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FRA *today*

The magazine of the Fleet Reserve Association

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2024 • \$3.75



Celebrating the WWII Era

- 16** Rough Seas on the Journey to Racial Integration
- 20** Remembering Lt. Col. Kenneth A. Walsh



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JEREMY PATTERSON
ARMY RESERVIST
FORT CAVAZOS

Happy Holidays
FROM YOUR EXCHANGE

X
EXCHANGE

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Cover: USS MASON (DE-529), March 20, 1944. African American crewmembers look proudly at their ship while moored at the Boston, Navy Yard, Boston, Massachusetts. Official U.S. Navy photograph, now in the collections of the National Archives. Photo courtesy of the Naval History and Heritage Command.

Features

16 Rough Seas on the Journey to Racial Integration

It was 1943 when Lt. Carlton Skinner proposed an experiment born from practicality: He suggested that Black sailors and Coast Guardsmen be fully integrated aboard ships so as to widen the available pool of labor.

20 Outnumbered and in Charge

From high school track star to Medal of Honor recipient, Lt. Col. Kenneth A. Walsh exemplified the spirit of the Marine Corps and became known as one of the most ruthless Corsair pilots flying in the Second World War.



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.

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The FRA's Centennial Year is Here!

I know I share the excitement of so many Shipmates and FRA staff members to be finally entering 2024, the year the Fleet Reserve Association will turn 100.

We have an exciting year of bimonthly magazines ahead of us, with each issue's features focusing on a different era in the FRA's history. This issue, you will find stories from the 1924–1945 time frame. The March/April issue will focus on the years 1946–1960, the May/June issue on 1961–1975, the July/August issue on 1976–2001, the September/October issue on 2002–2023, and the November/December issue on 2024 and beyond. All six issues will arrive to you in print and will also be available at fra.org for you to view and share (free of charge).

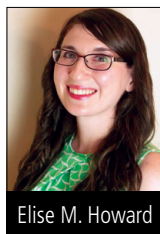
We begin this centennial year with the stories of two sea service members who embodied the FRA's cardinal principles of loyalty, protection and service. Although decorated Marine Corps aviator Kenneth Walsh and Coast Guard weather patrol ship captain Carlton Skinner may appear to have little in common on the surface, they both demonstrated the courage to do what was right in the face of enormous obstacles.

The dangers Walsh faced were obvious — waves upon waves of Japanese “Zeros” — and yet, his dedication to protecting his fellow aviators and his loyalty to his nation overrode his own desire for safety. In Skinner's case, his commitment to protecting his nation in a time of war, as well as his loyalty to the Coast Guard and his fellow Coast Guardsmen, compelled him to call for the racial integration of Coast Guard ships. Despite the potential for retaliation from his superiors, Skinner steadfastly paved the way for the better-known racial integration efforts that the Navy pursued after him, and ultimately, for the diversity that strengthens our sea services today.

We hope these stories inspire you to live out the cardinal principles in your own way this year. Although you will probably not be diving a fighter into a swarm of enemy combatants, you can still find ways to choose loyalty, protection and service over convenience, comfort and complacency in everyday situations. **FRA**

In Loyalty, Protection and Service,

Elise M. Howard
Managing Editor



Elise M. Howard

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1920s Style for a 1920s Price

It was a warm summer afternoon and my wife and I were mingling with the best of them. The occasion was a 1920s-themed party, and everyone was dressed to the nines. Parked on the manse's circular driveway was a beautiful classic convertible. It was here that I got the idea for our new 1920s Retrograde Watch.

We carefully climbed into the car's long front seat. Among the many opulent features on display was a series of dashboard dials that accentuated the car's lavish aura. One of those dials inspired our 1920s Retrograde Watch, a genuinely unique timepiece that marries timeless style with modern technology.

With its remarkable retrograde hour and minute indicators, sunburst guilloché face and precision movement, this design is truly one of a kind. What does retrograde mean? Instead of displaying the hands rotating on an axis like most watches, the hands sweep in a semicircle, then return to their starting point and begin all over again.

Retrograde watches by the big brands can set you back thousands; one recent offering from a big French fashion house is selling for more than \$150,000! But because we've designed the 1920s Retrograde Watch in-house, we can offer it to you for just \$99!

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Priorities for Our Centennial Year



Phillip Reid, NED

It sometimes feels as though there are a hundred things to focus on every day at headquarters. Everyone knows that no one can succeed at accomplishing that many things at one time. At least, not accomplishing them very well.

My priorities in 2024 are as follows:

1. Relocating the FRA headquarters.
2. Making the FRA Centennial Celebration the most successful event that FRA members have ever experienced.
3. Repairing relationships with the leadership of the U.S. Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard.
4. Fully implementing the C&BL change that allows commissioned officers to be members of the FRA.
5. Hiring a fully qualified finance officer.
6. Trying to take care of the other fifty items that come across my desk on almost a daily basis.

I want to take a deeper look at my top three priorities.

Relocating the FRA Headquarters

On Dec. 27, 2023, the sale of the FRA HQ building was finalized. Simultaneously, we signed a lease-back agreement with the seller that allows us to rent our current office space through Aug. 31, 2024. Between now and Aug. 31, we need to finalize the selection of a new home and find new owners for historical pieces currently on display in our museum or other parts of the building.

Like a family that has decided to downsize, we'll need to figure out what goes with us and what needs to find a new home. Once we complete that task, we'll begin finding homes for those items not going with us. If there are individuals or branch homes that might have some interest in items, feel free to let me know.

Making the FRA Centennial Celebration the Most Successful Event Ever!

Hat's off to PNP Donna Jansky and her team for taking on this monumental task. They've already

put in countless hours making our celebration the event of the century for our members. The headquarters staff finds itself playing a huge role in the planning of this once-in-a-lifetime event because it's being held in "our backyard" and it's being presented in conjunction with the Veterans Service Foundation, a headquarters entity.

To save money (thereby maximizing the return), many of the marketing functions and fundraising activities are being taken on by members of the committee and the headquarters' staff.

This is happening during my time as the national executive director, and I will be doing everything in my power to make it an unforgettable event for you, our members. We only get one shot at this and I want to do it right.

Repairing Relationships With the U.S. Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard Leadership

Since coming to FRA 3 1/2 years ago, all I've heard about is how the relationship between FRA and the leadership of the sea services has deteriorated. My goal is to rebuild relationships with the leadership, or build relationships with individuals who know the leadership. We are in the right town to build up these relationships, to prove to leadership that we have value and that FRA can be helpful to them in some capacity.

How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time. My plan is to keep knocking on doors until someone answers.

Vet Tix (Not a Priority, but a Great Benefit)

Veering off topic, I want to mention a program that I hope some of you are already aware of: Vet Tix. It's sponsored by the Veteran Tickets Foundation. It's an amazing program that provides veterans with tickets to concerts and sporting events around the country. If you haven't signed up for this program, I encourage you to do so at www.vettix.org. **FRA**

Yours in Loyalty, Protection and Service,
Phillip Reid, National Executive Director



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Editor's Note: *FRA Today* welcomes letters from readers about the editorial content of the magazine. For future issues, we will continue to publish letters to the editor that address editorial content in the magazine but will refrain from publishing letters about advertising. Letters to the editor are typically only about editorial content rather than advertising. If you have a letter you would like to submit about articles published in the magazine, email us at fratoday@fra.org. Letters may be selected for publication depending on the space available for the next issue. We will attempt to publish all letters to the editor pertaining to editorial content.

Offended Members

With great dismay, I read the feedback from a few members who got easily offended by advertisements published in a couple of editions of *FRA Today*. I hope the magazine continues to run advertisements that generate the greatest amount of revenue for the FRA, regardless of how some individuals interpret them on the political spectrum. I guess some of the readers cannot tolerate other viewpoints. It is disappointing to read threats by a few members to cancel their membership if the magazine does not make content changes that align with their fringe political beliefs. I enjoy reading the magazine and applaud the editorial board for their hard work and dedication.

