan area means a new source of housing, commercial opportunities and community identity.

Bringing Military Facilities Into the Civilian World

Practically speaking, many small-town elements are built into a large base as it organically develops —

restaurants, presentation venues, classrooms, large construction zones and storage areas — which all lend themselves to some amount of reuse or creative redevelopment. On the other hand, most federal installations have outdated buildings that were never designed for modern accessibility. They don't have advanced fire prevention systems in office spaces or the required number of accessible parking spaces for restaurants; they need work to bring them up to code.

As charming as it might be to go out for a lazy brunch with friends or family at a newly designed restaurant aboard an old installation, chances are it took some major cleanup to facilitate civilian use of the land and older buildings. For example, Pease International Tradeport in New Hampshire — formerly Pease Air Force Base — required significant cleanup after years of base operations left the local soil and groundwater contaminated with



These Coast Guard destroyers docked at the New York Navy Yard in October 1926 had been transferred from the Navy to help interdict rum-running operations on the East Coast during Prohibition. U.S. Naval History and Heritage Command photograph.

heavy metals and organic pollutants. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Defense closes some military installations in an effort to sustain military readiness and streamline operations, but the actual process takes several years if it requires environmental cleanup.

Once an installation is identified for Base Realignment and Closure, it is screened for potential federal reuse based on what is available on-site, then passed along for community input and public hearings if the site is better suited to being sold off locally. The federal Department of Housing and Urban Development reviews the site and eventually, buildings and property are transferred to other owners. Ideally, the base retains some of its physical and practical character. Former Naval Training Center Orlando in Florida, for example, now sustains law enforcement training activities because the facilities were ideally set up, and San Diego's Liberty Station, also a former

NTC, now houses a Stone Brewing restaurant in what was once the mess hall.

Born in Philadelphia, Rebuilt in America

The Philadelphia Navy Yard has our nation's history embedded in its streets. One could say the Navy was born under George Washington when John Paul Jones defended what would become America against the British, but it wasn't until the 1790s that our earliest naval bases were established, including the Philadelphia Navy Yard. America was still under British rule when the Continental Congress thought ahead and leased land along Philadelphia's docks to shore up naval defense. By 1794, President George Washington had ordered several ships, one of which was to be built on private property in the Southwark neighborhood of Philadelphia. By 1801, the newly created Navy purchased part of the land and the Southwark shipyard took its place in American history. It would seem that our early congressional



Early 1970s view of Naval Training Center San Diego. U.S. Navy photo scanned from "The Anchor" cruise book for Company 230-75.

representatives were already discussing base closures just 65 years later in the wake of the Civil War, as iron ships supplanted wooden ones, and a second, more modern yard was established on nearby South Broad Street. Between the two shipyards in Southwark and on South Broad Street, generations of sailors made their lives on and around the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard until it was permanently closed in 1996.

Although some Navy support activities remain on a small annex of the old base, the majority of the shipyard has since been redeveloped with small businesses, residential areas, open spaces with art installations, corporate buildings and some naval manufacturing spaces in a nod to the base's historic past. More than 150 businesses call the old base home, including a surgical center owned by Thomas Jefferson University Hospitals — ironic, considering Jefferson was not initially in favor of a large, federally funded Navy when he was elected president. In another historical twist, there are still

shipbuilders on-site, but they work at privately owned companies, not unlike the earliest iteration of independent companies hired by George Washington several centuries ago. Jefferson, the consummate inventor of practical gadgets and solutions, would likely also appreciate the reimagined base's massive community solar power grid and the fact that the grid itself is often utilized in energy research. The former base retains a sense of pragmatism and possibility over two centuries after Washington ordered America's first ships.

The Brooklyn Navy Yard: From Farm to Factory to Farm

Just a tad younger and one state away, the New York Navy Yard — nicknamed the Brooklyn Navy Yard by locals — stood near the harbor in New York where rebellious colonials were often imprisoned on British ships. The site of this early American shipyard was possibly chosen for its excellent location, or possibly chosen with a bit



The Mahan-class destroyer *USS DOWNES* (DD-375), built by Norfolk Naval Shipyard and shown here during its April 1936 launching, was destroyed at Pearl Harbor. Machinery and equipment were salvaged to form the basis of the new *DOWNES* built at Mare Island Naval Shipyard, which retained both the name and hull number. The recommissioned ship's first mission was escorting convoys to Pearl Harbor in March 1944. Photo courtesy of Marcus W. Robbins, Norfolk Naval Shipyard command historian and archivist.

of defiance as our country came into its own and no longer answered to British rule. Either way, the Brooklyn Navy Yard's acreage was purchased in 1801, but its first buildings weren't constructed until 1805. The base was a busy one, but officially shuttered in 1966 with a massive wave of military closures and sold to the city of New York. The historic base went through transitional pains, with several unsteady decades of halting business growth and subsequent layoffs, followed by a slow financial rebuild. By the early 1990s, the Brooklyn yard began to look like a commercial success story, with typeset and printing companies, photography studios, art galleries and activation spaces, architectural firms, and other contemporary businesses firmly installed as tenants.

Today, the Brooklyn Navy Yard is home to Steiner Studios, a large complex where television shows like "The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel" and

"Sweetbitter" were recently filmed. Buildings dating back to the Civil War, WWI and WWII are reassuringly familiar, arguably an architectural dream with the Brooklyn Bridge standing in the background. In another historical twist, the same area that was purchased from local farmers for a yard expansion during WWI is now the site of Brooklyn Grange, a 1.5-acre rooftop farm. In addition to providing fresh produce for the city, the farm is also used as a modern event venue.

Mare Island: Fate Undecided

Mare Island Naval Shipyard, located about 20 miles north of San Francisco, dates back to the comparatively recent 1854 — nowhere near the age of the Philadelphia or Brooklyn yards — but was the first U.S. naval base built on the West Coast. In its heyday, Mare Island made history when Americans built an entire destroyer, the



FEATURE

This architectural rendering shows the 2013 master plan for redeveloping the 1,000-acre former Philadelphia Navy Yard into a mixed-use space that takes advantage of the site's, 6 miles of waterfront along the Schuylkill and Delaware rivers and more than 187 historic buildings within the nationally registered Philadelphia Naval Shipyard Historic District. After a six-week competition, Robert A.M. Stern Architects, the design team lead, predicts it will take 20 to 30 years to fully complete the project, which includes apartment buildings, office space, research infrastructure, public areas and even wetlands. Image courtesy of Robert A.M. Stern Architects, LLP.

WWI-era *USS WARD*, in just 17 ½ days. The base was known as a highly effective, strategically located facility with stunning architecture. Unfortunately, it was closed in 1996, not only because it was redundant, but also because its closure would not drastically affect the economically sound region. The shipyard and its cemetery are now National Historic Landmarks, while much of the base was purchased by the surrounding city of Vallejo, California.

Generally, Mare Island is an example of a former base that has not yet found its footing as a community asset. Although operations moved quickly during Mare Island's active-duty days, developers have been slow to make progress on identifying what lies ahead for the base. Whereas Philadelphia's and Brooklyn's closed bases are at the hearts of the largest East Coast cities with prime real estate, Mare Island is somewhat removed from cosmopolitan life. However, it retains the core of its

History Has a Place Today

When President John Adams established the Department of the Navy and the Continental Congress acquired the land for some of our nation's original shipyards, they likely did not picture companies like Urban Outfitters taking over the dusty space that once housed wooden shipbuilders, nor the nation's earliest unpaved streets being decorated with a public art installation more than 200 years later.

However, there is something arguably charming about the feel of older buildings, a sense of character that comes along with hallowed grounds where you can almost hear the sound of an old reciprocating engine and picture where hundreds of former service members stood for Pass-in-Review. It might be fiscally wise to close unneeded bases, but it is also a reassuring balm for the history lover's soul to see them reborn.



Blue Bridge Hospitality, based in Coronado, California, that co-developed and operates Liberty Public Market at Liberty Station, which sits on the grounds of former Naval Training Center San Diego. The 25,000-square-foot building opened to the public in 2016, and is fully occupied with food vendors selling everything from squid ink spaghetti and lobster rolls to empanadas and crepes. Photo courtesy of Blue Bridge Hospitality.

identity: Just as Mare Island was a bastion of possibility when it was used as a shipyard and base, it is still a source of opportunity and retains a sense of wonder.

All Aboard at Liberty Station

Liberty Station, formerly Naval Training Center San Diego, sits about 25 miles north of the Mexican border and salutes the city of San Diego from its harbor edge. As with the former naval training center in Orlando, Florida, the station was closed in 1997 to consolidate naval training to Naval Station Great Lakes, Illinois. For many years, the semi-abandoned base was considered an eyesore, with faded yellow paint on the stuccoed walls and cracked parking lots lounging in neglected ugliness amid the view of historic hangars at Naval Air Station North Island and beachfront

homes just down the street. Ultimately, the city of San Diego stepped in and broke the old base up into areas that would be familiar to residents used to Southern California developments: a restaurant zone, a commercial area, residential strips and an arts center.

Today, Liberty Station is home to the ArtWalk festival, rehearsal halls that resonate with dance classes, and a rose garden dedicated to Navy wives past and present. The tenant spaces give a hint at modern San Diego, with yoga studios and craft breweries, as well as a veteran's center in a city where more than 5% of the residents are veterans. There are no young recruits standing for inspection, but the grid of the residential district and sprawling lawns of the public spaces clearly convey the message: This place has history. **FRA**

Better than cannabis, better than CBD

New Joint-Supporting “Miracle Oil” Capsule Delivers Hip, Knee, and Shoulder Comfort in Just Days

Thousands of Americans are rediscovering normal freedom of movement thanks to a “miracle oil” capsule that’s outperforming hemp in promoting joint comfort.

According to the official figures from the CDC, more than 58 million Americans are living with joint discomfort. This epidemic has led to a search for alternative approaches – as many sufferers seek relief without the harmful side effects of conventional “solutions.”

Anti-aging specialist Dr. Al Sears is leading the way with a new formula he calls “the most significant breakthrough I’ve ever found for easing joint discomfort.”

The capsule is based on a “miracle oil” historically treasured for its joint health-supporting properties. Marco Polo prized it as he blazed the Silk Road. And to this day, Ayurvedic practitioners rely on it to promote optimal joint health.

Now, with a modern twist backed by science, Dr. Sears is making this natural solution for joint health available to the public.

Your Body’s Hidden “Soothing System”

Joint health research changed forever with the discovery of the endocannabinoid system (ECS) in 1992. Up until that point, research on cannabinoids focused on psychoactive effects. Now, scientists were looking at a new way to fight occasional aches and pains.

Your ECS serves as a central “signaling system” that tells your body how to react to things you do every day. It controls several critical bodily functions such as learning and memory, sleep, healthy immune responses – and your response to discomfort.

A recent study revealed a direct link between the ECS and creaky, sore joints. Researchers at the University of Edinburgh studied the aging of mice with endocannabinoid deficiencies versus “normal” mice.

As they aged, the deficient mice had a whopping 60% more joint degeneration than the mice with a healthy ECS.

As the name suggests, the ECS responds to cannabis. At the time it was discovered, scientists assumed that was the best way to support it. But thanks to Dr. Sears’ all-natural solution, you can power up your ECS without marijuana.

“Calling it the ‘endocannabinoid system’ was a misnomer from the very beginning,” Dr. Sears explained. “Modern research reveals that you don’t need cannabis to activate this incredible system. You don’t need to ‘get high’ to get joint relief.”

A scholarly review found that plants and herbs that don’t produce mind-altering effects can support the ECS and help it maintain its healthy functions.