YNM(AW/EXW) Douglas P. Davis, USN (Ret.)

December Shipmate Forum Opinions

This letter will comment on two individual opinions published in the December 2023 issue of "The *FRA TODAY*—Shipmate Forum." It was extremely disturbing to come across these two opinions of the identical subject that reflected such equally arrogant and egregious statements regarding the Forum's selection of material that are published in the forum. In that both opinions were extremely similar in content and structure, one would surmise whether there was some collusion between the two individuals submitting their caustic opinions. What was most surprising to me, is that the most abrasive author of the two opinions was a senior grade Intelligence CrytoTech (NAC) (CTICM). I have had the privilege of working and associating with many of the rating throughout my lengthy career in carrier aviation and judging from their uncontrolled vitriolic pronouns leveled on the protagonist, I must respectfully challenge their professional and military qualifications attached to their signatures. I had worked and associated with numerous CT's and had usually been impressed with

their intelligence, refined manner and decorum. However, I could not "wrap my head around what I had seen and read" in my 42 years of military service.

I have enjoyed the FRA since 1998, however on rare occasions a couple of articles or advertisements were much to be desired, however it didn't take much talent or effort to turn the page and digest the balance of the monthly. Referencing a case in point, is the choice of advertisement subject that was featured in the October 2023 issue, that drew two negative reviews in the December 2023 issue. My afterthought is that had I been in the review channel, I would have "vetted" both authors as to their qualifications to submit an opinion to the forum and furthermore if they were cognizant of the policy and requirements of publication. Vitriolic pronouns should never be attached to a name without first backing the vitriol with indisputable fact.

The CTICM made mention of an "assumed biography?" Was there a "hidden biography" of the advertised book author that I may have missed? I would appreciate your rereading the opinion and email an affirmative if I did miss reading the mentioned biography for one reason or another. Thank you for a wonderful, informative magazine. Keep up the good work and I look forward to each issue, but usually appreciate your selections of good common sense opinions for the "Shipmate Forum!"

Respectfully,
Cmdr. Reuben T. Tsujimura, (Ret.), FRA Life Member

Tolerance of Different Viewpoints

I've read several letters in your magazine that take offense to ads for books written by conservative authors such as Tucker Carlson, and/or in support of public figures such as President Donald Trump. It is amazing at how "offended" these people are at an ad; ignoring an *ad* you're not interested in and just turning the page (as I normally do) is something these people seem to have

quite a problem doing. Some have even said certain books should be BANNED because of their content. It appears that the decades-long efforts of our military branches to increase “diversity” and “tolerance” of different viewpoints seem to have failed miserably. Some of these letters have been written by Chief Petty Officers or above; people who really should know better by virtue of their position.

Some have even threatened to cancel their membership in the FRA. Considering their “tolerance” of others, it could be argued that the FRA may very well be better off without them. The current politicization of today’s military has not made our nation safer; just the opposite, in fact.

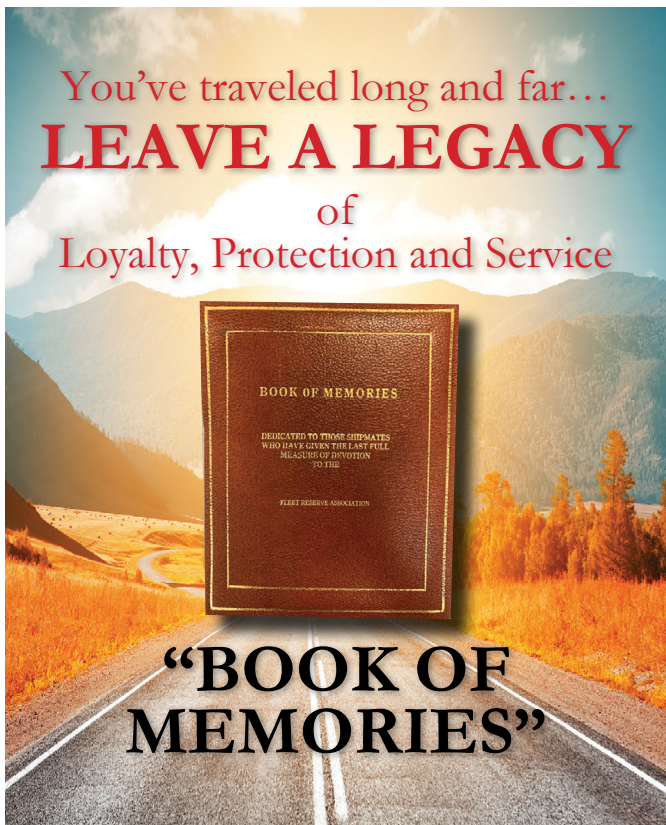
The editor’s note said that “New leadership is now in place and they will be determining what is and is not offensive. The overall objective of the magazine will no longer be to

make money from advertising.” So the FRA no longer needs to make money?!? Interesting. And this “leadership” will determine what is “offensive”? Is *FRA Today* going to mimic the New York Times or the Washington Post? If so, maybe I should reconsider my membership.

Personally, I think CPO’s, SCPO’s, and MCPO’s should ACT like CPO’s, SCPO’s, and MCPO’s. And some people need to learn the meaning of tolerance.

Sincerely yours,
YNC Edward L. White II, USCG (Ret.)

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. Submit letters to *FRA Today*, 125 N. West St., Alexandria, VA 22314 or to fratoday@fra.org.



The “**Book of Memories**” was instituted in 1959 to perpetuate the memory of Shipmates and Ladies who have joined the Staff of the Supreme Commander.

Originally, the donations received were placed in a special fund established to pay the mortgage on the National Executive Offices building. The mortgage was paid in full by the date of the 1961 national convention. However, the Shipmates decided that memorializing their departed members in this manner was most fitting and the program was continued.

Create a lasting tribute and perpetuate your commitment to the guiding principles of our organization.



To learn more, contact FRA National Headquarters at 1-800-372-1924 or email at phillipr@fra.org.

ON & OFF *capitol hill*

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



John Davis,
Director,
Legislative
Programs

New Year Provides Opportunities to Build on 2023 Success

As the FRA Legislative Team prepares for the second session of the 118th Congress, we would like to share our legislative victories from the first session. As *FRAtoday* goes to press, the House and Senate have both passed their versions of the National Defense Authorization Act. A conference committee will resolve the differences between the two bills and present a final version of the bill to the House and Senate. If approved, that bill will go to the president to be signed into law or be vetoed.

After all the turmoil over the speakership in the House, the Major Richard Star Act (H.R.1282), a concurrent receipt reform bill, is still pending on the House floor. The FRA Legislative Team will be working to get a vote on the act in the House so that the bill can be sent to the Senate for further consideration.

Legislative Victories in 2023

The 2023 calendar year was the first year of the two-year 118th Congress. Bills introduced in 2023 can still be enacted in 2024. The FRA maintains a strong and creditable presence on Capitol Hill, and the association's legislative successes during the preceding year include:

- No new TRICARE fee increases in the House or Senate versions of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). The FRA worked to stop fee increases proposed by the Congressional Budget Office for TRICARE For Life and other TRICARE plans from moving forward in Congress.
- The House Armed Services Committee's approval of a concurrent receipt reform bill, the Major Richard Star Act (H.R.1282). The bill has 326 co-sponsors and is awaiting a vote on the House floor.
- The introduction of five pieces of concurrent receipt legislation in the House and Senate (H.R.333, H.R.303, H.R.1282, S.1515, S.344).
- The introduction of the Respect for Grieving Military Families Act (H.R.3232, S.1588), which would stop the Defense Finance and Accounting Service from taking back a prorated portion of a deceased military retiree's benefits from their surviving spouse during the month of the retiree's death.
- The introduction of bipartisan bills (H.R.2537, S.1823) that would restore Basic Allowance for Housing payments to 100% of estimated housing costs. A provision to increase BAH 1% — from 95% to 96% of estimated housing costs — is included in the House-passed NDAA.

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.

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- The introduction of legislation in the House and the Senate (H.R.939, S.334) that would repeal the requirement that those retiring from military service wait 180 days before entering a Department of Defense civil service position if that job is classified as GS-13 or below on the General Schedule. A similar provision is in the House-passed NDAA.
- Provisions for an active-duty pay increase of 5.2%, equal to the Employment Cost Index, in both the House and Senate versions of the NDAA.
- The inclusion of a massive rewrite of the military's pay tables in the House Appropriations Committee's Department of Defense Appropriations Act (H.R.4365). The FRA-supported bill would provide at least a 5.2% increase for all active-duty service members and a pay increase of more than 40% for some junior enlisted members. The move would guarantee that even the lowest-ranking service members make at least \$31,000 annually in base pay, roughly \$15 an hour.
- Measures in the House and Senate versions of the NDAA that would require the DOD to report on beneficiary access changes resulting from the reduction of the TRICARE pharmacy network.
- Provisions in the FY2023 omnibus bill that expanded the VA's prostate cancer treatment and research.

Veterans Day, FRA's 99th Anniversary, Marine Corps' 248th Birthday

Nov. 11 is recognized as Veterans Day, and it is a long-standing tradition for many FRA Shipmates to participate in Veterans Day ceremonies all across the country. FRA National President John S. Handzuk attended a White House breakfast. Later, he participated in the National Veterans Day Observance at Arlington National Cemetery, including a special wreath-laying ceremony. NED Phillip Reid participated in a ceremony at the Navy Memorial in Washington, D.C.

This past Veterans Day (Nov. 11, 2023) also marked the FRA's 99th anniversary and the 248th birthday of the Marine Corps. Assistant Director of Legislative Programs Theo Lawson attended the Mack's Marines luncheon at Marine Barracks Washington, D.C., in observance of the Marine Corps' birthday.

- A pilot program to provide travel reimbursements for low-income veterans in advance of medical appointments, which was established by the FY2023 omnibus bill.
- A provision in the Senate FY2024 NDAA that would require a comprehensive review of Navy efforts to reduce suicide.
- A new VA policy allowing almost any veteran experiencing a suicidal crisis to receive emergency care at no cost from any VA or non-VA health care facility. Enrollment in the VA system is not required.
- The introduction of a bill that would mint a 100th anniversary FRA commemorative coin.

These successes would not have been possible without the support of FRA Shipmates. As of Nov. 20, 2023, Shipmates using the FRA Action Center had generated more than 28,000 messages that were sent to Capitol Hill during calendar year 2023. Your continued grassroots participation will be an important factor in determining legislative success or failure in 2024. Shipmate participation through the Action Center complements the work of the FRA's Legislative Team.

USMC Commandant Recovering From Cardiac Arrest

On Oct. 29, 2023, Gen. Eric Smith, the newly appointed Marine Corps commandant, was hospitalized due to what the Marine Corps initially described only as a "medical emergency." It was later reported that the commandant had experienced sudden cardiac arrest while jogging, collapsing near Marine Barracks Washington and receiving CPR from emergency services. After Gen. Christopher Mahoney was confirmed as assistant commandant by the Senate, the No. 2 officer in the Marine Corps began filling in for the service's top leader while he remained hospitalized. Mahoney will continue performing the duties of the commandant as Smith recovers, the Marine Corps said.

"General Smith is making excellent progress," the Marine Corps stated in a November press release. "His baseline physical health has directly contributed to his rapid improvement, and he is recovering as expected. Once he is discharged from the hospital, he will continue his recovery at his military quarters, but will need to focus on his health prior to fully returning to duty."

Senate Moves to End Military Confirmation Blockade

The Senate Rules and Administration Committee approved Senate Resolution 444 by a 9-7 vote to permit one floor vote for more than 350 senior military nominations, potentially ending a nine-month confirmation blockade that has delayed planned leadership changes across the Department of Defense. The temporary standing order resolution is sponsored by Sen. Jack Reed (R.I.), the chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, and if approved by a bipartisan super-majority of 60 or more senators, would effectively override Sen. Tommy Tuberville's (Ala.) blanket blockade of military promotions.

This resolution would establish a standing order for the remainder of the 118th Congress (2023-2024) that would allow the Senate to consider and vote on multiple military nominations at once — with the exception of nominees to the Joint Chiefs of Staff and combatant commanders — as long as those nominees have been favorably reported by the Senate Armed Services Committee. Previously, unanimous consent was required to confirm more than one military nominee at a time, allowing Tuberville to single-handedly block the efficient promotion of senior military leaders. The new resolution would also limit debate on the group of nominees under consideration to

two hours and would prohibit motions to interrupt the voting process.

The proposal was approved by the committee on a party-line vote. Tuberville has blocked the normally routine approval of senior military officials since late February because of his objections to the Defense Department's policy of reimbursing service members for travel expenses when they must leave the state to obtain an abortion. It is unclear when the full Senate will vote on the resolution.

Despite Tuberville's hold on military appointments over the Pentagon's abortion-related policies, the Senate confirmed three top military nominees. Navy Adm. Lisa Franchetti was confirmed as the Chief of Naval Operations in November by a 95-1 vote, making her the first female member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The Senate also approved Air Force Gen. David Allvin as the service's next chief of staff, which fills the positions on the Joint Chiefs of Staff for the first time since July 10, 2023. Furthermore, senators voted 86-0 to promote Marine Corps Lt. Gen. Christopher Mahoney to general and confirm him as the Marine Corps Assistant Commandant. Mahoney's confirmation took on added urgency following news that Commandant Gen. Eric Smith had been hospitalized following a cardiac arrest.

Sailor Pleads Guilty to Providing Info to China

As a follow-up to an August 2023 NewsBytes story, a Navy sailor pleaded guilty before a U.S. district judge in Los Angeles to accepting a bribe and conspiring with a foreign intelligence officer. The sailor is charged with sending sensitive military information to China — including photos, videos, blueprints and naval force movement plans — in exchange for about \$15,000 over the course of nearly two years. The petty officer, who was stationed at Naval Base Ventura County in Port Hueneme, California, was led to believe that the Chinese intelligence officer was a maritime economic researcher who needed the information to make investment decisions. The sailor originally pleaded not guilty when he was charged on Aug. 4, 2023. He now faces a statutory maximum sentence of 20 years in federal prison: five years for conspiracy and 15 years for bribery. The sailor has been in custody since

his arrest in August, and his sentencing hearing was scheduled for Jan. 8.

In a similar but separate case, another sailor arrested on charges of providing information to China has pleaded not guilty in federal court. This sailor was assigned to the San Diego-based *USS ESSEX* (LHD-2), a Wasp-class amphibious assault ship that just completed a yearlong maintenance and upgrade period in dry dock in September. The sailor is accused of providing a Chinese intelligence officer with detailed information about the weapons systems and aircraft aboard the *ESSEX* and other amphibious assault ships, including photos, videos and over 50 technical manuals, in exchange for thousands of dollars. Federal officials involved in the cases have not yet stated whether or not the two cases involved the same Chinese intelligence officer. Both sailors are naturalized citizens from China.