The active ingredient in Mobilify soothes aching joints in as little as 5 days

This includes common foodstuffs, such as kava, chocolate, black pepper, and most significantly – the star ingredient to Dr. Sears’ own **Mobilify** formula – frankincense.

Modern scientists say this natural ingredient meets “cannabinoid tetrad” – the signs used to determine if something supports the ECS. While it doesn’t produce a “high” like cannabis does, it binds to the same receptors to support a healthy response to discomfort.

All the Benefits of CBD – Without Cannabis

Indian frankincense, the chief ingredient in **Mobilify**, has been shown to provide all the benefits of cannabis without any feelings of sluggishness or sleepiness.

And studies show that users don’t have to wait long for the comfort they’re looking for.

In a study published in the International Journal of Medical Sciences, 60 patients with stiff knees took 100 mg of Indian frankincense or a placebo daily for 30 days. Remarkably, Indian frankincense “significantly” supported healthy joint function and relieved discomfort in as little as five days.

Additional research linked regular use to lasting comfort.

In another study, 48 participants were given an extract made from frankincense for 120-days. When the results came in, researchers determined the extract strongly supported joint comfort – especially in the knees.

These results were all achieved without marijuana. Research continues to back up the idea that you can support smooth, strong, and healthy joints naturally – without tiredness or sluggishness.

Get Moving Again with Mobilify

Mobilify has already helped thousands of Americans stay on their feet and breeze through their daily activities with ease.

One user even reported getting results the same day it was used.

“**Mobilify** really helps with soreness, stiffness, and mild temporary discomfort,” Joni D. said.

Larry M, another user, compared taking **Mobilify** to living a completely new life.

“After a week and a half of taking **Mobilify**, the discomfort, stiffness, and minor aches went away...it’s almost like being reborn,” he said.

Dennis H. said it helped him get back to his favorite hobby.

“I can attest to **Mobilify** easing discomfort to enable me to pursue my golfing days. Definitely one pill that works for me out of the many I have tried,” he said.

How to Get Mobilify

Right now, the only way to get this powerful, unique **Mobilify** formula that clobbers creaking joints without clobbering you is directly from Dr. Sears. It is not available in stores.

To secure your bottle of this breakthrough natural joint discomfort reliever, buyers should call with Sears Health Hotline at **1-800-341-7198**. “The Hotline allows us to ship the product directly to customers.”

Dr. Sears believes in this product so much, he offers a 100% money-back guarantee on every order. “Just send me back the bottle and any unused product within 90 days, and I’ll send you your money back,” said Dr. Sears.

The Hotline will be taking orders for the next 48 hours. After that, the phone number may be shut down to allow them to restock. Call **1-800-341-7198** to secure your limited supply of **Mobilify**. If you are not able to get through due to extremely high call volume, please try again! Call NOW to qualify for a significant discount on this limited time offer. To take advantage of this exclusive offer use Promo Code: **FRAMB423** when you call.

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GRANLEY, SAMUEL C. JR.



“Education, Motivation, Perseverance”

The Trailblazing Career of Vice Admiral Samuel Lee Gravely Jr.

By Ann Norvell Gray

Samuel Lee Gravely Jr. was born in June of 1922 in the modest Fulton neighborhood east of downtown Richmond, Virginia. His father was a postal worker, and his mother looked after him and his four younger siblings until illness debilitated her. She died when Samuel was 15 years old. He was already a determined young person, doing his best to look after her while she was sick, doing well in school, and working through the summers to help his father support the family after her death. With the steadiness and focus that would drive him throughout his life, he graduated from high school at 15. Then, not long before the attack on Pearl Harbor, he enrolled at Virginia Union University, a historically Black Baptist university in Richmond. The school had been originally founded in 1865 as the Colver

Institute to prepare newly emancipated Black men for the ministry, and had grown over subsequent decades into a broader academic institution.

After the Japanese devastated the Navy ships in Pearl Harbor, when Franklin Roosevelt gave the famous “date which will live in infamy” speech to Congress and war was declared, the young student realized that the draft was probably coming for him. Gravely left school, enlisted in the Naval Reserve and headed for basic training in September 1942, stepping onto the path that would take him into the history books as one of the earliest African American sailors to be trained as an officer, as well as the first African American officer to reach flag rank, command a U.S. Navy warship, be promoted to vice admiral and achieve command of a Navy fleet.



Then Capt. Samuel L. Gravely Jr. (L) works on the bridge of the guided-missile frigate *USS JOUETT* (DLG-29) as its commanding officer off the coast of San Diego, California. U.S. Naval History and Heritage Command photograph.

Obtaining an Officer's Education

In June of 1941, Roosevelt had signed an executive order prohibiting racial discrimination in federal agencies and contractors serving the defense industry. But as the history of human societies makes clear, regulation is slow to affect genuine cultural change. It took another year for public pressure from civil rights leaders to open the door to general service ratings for Black men. And still, the Navy remained rigorously segregated, with very little belief in the potential for leadership among the nation's African American population. Nevertheless, the same young man who had taken his responsibilities to his family so seriously in his boyhood tackled his Navy training with the same intensity, first at Naval Station Great Lakes in Illinois, then a year later at the V-12 Navy College Training Program at the University of California, Los Angeles. He then attended Naval Reserve Midshipmen's School at Columbia University, where his steady work ethic and intelligence were noted.

In 1944, three years after the president's order was signed, the Navy finally took 16 Black enlisted men into an officer training course at what is now Naval Station Great Lakes. The midshipmen soon realized that the Navy had stacked the deck against them by cutting the normal 16-week course to eight weeks, fully expecting them to fail. They were having none of it. They studied late into the nights, sat for their testing and passed with higher marks than the usual level achieved in the all-white, full-length course. So the unconvinced leadership made them take the tests again. All of them passed again, with a class average score of 3.89 out of 4, according to the Naval History and Heritage Command.