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PACT Act Deadline Spurs Second-Highest VA Enrollment Month on Record

As authorized by the Honoring Our PACT Act, Sept. 30, 2023, marked the end of the VA's one-year special enrollment period for post-9/11 combat veterans who left active duty between Sept. 11, 2001, and Oct. 1, 2013. Thanks in part to outreach efforts by the VA and veterans service organizations like the FRA, the Department of Veterans Affairs experienced one of its highest-volume months ever for health care enrollments in September 2023. The VA reports that 48,763 veterans enrolled in VA health care last September, nearly twice the number who enrolled in September 2022. This made September 2023 the second-highest month of enrollments in the department's history.

As of late November, the VA reported that it is taking an average of 155.6 days to complete a PACT Act-related claim. The FRA wants the VA to have no disability claims pending for more than 125 days, with all claims having an accuracy rate of 98% or higher. However, the VA reports that only 46.1% of PACT Act-related claims are being completed in 125 days or less.

The VA reports that more than 4.9 million veterans received toxic exposure screenings between Sept. 6, 2022, and Nov. 19, 2023, with 43% of those screened noting at least one potential toxic exposure. The PACT Act allows

all patients visiting VA health care facilities to undergo toxic exposure screenings to detect signs of illness and inform veterans if they may qualify for new benefits. The five-minute screening includes a series of simple questions regarding veterans' time in service, potential exposure to toxic substances, and current health status. Veterans will undergo the screening during their initial visit, but will not repeat the questions during follow-up appointments. Officials plan to conduct the screening for every patient once every five years.

Only Vietnam Veteran in Senate to Retire

The only Vietnam veteran serving in the U.S. Senate, Tom Carper (Del.), has announced that he will not seek reelection in 2024. Carper said in a Military.com interview that because of how Vietnam veterans were treated upon their arrival back in the States, the perspective they brought to Congress was fundamentally different than the views of their colleagues who had served in World War II and Korea.

"Coming back from Vietnam, we didn't get a warm welcome," Carper said.

He and other Vietnam veterans have worked to encourage Americans to differentiate between their feelings about a particular conflict and their feelings about the service members sent to fight it.

"So, there's been a big change from how it was during Vietnam and now," Carper said, and the change has been for the better.

Although the three Vietnam veterans currently serving in the House of Representatives are running for reelection this November, Carper's retirement reflects the larger trend of a shrinking population of veterans, not only in Congress, but also in the U.S. population as a whole. According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2022 data, there are approximately 16.2 million veterans living in the United States, representing about 6.2% of the country's adult population. This is a significant decline from 1980, when about 18% of adults in the United States were veterans. Despite making up only 6.2% of the general population, however, veterans of all eras make up 17% of the Senate and 18.4% of the House in the current session of Congress, according to the Pew Research Center.

HASC Quality of Life Panel Briefed by DOD on Compensation Review

The House Armed Services Committee's Quality of Life Panel, led by Chairman Don Bacon (Neb.) and Ranking Member Chrissy Houlahan (Pa.), was recently briefed by the Department of Defense about the ongoing 14th Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation.

The QRMC is conducted every four years to ensure that service members are being paid fairly compared to the civilian workforce and can afford basic necessities like food and housing. The 14th QRMC began on Jan. 31, 2023, and must be completed by Jan. 31, 2025.

The FRA submitted a statement to the QRMC team in March. Previous compensation reviews have resulted in significant changes in military pay and benefits, such as increased hazardous duty pay and modifications to the criteria used to calculate the housing allowance.

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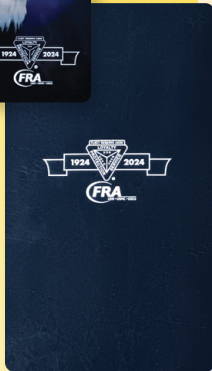
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GAO Report on Challenges for Reservists Filing VA Disability Claims

A recent Government Accountability Office report in which the Fleet Reserve Association actively participated, GAO-24-105400, notes that changes are needed to address the unique challenges Reserve component members face when filing for veterans disability benefits with the Department of Veterans Affairs. Although National Guard members and reservists are eligible for VA disability benefits, serving part time can make it difficult for them to prove that their disabilities are service-related.

The GAO found that although the Department of Defense and the VA have guidance about disability

benefits for reservists, it does not cover the importance of immediately documenting health conditions to establish a connection to time on duty. Furthermore, gaps in VA data — such as difficulty accessing the dates of reservists' annual two-week trainings and drill weekends — make it challenging to verify claims of service connection. The GAO recommended that the DOD and VA improve their trainings for service members and increase data-sharing with each other to help those who have served in the Reserves and the National Guard access the benefits they have earned. **FRA**



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Phillip Reid, National Executive Director and Advisor to the 2024 Centennial Committee



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The ship's bell from the historic *USS SEA CLOUD*, the United States' first racially integrated sea service vessel, on display at the Coast Guard Research and Development Center in New London, Connecticut on Feb. 7, 2017. The bell was one of the artifacts on display at the RDC in celebration of Black History Month. Courtesy of the Coast Guard Historian's Office/DVIDS.



Above: Carlton Skinner, a Coast Guard lieutenant commander when he became commanding officer of the *USS SEA CLOUD* (IX-99), stands at the weather patrol ship's helm with four of his Black crew members. Photo courtesy of the Coast Guard Historian's Office.

Rough Seas on the Journey to Racial Integration

The *SEA CLOUD*, *MASON* and *PC-1264* Embark on an Experiment

By Jessica Brodtkin Webb

It was 1943 when then-Lt. Carlton Skinner, who started his career as a journalist before applying for a commission in the Coast Guard Reserve, put forth a request that inadvertently served as an experiment with U.S. military racial integration.

Skinner was serving as executive officer aboard the *USS NORTHLAND* (WPG-49), a Coast Guard gunboat operating under the command of the Navy, when a Black sailor named Oliver Henry asked if he could sit for a machinist's mate rating exam. At that time, Black men could serve in the Navy only as cooks and stewards, or in some cargo handling roles, which included such grim tasks as digging graves. Skinner put in the request with Enlisted Personnel at Coast Guard Headquarters, but the request was denied due to Henry's race. Frustrated with having to deny advancement opportunities to a hardworking man eager to serve, and while the military was coming to terms

with low recruitment numbers in general, Skinner proposed an experiment born from practicality: He suggested that Black sailors and Coast Guardsmen be fully integrated aboard ships so as to widen the available pool of labor.

A Quiet Experiment

Initially, Skinner's requests for integration went ignored. However, when he was later assigned as commanding officer of the *USS SEA CLOUD* (IX-99), 12 Black sailors were given orders, without any special notice or treatment, for non-stewarding assignments aboard the weather patrol boat. In a formal Coast Guard report, Skinner observed that the lack of fanfare was quite in keeping with his request to keep the experiment low-key, away from media attention and solely focused on a work-as-usual approach.

For the trial to succeed, he had noted that posts would need to be assumed on a regular ship on sea duty, where

sailors could learn from other sailors, entirely devoid of press coverage or special treatment. Essentially, Skinner reasoned that the only way to illustrate the normalcy of integrating crews and prove it was a worthwhile and practical choice was to treat the situation like it was normal practice. Save the fact that some men would be newly assigned to jobs that had previously been closed off to them as Black Coast Guardsmen, everything else, he said, should function according to standard practices with no hint of special treatment.

Deliberately, Skinner focused on military training, later reporting he “was convinced that it would work only if it were routine” and exactly like any other Coast Guard unit in operation. In fact, the ship’s crew was put to two very real tests, first in assisting with anti-submarine warfare operations and later in averting a potentially catastrophic collision with an enormous iceberg while on patrol off the coast of Newfoundland. According to a written account by Skinner, the integrated crew performed like any other would have under trying circumstances, confirming his belief that focusing on training rather than highlighting racial differences would prove advantageous under pressure. The unspoken social hierarchy aboard the *SEA CLOUD* appeared to fall into a familiar pattern, with older sailors, regardless of skin color, claiming a slight advantage over younger ones. All hands on board complained about the lousy weather and hard work, he noticed.