Despite the whole class's exceptional performance, only 13 of the Black midshipmen reached rank, mysteriously matching the pass rate of the average class of white candidates. These young officers became known as the "Golden Thirteen." They were the Navy's first Black enlisted men to become



Rear Adm. Samuel L. Gravely Jr. (center) receives the congratulations of other officers, following the ceremony marking his promotion to flag rank on board *USS JOUETT* (DLG-29) at San Diego, California, June 2, 1971. U.S. Naval History and Heritage Command photograph.

“Leadership is being able to take one man or a group of men and to convince them of a course of action that you think is the best course of action they could possibly take under those circumstances, and guide them along to complete that mission.”

— Retired Vice Adm. Samuel L. Gravely Jr.,
in an interview with the National Visionary
Leadership Project

commissioned and warrant officers, and the only ones ahead of Samuel Gravely, whose commissioning would come eight months later.

In an interview conducted by the National Visionary Leadership Project in 2002, the barrier-breaking vice admiral was asked why he chose to join the Navy.

“When Pearl Harbor came, then I was sure that I would be drafted” he said, “but not by the Navy — by the Army. ... I did not want to go into the Army. My father had fought in the Army, and he didn’t like it.”

Asked why he thought that the Navy would be any better, he replied, “Most people told me that the Navy generally slept in clean beds at sea. The Army slept in mudholes and tents and that kind of business, and I just felt that it would be a better life in the Navy.”

The Motivation to Change Minds

Ensign Gravely began his seagoing career as the only Black officer aboard the submarine chaser *USS PC-1264*, one of two ships with a predominantly Black enlisted crew assembled as a test of the suitability of African Americans for Navy service. According to the U.S. Naval Institute, the performance of the crew under pressure was judged to be admirable by instructors, inspectors and foreign officers, despite



Vice Adm. Samuel L. Gravely Jr. (center), salutes during the 3rd Fleet change of command ceremony held on board *USS REEVES* (CG-24) at the Naval Supply Center in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, Sept. 10, 1976. U.S. Naval History and Heritage Command photograph.

friction from numerous quarters because of their race. The experiment proved conclusively that African American sailors at every rank were more than up to the demands of service and were a credit to the U.S. Navy. The Navy's utter disregard for the nation's Black citizens began to change. Nevertheless, in 1946, Gravely's disappointment in the opportunities available to him and the entrenched resistance to his advancement convinced him to leave active duty and return to the Naval Reserve. He went home to Richmond and married Alma Clark, his schoolteacher sweetheart, with whom he would raise three children. Determined to complete his education, he went back to Virginia Union to study history, and graduated in 1948.

Persevering Through the Ranks

And then the Navy called again. In 1949, the reservist returned to active duty as a recruiter in Washington, D.C. During the Korean conflict, he served as a communications officer on the *USS IOWA*

(BB-61), which is now in service as a museum ship in Los Angeles, California. In 1955, he returned to the regular Navy, and his list of firsts began to grow.

In 1961, he became the first African American officer to command a U.S. Navy ship aboard the *USS THEODORE E. CHANDLER* (DD-717). In 1962 and '63, he commanded the radar picket escort ship *USS FALGOUT* (DER-324). During the Vietnam War, he commanded the destroyer *USS TAUSSIG* (DD-746) off the coast of Vietnam, and thereby became the first Black officer to lead a U.S. Navy ship into combat. His promotion to captain in 1967, rear admiral in 1971 and vice admiral in 1976 were all firsts for an African American.

Gravely sailed through another barrier in the mid-1970s when he became the first African American in command of a U.S. Navy fleet, commanding the 3rd Fleet based in Hawaii. He then transferred back to shore duty in Virginia to direct the Defense Communications Agency until his retirement in 1980. Now a civilian, he and Alma moved north

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Sailors man the rails as the guided-missile destroyer *USS GRAVELLY* (DDG-107) returns from deployment. Gravelly deployed to the U.S. 6th Fleet in the eastern Mediterranean Sea and conducted missions in support of operations Sharp Sentry, Atlantic Sentry, and Active Endeavor. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Justin R. DiNiro.

of their hometown of Richmond to a farm in Haymarket, Virginia, and stayed active with a consulting practice.

Commemorating a Life of Leadership

In October of 2004, Samuel Lee Gravelly Jr. suffered a stroke, and died in Bethesda, Maryland, at the National Naval Medical Center. He is buried at Arlington National Cemetery. His legacy lives on in the growing ranks of officers of color in the Navy, and in the places and things and events that carry his name. In December of 2021, Gravelly Elementary School in Haymarket, Virginia, hosted a 100th birthday party for the remarkable Alma Gravelly, whose kindness, eloquence and seriousness of purpose still radiate as she describes their life together. Admiral Gravelly Boulevard in Richmond is a residential street with a median strip of flowering crepe myrtles in the rapidly diversifying Fulton neighborhood where he grew up. An official historical marker has been approved for placement at his childhood home

on Nicholson Street. The Virginia War Memorial has memorial plaques that carry quotes from the commonwealth's prominent military veterans. One is engraved with this from Gravelly: "When you stand and fight for America you're defending an America that is not perfect ... but it's better than any other country I know."

The guided-missile destroyer *USS GRAVELLY* (DDG-107), commissioned in 2010, was christened by Alma, the ship's sponsor, who kept the wrapped champagne bottle she smashed with a flourish on its prow. Every year, the Gravelly Celebration Experience is held aboard the Battleship Iowa museum ship in California, honoring trailblazers exemplifying his extraordinary leadership and service, and conducting an essay competition for high school students with Gravelly's motto: "Education, motivation, perseverance." And he is remembered, in the speeches, stories and publications of those he inspired with his direct, unwavering leadership in the Navy he loved, flaws and all, and served with honor for nearly 40 years. **FRA**



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FLEET RESERVE ASSOCIATION 2024 ORAL HISTORY PUBLICATION

To commemorate our **100th Anniversary**, our upcoming engagement campaign will compile a unique oral history archive, uniting Fleet Reserve Association members across generations, professions, geography, and life experiences.