Skinner reported there were some issues with the dynamic, notably when sailors with known disciplinary issues were sent to the *SEA CLOUD*, as well as when the white population of sailors assigned to the boat dropped so low that Black sailors began bullying the newer minority. He also noticed with some dismay that sailors who got on well while at work would still self-segregate when going ashore for liberty. Generally, however, integration efforts aboard the *SEA CLOUD* were successful and did indeed fulfill Skinner’s goal of tapping into a wider workforce and recruitment pool.

‘Eleanor’s Folly’: The *USS MASON* Defies Judgment

By 1941, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People had begun a targeted push for integration throughout the Navy. The NAACP first asked Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox to accept Black service members for non-steward roles, but to no avail; the group then approached President Franklin Roosevelt with their request, which prompted an investigation by the Fair Employment Practices Committee.

On June 1, 1942, the U.S. Navy — which had come under public and congressional criticism — began allowing Black recruits to enlist for general service, but the majority of Black sailors continued to be messmen, and most were restricted to shore-based units. The Navy’s first attempt at a nonsegregated crew with the destroyer escort *USS MASON* (DE-529) did not include most of the elements Skinner had deliberately employed on the *SEA CLOUD*. While it is not fair to suggest Skinner achieved better results, it is accurate to note that the Navy certainly approached their first attempts at desegregated crews with an eye to the public perception, a choice Skinner had cautioned against making.

Whereas Skinner had quietly seen Black sailors transferred aboard the *SEA CLOUD* into varied jobs with little fanfare, the *MASON* was very publicly touted as having a primarily Black crew when it was commissioned in March 1944. Of the 204 sailors assigned to the *MASON*, 160 were Black, with white officers slotted into the highest-ranking positions.

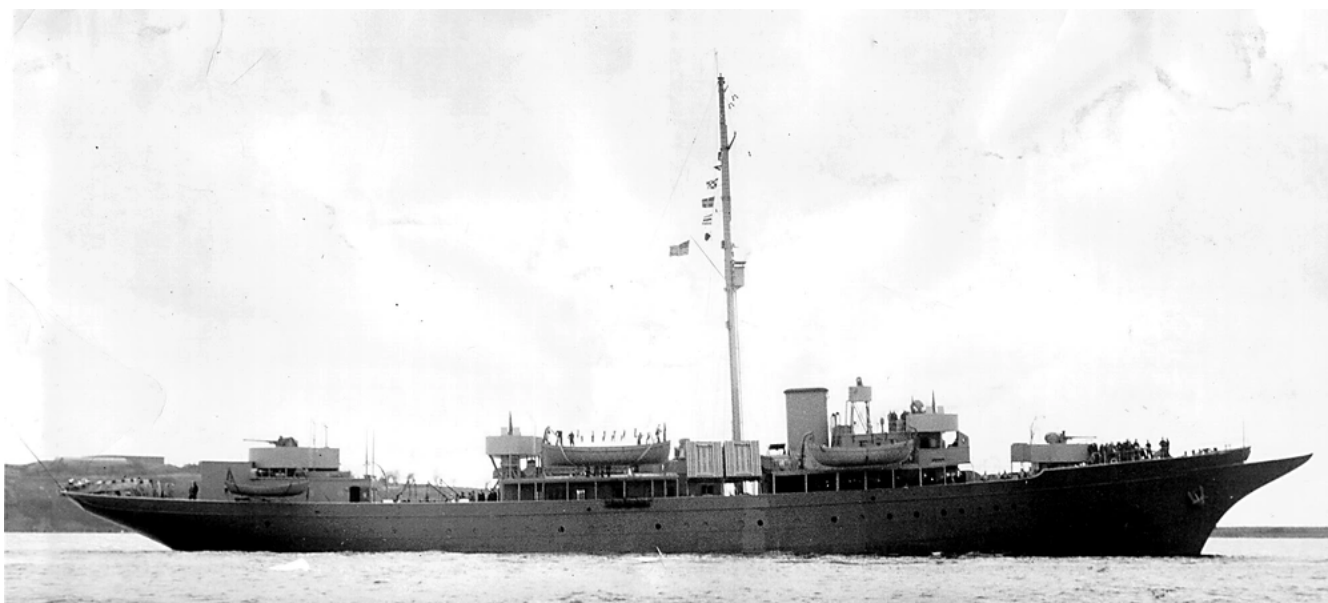
Unlike the integrated living conditions Skinner had implemented on the *SEA CLOUD*, Black sailors were placed in segregated quarters during training and separate sleeping areas aboard the *MASON*. Black sailors with *MASON* orders were still not allowed to enter most USO clubs and were instead directed to “Negro” clubs for downtime, which mirrored civilian segregation practices. Still, *MASON*’s wartime captain, Lt. Cmdr. William Blackford, was not entirely unlike Skinner in his personal approach to the workings of his boat: He allegedly told the entire crew in no uncertain terms that his job was not to contend with race relations but to run a ship.

Initially monikered “Eleanor’s Folly” in a stab at first lady Eleanor Roosevelt’s attempts at forced desegregation, the *MASON* proved itself at sea. It escorted six convoys to both England and the Mediterranean before its first year in service ended, including a well-documented trip through deadly weather conditions. Former signalman 1st Class Lorenzo Dufau remembered in a Library of Congress Veterans History Project oral history recording that “the vessel was lifted up by one wave and you’d be on top of that wave and ... you’d slide down the wave,” with several swells taking down tugboats.

The sea, it would seem, did not recognize skin color.

Changes on the Wind

Just over a month after the *MASON* was commissioned, the *USS PC-1264*, a submarine chaser built to destroy German U-boats, entered service in April 1944. Lt. Eric Purdon was installed as its white commanding officer.



The *SEA CLOUD* had originally been built as a yacht in 1930, and was converted for weather patrol service in 1941. The ship's crew would remain in a designated area of the Atlantic for three to four weeks at a time, reporting the weather by radio every four hours. This photo is of the USS *SEA CLOUD* at sea Oct. 22, 1942. It was the first ship in the Coast Guard to operate with a fully integrated crew, thanks to the efforts of Carlton Skinner. Photo courtesy of the Coast Guard Historian's Office/DVIDS.

Four additional white officers were aboard, along with 53 Black crew members.

Despite being celebrated at its New York birthplace as a step toward racial integration, the *PC-1264* was met with racism during training. According to the United States Naval Institute, the city of Miami Beach did not allow Black people in public settings after sundown, and denied the crew access to any facilities for its scheduled abandon-ship training. After a fairly straightforward assignment brought the *PC-1264* back to New York, the submarine chaser was again sent to Florida. This time, when the ship's Black petty officers went out to enjoy a movie at the Key West Coast Guard base, they were told they must sit in the segregated steward's section at the back of the theater.

A third incident occurred months later, when one Ensign Samuel Gravely Jr. was arrested for having drinks with a handful of petty officers in Miami. Gravely, who was Black and serving as an officer aboard the *PC-1264*, was not allowed to enter any officers clubs on base. History would prove to be on Gravely's side: Although he never took full command of the *PC-1264*, he eventually became the first Black vice admiral in the Navy.

By the time the *PC-1264* was decommissioned in February 1946, it had an entirely Black crew and a Black executive officer. In a loose comparison, the *MASON* never had an all-Black crew. Although the *PC-1264* went through

frequent changes of command and endured multiple public relations incidents involving segregation, it served as a turning point in naval history.

An Enduring Legacy

A 2016 Department of Defense report that gathered the most recent statistics on gender, race and ethnicity among Navy sailors indicated that between 5% and 7% of the officer population and 18-21% of chiefs were Black at the time the data was collected. Those numbers represent a large leap from Skinner's 1943 estimate of 2-3% of seagoing billets being open to Black sailors. Although the *MASON* and *PC-1264* were not staffed in the same way as the *SEA CLOUD*, efforts toward integration across all rates and ranks undeniably took place on all three boats, proving the capabilities of Black sailors and Coast Guardsmen at sea.

Still, it is worth remembering Skinner's primary motive was to increase Navy and Coast Guard efficiency in an effort to win a war against fascism in Europe. The analytical journalist and his push for productivity triggered policy changes that contributed to Allied triumph in Europe and changes across the U.S. military. Three-quarters of a century later, the United States is by no means devoid of racism, but sailors of every race and religion serve together and stand together, just as Skinner envisioned, in support of freedom. **FRA**



Outnumbered and in Charge

Remembering Lt. Col. Kenneth A. Walsh, Celebrated Ace of WWII

By Bethanie Hestermann

Combat pilot Lt. Col. Kenneth Walsh had guts. He had the kind of guts that gave him the courage and fortitude to do his duty under extreme circumstances, accomplishing great deeds in the face of great peril. Walsh lived a long life, from 1916 to 1998, and considering what he did during his nearly 30 years of service in the U.S. Marine Corps, which spanned both World War II and the Korean War, this is particularly incredible; so many others are taken before their time under far less dangerous circumstances.

In August 1943, as a first lieutenant stationed in the South Pacific with Marine Fighting Squadron 124, Walsh earned a Medal of Honor partly for diving his F-4U Corsair into an enemy formation, even though the enemy outnumbered his own division 6-to-1. The ace not only came out on the other side of this encounter, but also downed a pair of Japanese dive bombers and a fighter aircraft in the process. Later that same month, Walsh took on 50 Japanese “Zeros,” cementing his reputation as one of the most dauntless combat pilots to serve in WWII. He accepted his Medal of Honor in February 1944 from President Franklin D. Roosevelt and went on to have an influential career before retiring as an American hero. Here’s his story.

A Combat Pilot in the Making

Kenneth Ambrose Walsh was born in Brooklyn, New York, in November 1916. He lived in Brooklyn with his

parents and sister until his father, Ambrose Walsh, died when Kenneth was just 7 years old, according to a 1944 article from *The Morning Post* of Camden, New Jersey. The family moved to New Jersey near an airport, and young Kenneth Walsh enjoyed watching the aircraft take off, land and soar overhead.

As a young man, Walsh was athletic and a standout member of the track and field team at his local high school. Walsh enlisted in the Marine Corps after graduation in December 1933 at age 17. According to the Naval History and Heritage Command, he underwent recruit training in Parris Island, South Carolina, before being ordered to the Quantico, Virginia, Marine Corps base. There, Walsh served as an aviation mechanic and radioman.

Walsh wanted to fly planes, and in April 1937, he got his chance, completing his flight training at Naval Air Station Pensacola in Florida. He worked his way up through the Marine Corps ranks, being promoted to master technical sergeant and gunner before gaining a commission as a second lieutenant in 1942. He was promoted to first lieutenant in June 1943. Along the way, he completed scout and observation missions off of the aircraft carriers *USS YORKTOWN*, *USS WASP* and *USS RANGER*; served with Marine Aircraft Group 12’s Marine Fighting Squadron 121 (VMF-121); and flew with Marine Fighting Squadron 124 (VMF-124).



Marine Corps Lt. Col. Kenneth A. Walsh was an ace pilot during World War II and earned the Medal of Honor. Official Navy photograph. Photo from "Medal of Honor, 1861-1949, The Navy," courtesy of the Department of Defense.

An American Hero in the Making

As Walsh was building his career in the Marine Corps, he was also building a family. He married Beulah Mae Barinott in 1940, and the couple had two sons, Kenneth Jr. and Thomas. The young pilot — now also a young father — was relocated with VMF-124 to the South Pacific in 1943. By then, the United States was entrenched in World War II.

VMF-124 was notable for being the first operational Marine Corps squadron to fly the F-4U Corsair fighter-bombers. Walsh would go on to become a notable member of this squadron, first by shooting down six enemy aircraft in the period between April and May of 1943, thereby becoming the first "ace" to fly a Corsair, according to the U.S. Department of Defense DOD. He later became the first F-4U pilot to earn a Medal of Honor, according to the Marine Corps History and Museums Division's pamphlet "Time of the Aces: Marine Pilots in the Solomons, 1942-1944," which meticulously details the period.

A Defining Moment in Aerial Combat

On Aug. 15, 1943, now-first lieutenant Walsh really proved his mettle. As U.S. ground troops were attempting to gain control of Vella Lavella, a small island in the Solomons, Japanese aircraft were bombing ground forces to stop the attempt. Walsh and other combat pilots were engaging the Japanese in aerial combat to give the Americans on the ground the best chance of success.

In his Corsair, Walsh dove repeatedly into an enemy formation to break it up. Finding himself alone in the middle of Japanese aircraft that outnumbered his own division 6-to-1, Walsh shot down three enemy planes — two dive bombers and a fighter aircraft — and took a heavy dose of cannon fire in the process. Walsh's Corsair had damage to the fuel tank and one wing, according to the DOD, but the ace was able to safely land the plane back on friendly ground.

Being outnumbered in the sky isn't a comfortable position, but Walsh put himself there anyway. His bravery that day likely saved the lives of many U.S. ground troops on Vella Lavella.

Brave Deeds Aboard a Borrowed Corsair

Later that month, on Aug. 30, 1943, Walsh again showed gallantry and an unwavering sense of duty. Walsh and three others from VMF-124 were tasked with escorting Army B-24 Liberators on a strike against the Japanese airfield at Kahili on Bougainville. En route, Walsh's aircraft was acting funny, and he was forced to land at the Allied airfield in Munda, where a friend of Walsh's gave him his pick of the Corsairs by the airstrip. Outfitted with a fresh Corsair, Walsh set off to rejoin the escort effort.

Before he caught up to the escort, though, Walsh encountered around 50 Japanese Zeros. All alone, Walsh tried his luck with 50-to-1 odds this time, and once again lived to tell the tale. He took down four enemy planes and sustained heavy damage during the conflict. Thankfully, fellow American pilots came to his aid and continued the fight as Walsh was forced to disengage. The Japanese pilots didn't let him off easy though, and continued to fire at Walsh as he performed an emergency landing off the coast of Vella Lavella, which was by then under Allied control. He was rescued from the wreck by a group of Seabees who had watched his plane hit the water.

All in all, the Naval History and Heritage Command reports that Walsh destroyed 21 enemy planes during WWII, earning him the honor of being named the Marine Corps' fourth-ranking ace during the war. As stated in his Medal of Honor citation, it was for his

“extreme heroism and intrepidity” during the two events in August 1943 that Walsh was awarded the nation’s highest medal for valor in 1944.

Post-WWII Career

Walsh came home in October 1943, accepted his Medal of Honor, and was promoted to captain within a few months of his return. He briefly returned to the Pacific in 1945, participating in the Okinawa campaign with Marine Fighting Squadron 222 (VMF-222) and later serving with Marine Aircraft Group 14. He also served in Korea with Marine Aircraft Group 25 from 1950-1951.

Walsh became a major in April 1955 and was promoted to lieutenant colonel in October 1958. Lt. Col. Walsh retired from the Marine Corps in January 1962, after nearly three decades of service. Besides his Medal of Honor, Walsh also earned a Distinguished Flying Cross with six gold stars, an Air Medal with 14 gold stars, a Marine Corps Good Conduct Medal with one bronze star, and a Korean Service Medal with one silver star and one bronze star, among other awards and distinctions.