We have partnered with Publishing Concepts (PCI) to help collect stories from as many members as possible and produce the **Fleet Reserve Association 2024 Oral History Publication**.

By sharing your memory, you'll ensure that the rich history of Fleet Reserve Association will be preserved for generations to come.

PCI will soon be contacting you via mail and email asking you to participate and updating your contact information.

Thanks for your participation!



Why I Joined the Fleet Reserve Association



RPNE/NEng.
Neil Ross

If you are hoping to read the politically correct version of why I joined the FRA, then read no further. This recounting of my reason for joining this noble organization is based upon the truth and a rapidly fading memory!

So, disregard what you expect to hear and enjoy what is written herein:

Quite frankly, I joined the Fleet Reserve Association because I love telling sea stories, and there wasn't anyone left in my sphere of friends and family who would listen. After all, hearing the same old sea story for the umpteenth time gets a little boring! Thus, the Fleet Reserve Association was the perfect place to meet new people, other sailors in particular, and share my historical worldly adventures! It was a place to tell my tales.

Maybe you're thinking this sounds a bit self-centered, and you would be right — it is! I did not join for such glorious reasons as “love of country” or “a calling to help my fellow Shipmates.” Heck, after three wars and 28 years of service, I just figured I had done enough for love of country. After rising through the ranks to senior chief petty officer, I figured I had done enough for my fellow Shipmates, too.

Meeting new Shipmates and telling yarns that started with “This is no s---” and ended with terms like “honestly!” or “so help me!” was all the glory I needed, and the Fleet Reserve Association provided just that! Why did I join the FRA? To meet other Shipmates!

Let me tell you, it is so wonderful sharing memories and discovering that others have had the same or similar experiences. Such memories include “Guess tonight's mystery meat for chow?” or flying in an aircraft made by the lowest bidder. Then there is the swagger about foreign ports of call or wild women who offered to love you “long time,” which often caught one's interest. And always, there is the staple bragging



Shipmate Senior Chief Neil Ross, USN (Ret.) currently serves as the Regional President of the Northeast/New England region.

about how high the waves were or how many degrees the ship rolled. Yep, sea stories — love them all!

So, this isn't your run-of-the-mill reason for joining a fraternal organization; yet, it's a truthful one! I deeply enjoy the Fleet Reserve Association because it gives me the platform I need to meet other Shipmates. And throughout my membership in this noble organization, I have been learning about the values of its mantra: loyalty, protection and service! **FRA**

Yours in Loyalty, Protection and Service,
Neil I. Ross

Neil Ross is the regional president of the Northeast/
New England Region.

1. BRANCH 15, WALHALLA, S.C.

Shipmates from Branch 15 participated in the Veterans Day Parade in Liberty, South Carolina, on Nov. 13, 2022. (L) Branch Board Member Tom Smith and (R) Branch Secretary/Treasurer Jim Jones.



2. BRANCH 261, LEMOORE, CALIF.

Branch President Doug McCann (R) visited Shipmate James Hays (L) of Hanford, California. During his visit, he presented Hays with his 50-Year Continuous Membership Certificate and Pin.



3. BRANCH 23, BUFFALO, N.Y.

Branch 23 attended the Sea Cadet Banquet at VFW Post 1419 in Hamburg, New York Dec. 10, 2022, as part of their Sea Cadet Corps Annual Awards Ceremony. (L to R) Joe Barbaritz, Mike Kingswell, Sea Cadet Matthew Kingswell Jr., and Branch President and retired Navy Cmdr. Wayne Sorrentino. Sorrentino is also president of the sponsor, Navy League of the United States' Niagara Frontier Council.



4. BRANCH 263, COCOA, FLA.

Shipmates David Clayton (L) and Dennis Herring (R) presented wreaths as part of the formal ceremony at the Cape Canaveral National Cemetery on National Wreaths Across America Day, Dec. 17, 2022. Following the ceremony, volunteers from the branch and the local area placed wreaths on all gravesites at the cemetery.



5. BRANCH 61, CHULA VISTA, CALIF.

Branch and Unit 61 sponsored a dinner in honor of Shipmate John McCann being elected mayor of Chula Vista, California. McCann is a Life Member of Branch 61. (L to R) Branch 61 President Rocky Sgro, the Honorable John McCann and Unit 61 President Shirley Ferrill.



6. BRANCH 298, GRAND RAPIDS, MICH.

Wolverine Branch members participated in National Wreaths Across America Day at the Grand Rapids Home for Veterans Cemetery in Michigan despite the cold and 8 inches of snow. PRPNC and Branch Secretary/Treasurer Marty Posekany (L) and Branch President Garland "Gene" Reed (R) were among those who attended.



7. BRANCH 302, CARSON, CALIF.

Branch President Ed Labao (L) and Unit Vice President Cristina Almazan (R) smile with Mayor Lula Davis-Holmes during the annual childrens Christmas party hosted by the branch.



8. BRANCH 90, LAS VEGAS, NEV.

(L to R) Steve Smith, Calvin Pascetta, Branch President Steve Haupt, Ken Martin, Jed Levine and Nicholas Locito salute the colors for the Pledge of Allegiance during the groundbreaking ceremony for the expansion of the Southern Nevada Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Boulder City, Nevada, on Jan. 25.



9. BRANCH 261, LEMOORE, CALIF.

During their February branch meeting, Bob Craig presented the branch-level winners of the Americanism Essay Contest with an award for being the best in their grade level. (L to R) Branch President Doug McCann, senior Fern Mollineau, freshman Maddyson Coultas, sophomore Ethan Murray and Americanism Essay Contest Chairman Bob Craig. All the students were from Lemoore High School.