After retirement, Walsh settled in Southern California with his wife, and the DOD reports that he was active among veterans’ groups in his retirement. He died in July 1998 and is buried at Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia.

Walsh’s Legacy

From high school track star to Medal of Honor recipient, Walsh exemplified the spirit of the Marine Corps and became known as one of the most ruthless Corsair pilots flying in the Second World War. His ability to step up in key moments during battle and take action for the greater good — putting himself in great personal peril in the process — earned him a legacy as a true American hero.

When things got tough and Walsh was grossly outnumbered in aerial combat, rather than turning the other way, he flew straight into the fight. When he did, he contributed to the success of Allied missions, and he saved American lives. The ace also somehow managed to save his own skin more than once, proving he had not only grit and skill as a pilot, but also more than a little bit of luck. **FRA**



In December 1944, a Vought F-4U Corsair’s spinning propeller cuts circles of vapor on a damp day in the Pacific as it moves up the deck for takeoff against Formosa. Official U.S. Navy photograph, now in the collections of the National Archives. Photo courtesy of Naval History and Heritage Command.

Popular CoQ10 Pills Leave Millions Suffering

Could this newly-discovered brain fuel solve America's worsening memory crisis?

PALM BEACH, FLORIDA — Millions of Americans take the supplement known as CoQ10. It's the coenzyme that supercharges the "energy factories" in your cells known as *mitochondria*. But there's a serious flaw that's leaving millions unsatisfied.

As you age, your mitochondria break down and fail to produce energy. In a revealing study, a team of researchers showed that 95 percent of the mitochondria in a 90-year-old man were damaged, compared to almost no damage in the mitochondria of a 5-year-old.

Taking CoQ10 alone is not enough to solve this problem. Because as powerful as CoQ10 is, there's one critical thing it fails to do: it can't create new mitochondria to replace the ones you lost.

And that's bad news for Americans all over the country. The loss of cellular energy is a problem for the memory concerns people face as they get older.

"We had no way of replacing lost mitochondria until a recent discovery changed everything," says Dr. Al Sears, founder and medical director of the Sears Institute for Anti-Aging Medicine in Palm Beach, Florida. "Researchers discovered the only nutrient known to modern science that has the power to trigger the growth of new mitochondria."

Why Taking CoQ10 is Not Enough

Dr. Sears explains, "This new discovery is so powerful, it can multiply your mitochondria by 55 percent in just a few weeks. That's the equivalent of restoring decades of lost brain power."

This exciting nutrient — called PQQ (*pyrroloquinoline quinone*) — is the driving force behind a revolution in aging. When paired with CoQ10, this dynamic duo has the power to reverse the age-related memory losses you may have thought were beyond your control.

Dr. Sears pioneered a new formula — called **Ultra Accel II** — that combines both CoQ10 and PQQ to support maximum cellular energy and the normal growth of new mitochondria. **Ultra Accel II** is the first of its kind to address both problems and is already creating huge demand.

Over 47 million doses have been shipped to men and women across the country and sales continue to climb for this much sought-after brain fuel. In fact, demand has been so overwhelming that inventories repeatedly sell out. But a closer look at **Ultra Accel II** reveals there are good reasons why sales are booming.

Science Confirms the Many Benefits of PQQ

The medical journal *Biochemical Pharmacology* reports that PQQ is up to 5,000 times more efficient in sustaining energy production than common antioxidants. With the ability to keep every cell in your body operating at full strength, **Ultra Accel II** delivers more than just added brain power and a faster memory.

People feel more energetic, more alert, and don't need naps in the afternoon. The boost in cellular energy generates more power to your heart, lungs, muscles, and more.

"With the PQQ in Ultra Accel, I have energy I never thought possible at my age," says Colleen R., one of Dr. Sears's patients. "I'm in my 70s but feel 40 again. I think clearly, move with real energy and sleep like a baby."

The response has been overwhelmingly positive, and Dr. Sears receives countless emails from his patients and readers. "My patients tell me they feel better than they have in years. This is ideal for people who are feeling old and run down, or for those who feel more forgetful. It surprises many that you can add healthy and productive years to your life simply by taking **Ultra Accel II** every day."

You may have seen Dr. Sears on television or read one of his 12 best-selling books. Or you may have seen him speak at the 2016 WPBF 25 Health and Wellness Festival in South Florida, featuring Dr. Oz and special guest Suzanne Somers. Thousands of people attended Dr. Sears's lecture on anti-aging breakthroughs and waited in line for hours during his book signing at the event.

Will Ultra Accel II Multiply Your Energy?

Ultra Accel II is turning everything we thought we knew about youthful energy on its head. Especially for people over age 50. In less than 30 seconds every morning, you can harness the power of this breakthrough discovery to restore peak energy and your "spark for life."

So, if you've noticed less energy as you've gotten older, and you want an easy way to reclaim your youthful edge, this new opportunity will feel like blessed relief.

The secret is the "energy multiplying" molecule that activates a dormant gene in your body that declines with age, which then instructs your cells to pump out fresh energy from the inside-out. This growth



MEMORY-BUILDING SENSATION: Top doctors are now recommending new **Ultra Accel II** because it restores decades of lost brain power without a doctor's visit.

of new "energy factories" in your cells is called mitochondrial biogenesis.

Instead of falling victim to that afternoon slump, you enjoy sharp-as-a-tack focus, memory, and concentration from sunup to sundown. And you get more done in a day than most do in a week. Regardless of how exhausting the world is now.

Dr. Sears reports, "The most rewarding aspect of practicing medicine is watching my patients get the joy back in their lives. **Ultra Accel II** sends a wake-up call to every cell in their bodies... And they actually feel young again."

And his patients agree. "I noticed a difference within a few days," says Jerry from Ft. Pierce, Florida. "My endurance has almost doubled, and I feel it mentally, too. There's a clarity and sense of well-being in my life that I've never experienced before."

How To Get Ultra Accel II

This is the official nationwide release of **Ultra Accel II** in the United States. And so, the company is offering a special discount supply to anyone who calls during the official launch.

An Order Hotline has been set up for local readers to call. This gives everyone an equal chance to try **Ultra Accel II**. And your order is backed up by a no-hassle, 90-day money back guarantee. No questions asked.

Starting at 7:00 AM today, the discount offer will be available for a limited time only. All you have to do is call TOLL FREE **1-800-604-7758** right now and use promo code **FRAUA124** to secure your own supply.

Important: Due to **Ultra Accel II** recent media exposure, phone lines are often busy. If you call and do not immediately get through, please be patient and call back.

2023 FRA National Award Winners

The FRA congratulates the following branches and Shipmates, who were selected for the FRA's 2023 national awards by the national committees on youth activities; Americanism-patriotism; veterans service; hospitals, welfare and rehabilitation; and public relations. These Shipmates and branches live out the cardinal principles of loyalty, protection and service as they engage their communities with thoughtful events and meaningful service.

Branches are considered for awards within a group of similarly sized branches. Branches in Group I have 413 members or more, branches in Group II consist of 213-412 members, branches in Group III contain 113-212 members, branches in Group IV consist of 63-112 members, and branches in Group V have 10-62 members.