10. BRANCH 226, STATEN ISLAND, N.Y.

Shipmates attended a Curtis High School Navy JROTC event honoring veterans and those who attended Curtis High School. N.J. JROTC cadets gave presentations on veterans from each war starting with WWII and ending with the war in Afghanistan. Most notable were two Medal of Honor recipients, Pvt. Joseph Merrill (WWII) and Navy Chaplain Corps Lt. Vincent Capodanno (Vietnam). In attendance were (L to R) Al Klingele, Bernard Eldredge, Jim Brown and Jim Haynes.

11. BRANCH 146, JOHNSVILLE, PA.

The Branch 146 Shipmate of the Year winner is Tom Concannon, who was honored during the December branch meeting for his loyalty, protection & service to his branch and Shipmates. Congratulations, Tom!



12. BRANCH 15, WALHALLA, S.C.

Branch 15 participated in a South Carolina Highway 11 trash pickup on Feb. 18. (L to R) Branch Secretary/Treasurer Jim Jones, Branch Chaplain Doug Olson, Branch President Clyde Albertson, Branch Vice President Larry Jones, and Branch Board Member Jimmy Hall. Not pictured, but participating, were Americanism Essay Chairperson Joyce Jones and Shipmate Jim Bright.

FRA

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Equine Therapy Reduces Staff Stress and Anxiety at Military Hospital

Military facility animals — whose job is to de-stress staff and patients at hospitals and clinics — come in all shapes and sizes.

At Naval Medical Center San Diego, miniature horses are one more resource for aiding the staff in coping with stress and optimizing their daily performance in an unconventional, yet effective, way.

Simply by being there, these tiny, shaggy creatures — about 30 inches high and 250-300 pounds — are showing that they are just as capable of reducing stress and anxiety in staff and patients as the facility dogs used at other military medical facilities and the Uniformed Services University's medical school.

The miniature horses — and sometimes, mini-donkeys — are extremely popular at Naval Medical Center San Diego. The military facility animals were actually called to work during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, when medical demand was at its highest and staff were overworked and emotionally vulnerable.

Judy Lee Beckett, their owner from a ranch outside San Diego, took all the necessary public health and safety precautions, including the use of personal protective equipment and physical distancing, so the horses could still come to NMCS D's courtyard during lunch hours.

"The health and wellness of our team of health care professionals is a top priority at NMCS D," said the hospital's director, U.S. Navy Capt. Kimberly Davis. "Walking through the courtyard and encountering these miniature horses adds sunshine to anyone's day."

She added: "The therapeutic effect of these animals on both staff and patients is significant. The volunteer support has been greatly appreciated, especially during COVID-19 when we all benefited from fresh air and a fun distraction."

If the pandemic proved one thing, it's that doctors, nurses and medical staff need to be in a healthy place emotionally to be effective for their patients.

Other military equine therapy proponents have seen the value of interactions between horses and recovering service members, such as the staff at a program with full-size horses at Fort Campbell in Kentucky. Beckett also uses full-size horses for service member, staff and family recovery at her ranch, and has had an established relationship with NMCS D since 2008.



Jo Newton, an equine therapist with the Healing with Horses Ranch located near Ft. Hood, Texas, pets one of the therapy horses on June 17, 2014. Photo by Spc. Marcus Floyd.

The horses' ability to draw people out of themselves simply by their presence and gentleness remains a much-awaited draw that has become a ritual for many on NMCS D's grounds and has even extended beyond its gates to the nearby naval fleet concentration area.

Researchers have learned that horses and humans tend to align their physiological responses to emotional stimulation. It's called "mirroring." A similar phenomenon occurs with other animals: Research has shown that people's blood pressure drops simply by petting a dog or cat, while the levels of the so-called feel-good hormones oxytocin and dopamine increase.

"There is something truly magical about these horses' ability to empathize with us without being able to utter a single word," said Kim Kobayashi Elliott, a certified therapeutic recreation specialist at NMCS D who advocates for the program and has worked with Beckett for many years. "The importance of just taking time out of your day to stop and pause, and really look around you, to appreciate the horses, is pretty amazing."

"Animals have a way of unconditionally accepting you. Also, people feel more at ease," Elliott said. "They can tell an animal anything, right? They don't break secrets. They're not into politics. But we're also trying to promote healthy recreation and experiences for staff and their families. That's what these animals do for us." **FRA**

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This content was written by Janet A. Aker and provided by the Defense Health Agency.



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or to donate.

Who needs money for college or trade school?

FRA's Education Foundation awards approximately \$90,000 in scholarship funds each year to recipients based on financial need, academic standing, character and leadership qualities. Our scholarship program is open to anyone who has an affiliation with the USN, USMC or USCG, through their own service or that of a spouse, parent or grandparent.

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

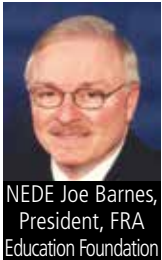
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Scholarship Applications Are Due This Month!



NEDE Joe Barnes,
President, FRA
Education Foundation

Do you know a young adult — or perhaps a not-so-young adult — headed to community college, a 4-year university or trade school this fall? They still have a few days left to apply for FRA Education Foundation scholarships! Send them to www.fra.org/foundation for all of the information and forms they will need to get their application submitted. All applications must be postmarked by April 15, and incomplete application packages will not be accepted.

Students are eligible to apply for foundation scholarships if they are affiliated with the U.S. Navy, Marine Corps or Coast Guard through their own service or that of a spouse, parent, grandparent or great-grandparent. FRA members in good standing and their spouses, children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren are eligible for a wider range of scholarships.

Applicants must be U.S. citizens and full-time students at accredited U.S. trade schools, community colleges, four-year colleges or universities. We are proud to be offering foundation scholarships to students bound for trade schools and community colleges for the third year in a row. Since this expansion of eligibility is relatively new, the opportunity to apply has been underutilized by these students. We hope you will help us spread the word to anyone you know who needs assistance with community college or trade school expenses. These institutions are important cost-saving options for students as tuition and fees at four-year schools remain high.

Foundation scholarship awards range from \$1,000 to \$5,000, and awardee selection is based on academic standing, financial need, character and leadership qualities. The total amount of annual foundation scholarships is approximately \$90,000, and students selected for the 2023-2024 academic year will be announced in July.

In the face of daunting higher education

costs, scholarships remain an important source of support for students. Every dollar a student does not have to borrow — and pay back with interest — makes a difference, not only in that student's ability to attend the school in the first place, but also in their ability to become financially independent after graduation. We are proud to support sea service members, veterans and their family members as they pursue their dream careers through postsecondary education.

The foundation's work is directly related to the FRA's mission

and 1924 founding principles of loyalty, protection and service. Foundation scholarships are also a significant benefit of membership in the association and a high-interest issue with potential members

— so don't miss opportunities to mention our program.

You can find additional information, application requirements and forms at www.fra.org/foundation. A list of our most recent scholarship recipients was published in last September's *FRAtoday* and is also posted on the website. Anyone wishing to make tax-deductible contributions in support of foundation awards can also do so at that address.

If you have questions about the program, you can reach out to Alicia Landis, the foundation scholarship coordinator, at scholars@fra.org.

Whether you support the FRA Education Foundation financially or by spreading the word to prospective members, donors and applicants, thank you in advance for your continuing support. We look forward to helping more students reach their educational goals this fall!

FRA

Joe is president of the FRA Education Foundation.

**Foundation
scholarship
awards range
from \$1,000
to \$5,000.**

In Memoriam

Name	Rating	Branch			
Andersen, Oliver L.	CDR, USN	201	Fowler, Billy E.	GMGC, USN	269
Anderson, James T.	PO1, USN	MAL	Gelvezon, Ernesto G.	DKC, USN	70
Armstrong, Charles O.	PO1, USN	MAL	Goodbar, Bernard	RMCS(SW), USN	MAL
			Griemsmann, Robert R.	CWO4, USN	MAL
Barber, John L.	CCS, USN	MAL	Hackbarth, Keith H.	AEC, USN	MAL
Beahm, Richard E.	BMCM, USN	289	Hanson, Clifford T.	PRC, USN	MAL
Betenbaugh, Thomas A.	AEC, USN	126	Havemann, Larry J.	ATC, USN	MAL
Bryan, L. Ted	DK1, USN	MAL	Hosch, Joseph W.	CWO4, USN	MAL
Bulick, Arnold E.	USN	MAL	Hunt, William T.	STCM, USN	22
Butler, Patty	PSC, USCG	230			
			Jackson, Daniel R.	CWO4, USN	MAL
Caraet, Conrado D.	PO1, USN	84	Jones, Jerry	CDR, USNR	MAL
Carr, Edward D.	YNCS, USN	MAL	Joyce, J. R.	RMC, USN	334
Cox, George T.	CTICS(SS), USN	MAL	Judkins, Robert W.	PR1, USN	94
Daniels, William G.	QMCS, USN	MAL	Kindla, August F.	BMC, USN	60
Dolar, Keith L.	PH1, USN	MAL			
Dunham, Kenneth C.	SKCM, USN	MAL	Laite, Virgil E.	MMCS, USN	MAL
Esposito, John G.	AEC, USN	146	Landicho, Petronilo	GMGC, USN	MAL



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Lepore, Daniel J.	LCDR, USN	MAL	Shipp, Harold E.	CTOC, USN	290
Lingham, Richard A.	AGC, USN	MAL	Shoemaker, Thomas	USN	MAL
Mack, William R.	AO2, USN	214	Sivertsen, Norman M.	MN1, USN	226
Martin, Donald E.	TDC, USN	MAL	Smith, Leonard W.	AFCM, USN	86
McCrary, Ben W.	PO1, USN	53	Smith, William C.	IC1, USN	97
McElwee, Mannan R.	MMCM, USN	259	Stewart, David P.J.	SKCM, USN	MAL
McFall, Mary L.	MA3, USN	161	Thompson, Leonard J.	DK1, USN	MAL
Milliken, John L.	PNCM (AW), USN	207	Townsend, Harry M.	MRCS, USN	40
Peter, Albert W.	DKCS, USN	126	Underwood, Robert E.	AOC, USN	93
Ramsey, Richard L.	MMC(SS), USN	MAL	Virata, Dominador C.	MS1, USN	166
Randolph, Beverly D.	HMCS, USN	94	Wenger, Ihor R.	LCPL, USMC	24
Rein, Walter M.	PO1, USN	91	Wildhaber, Jerry J.	LCPL, USMC	364
Richison, Donald	AVCM, USN	MAL	Williamson, James F.	BMCS, USN	311
Romanosky, Albert J.	HMC, USN	MAL	Wright, Dewane R.	AFCM, USN	17
Rudolph, William C.	BT1, USN	47			

Names in **red** indicate 50-year continuous members. Any names in **bold** indicate past national officers. To report a Shipmate death, email: mserfra@fra.org or call 703-683-1400, ext. 1.



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REUNIONS

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5/8/2023 – 5/12/2023
 New Orleans, La.
 Contact: Reed Radcliffe
 Telephone: 314-276-7481
 Email: reed@triplerphotography.com

USS BOSTON (CA-69/CAG-1, SSN-703)

7/13/2023 – 7/16/2023
 New Orleans, La.
 Contact: Barry Probst
 Telephone: 508-580-3808
 Email: president@ussboston.org

USS BEALE (DD/DDE-471)

8/20/2023 – 8/23/2023
 Evansville, Ind.
 Contact: John Davis
 Telephone: 812-264-2958
 Email: psalm51johndavis@yahoo.com
 Alternate Contact: Paul Barry
 Telephone: 321-338-5753

USS ALBANY (CA-123/CG-10, SSN-753, MAR DET)

8/20/2023 – 8/25/2023
 Nashville, Tenn.
 Contact: Lou Amico
 Telephone: 781-820-9933
 Email: reunion@ussalbany.org

LOOKING FOR

Looking for my commanding officer from the USS INDEPENDENCE (CVA-62), in 1971, Capt. Gerald G. O'Rourke. He used me as the model for the uniform that is now worn for E1 to E6. I still have my E6 uniform, and am allowed to wear it. I can be reached at: fnhunt876@gmail.com.

Thank you,
 PRPNE/NEng. Floyd G. Hunt, YN1 USN (Ret.)

Looking for DM2 Glenn Tatom. We served together at Enlisted Personnel Management Center (EPMAC), New Orleans, Louisiana, during the period from 1980 to 1982. Please contact YNCS D.R. Schreiber, USN (Ret.) at 504-931-7212.

A list of reunions is available online at: www.fra.org/Reunions. Looking For/Reunions must be submitted online, via email to reunions@fra.org, or in writing to FRA Looking For/Reunions at 125 N. West St., Alexandria, VA 22314.

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Honoring Shipmates Past, Helping Shipmates Present



Ronalee S. Klase
LA FRA RPSE

The Southeast Region is full of surprises. Mountains, beaches, farm communities, cities and small towns — we have it all in the Southeast. The auxiliary members here are as diverse as the region that they live in.

They are involved in helping the members of their units and the Shipmates of their branches with whatever may arise. They visit members who are hospitalized, homebound, or in nursing or rehabilitation homes. They help however they can, fixing meals and delivering them, helping with cleanup after a natural disaster or other emergency, and going to the pharmacy or grocery store when a member or their family is unable to do it.

Outside of meetings, our members keep in touch with phone calls and cards. The holidays offer them the chance to hold celebrations with other auxiliary members, Shipmates and their families. This gives them the chance to meet members of the families that they otherwise would not know.

Our region's auxiliary members also participate in their communities' various veterans programs. They place flags in cemeteries for Memorial Day and Veterans Day. Wreaths Across America receives their support with both the purchase and placement of wreaths in December. In January, they return to help with the removal of the wreaths from the cemeteries.

Also in January, the FRA and LA FRA Southeast regional presidents place a wreath at the memorial for the *USCGC BLACKTHORN* in St. Petersburg, Florida. This year, we were joined by FRA RVPSE Carl Kirtley and FRA NVP John Handzuk. This is a great opportunity to meet with Coast Guardsmen from the area and let them know about both of our organizations. It's a very moving ceremony and it is an honor to place the wreath in remembrance of those who lost their lives in this tragedy.

The members of the Southeast Region have a wide variety of crafting skills. Members crochet, knit, embroider and "diamond paint," a new type of craft that results in beautiful mosaics of adhesive



Unit and Branch 22 members gather for National Wreaths Across America Day. (L to R) Walt Carillan, Bonnie Kirtley, FRA RVPSE Carl Kirtley, LA FRA PRPSE Primitiva "Babe" Kilgore and FRA PRPSE Jim Richmond.

rhinestones. These items are sold at craft tables or silent auctions at various functions within the region. The money raised from these sales helps support various scholarships, the general fund and the units' functions.

The Southeast Region is rich with the history of the sea services. Most of our states have coastlines on the Atlantic Ocean or the Gulf of Mexico. Our only landlocked state, Tennessee, has rivers that flow into larger bodies of water. We have Navy, Coast Guard and Marine Corps bases within our region. We all work within our own area of the region to support the sea services. We honor those who serve and remember those who paid the ultimate price. We are here to offer our assistance to the members of the Fleet Reserve Association and to the members of the Ladies Auxiliary.

FRA

Yours in Loyalty, Protection and Service,
RPSE Ronalee S. Klase

Ronalee is the LA FRA regional president of the Southeast Region.

Four Questions to Help You Prepare for Retirement



Carl M. Trevisan, CFP®



Stephen M. Bearce

To determine how much money you will need to fund your retirement, it's helpful to estimate what your budget will look like. These four questions could help you identify your retirement lifestyle and plan for the related costs.

1. What Will I Be Doing?

- Do I plan to continue working past age 65 or after I reach my full retirement age? If so, will I work full time or part time?
- Are there hobbies I want to pursue that will either cost money or make money?
- Is there volunteer work I want to do that may also have associated costs?
- Do I plan to travel? If so, where?
- Are there things I enjoy that have related costs?

2. Where Will I Be Living?

- Will I stay in my current home, or downsize to something smaller or a rental property?
- Will I move to a retirement community or assisted living facility?
- Will I sell my home and replace it with a recreational vehicle or other alternative living option?

3. What Situations Could Impact My Expenditures?

- What health care coverage do I need for my health conditions?
- Do I have an emergency fund for unexpected situations, such as a health care crisis or property loss due to a natural disaster?
- What if I stop working sooner than expected?
- What happens if I experience a significant income loss?

4. What Barriers Are Keeping Me From Investing?

- Does my current budget leave me with nothing extra to invest?
- Do I have education loans or other debt?
- Do I need help learning how to start an

investment plan?

- Am I delaying investing with the belief that I will have time to start saving later?

Next Steps

Prepare, rather than panic. Create an outline from your answers to these questions. It should give you a framework for calculating the income you may need to support your retirement lifestyle.

Decide to adjust your spending patterns today. Choose something you really don't need and redirect the amount you would spend on it into your retirement savings. Take advantage of growth potential over time. Pay yourself first, instead of spending money on something that won't support your future retirement needs. Creating that nest egg now could reduce your stress about money later.

Start or add to an emergency fund. Even if the amount you save seems very small, it's important to take the first step. As that amount grows and the behavior becomes a habit, you will likely gain confidence and momentum in your investment activities.

Meet with a financial adviser. Review your answers to these questions and turn your outline into a plan to help you work toward your goals. **FRA**

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