Youth Activities

First Place

Group I: Low Country Branch 269, SE
Group II: Mo-Kan Branch 161, NC
Group III: Elizabeth City Branch 293, EC
Group IV: Triangle Branch 182, EC
Group V: Crossville Tennessee Branch 294, SE

Second Place

Group I: Chula Vista Branch 61, SW
Group II: Lemoore Branch 261, WC
Group III: Valley of the Sun Branch 163, SW
Group IV: Fabulous Vegas Branch 90, SW
Group V: Lake Shasta Branch 281, WC

Third Place

Group I: N/A
Group II: Carson Branch 302, SW
Group III: Vallejo Branch 08, WC
Group IV: Lakehurst Branch 124, NE/NEng.
Group V: West Kentucky Branch 223, NC

Shipmate of the Year:
Rob Burroughs of
Lake Shasta Branch 281



VA Center for Development and Civic Engagement *(formerly the VA Voluntary Service)*

First Place

Group I: Kempsville Branch 99, EC
Group II: Mo-Kan Branch 161, NC
Group III: Navy Department Branch 181, EC
Group IV: Gem State Branch 382, NW
Group V: High Sierra Branch 274, WC

Second Place

Group I: N/A
Group II: Whidbey Island Branch 97, NW
Group III: N/A
Group IV: Buffalo Branch 23, NE/NEng.
Group V: Lake of the Ozarks Branch 32, NC

Third Place

Group I: N/A
Group II: N/A
Group III: N/A
Group IV: Modesto Branch 197, WC
Group V: Diamond State Branch 309, EC

FRA Veterans Service Officer Program

First Place

Group I: N/A
Group II: Whidbey Island Branch 97, NW
Group III: Navy Department Branch 181, EC
Group IV: Gem State Branch 382, NW
Group V: Spokane Branch 38, NW

Second Place

Group I: N/A
Group II: Carson Branch 302, SW
Group III: N/A
Group IV: Buffalo Branch 23, NE/NEng.
Group V: Roanoke Valley Branch 41, EC

Third Place

Group I: N/A
Group II: N/A
Group III: N/A
Group IV: Modesto Branch 197, WC
Group V: Monterey Peninsula Branch 178, WC

Americanism-Patriotism

First Place

Group I: Low Country Branch 269, SE
 Group II: Mo-Kan Branch 161, NC
 Group III: Elizabeth City Branch 293, EC
 Group IV: Modesto Branch 197, WC
 Group V: Ozone Branch 222, SC

Second Place

Group I: Annapolis Branch 24, EC
 Group II: Mark A. Kilgore Branch 22, SE
 Group III: Santa Clara Valley Branch 101, WC
 Group IV: Triangle Branch 182, EC
 Group V: The Leland Alexander Memorial Golden Corner Branch 15, SE

Third Place

Group I: N/A
 Group II: Carson Branch 302, SW
 Group III: Atlanta Branch 89, SE
 Group IV: Milwaukee Branch 14, NC
 Group V: Heart of the Ozarks Branch 364, NC

Hospitals, Welfare and Rehabilitation

First Place

Group I: First Coast Branch 91, SE
 Group II: Carson Branch 302, SW
 Group III: Elizabeth City Branch 293, EC
 Group IV: Cleveland Branch 17, NC
 Group V: Tallahassee Branch 34, SE

Second Place

Group I: Imperial Beach Branch 289, SW
 Group II: Mark A. Kilgore Branch 22, SE
 Group III: Valley of the Sun Branch 163, SW
 Group IV: Gem State Branch 382, NW
 Group V: Mountain Home Branch 251, SC

Third Place

Group I: Ocean View Branch 60, EC
 Group II: Whidbey Island Branch 97, NW
 Group III: Atlanta Branch 89, SE
 Group IV: Birmingham Branch 112, SE
 Group V: San Diego Branch 62, SW

Shipmate of the Year: Shipmate Joseph Bland of Valley of the Sun Branch 163

Public Relations

First Place

Group I: Low Country Branch 269, SE
 Group II: Carson Branch 302, SW
 Group III: Elizabeth City Branch 293, EC
 Group IV: USS Oklahoma Branch 268, NC
 Group V: Lake of the Ozarks Branch 32, NC

Second Place

Group I: Imperial Beach Branch 289, SW
 Group II: Mo-Kan Branch 161, NC
 Group III: Valley of the Sun Branch 163, SW
 Group IV: Modesto Branch 197, WC
 Group V: Shreveport Bossier Branch 98, SC

Third Place

Group I: N/A
 Group II: Mark A. Kilgore Branch 22, SE
 Group III: N/A
 Group IV: Triangle Branch 182, EC
 Group V: Atlantic City Branch 13, NE/NEng.



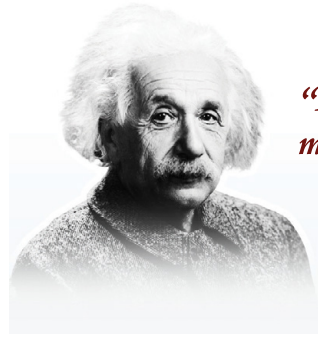
(L to R) Branch 261 President Doug McCann, Second Vice President Ike Payne, Director Dennis Desjarlais and Treasurer Chet Oliver proudly display national awards won by their branch.

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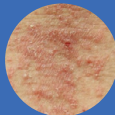
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prostate gland
inflammation



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metabolism, improves
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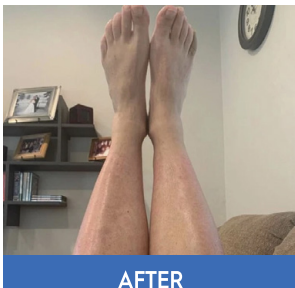
Soothes
gastrointestinal
problems



Improves varicose
veins, blood stasis



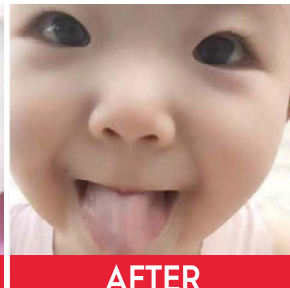
SKIN PROBLEMS



AFTER



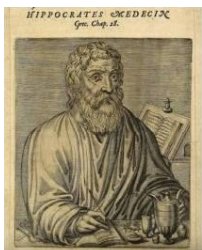
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AFTER



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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.

Questions? E-mail us at scholars@fra.org.

**Educating our service members,
veterans and their families.**



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2024 Scholarship Application Deadline Approaching

It's hard to believe that a new year is upon us and it's time for 2024 scholarship applications already! Although the fall semester may feel far away, now is the time for those interested in our scholarships to review the application requirements and begin gathering the necessary documents. Here is some important information about the foundation's scholarship program.

All applications must be postmarked by April 15. Please note the importance of submitting complete application packages; incomplete submissions will not be forwarded to the application review committee. Specific instructions are included with the application forms. Regarding eligibility, students may 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.

This is the fourth consecutive year that students bound for trade school or community college have been eligible for foundation scholarships, and we hope the word is getting out so that more of these students can take advantage of our scholarship program. The U.S. Census Bureau reports that nearly 3.5 million students were enrolled in two-year colleges for the fall 2022 semester, which is a fifth of all students at postsecondary institutions. Community colleges can be much more affordable than four-year colleges and universities, and can provide an easy path to enrollment in four-year institutions. Trade schools can also offer a more affordable path to a career, and a growing number of students are choosing

this form of postsecondary education, according to a 2022 report from the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center. Both community colleges and trade schools are important options for students pursuing postsecondary education, and the foundation is proud to support students who choose these institutions with scholarship opportunities.

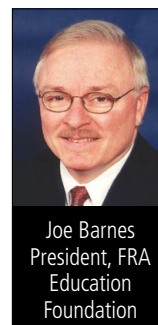
FRA Education Foundation scholarship awards range from \$1,000 to \$5,000, and awardee selection is based on academic standing, financial need, character and leadership qualities. The total amount of annual foundation scholarships is approximately \$90,000, and students selected for the 2024-2025 academic year will be announced in the summer.

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.

Additional information, application requirements and forms are available at www.fra.org/foundation. Anyone wishing to make a tax-deductible contribution in support of foundation awards can also do so at that web address. A list of our most recent scholarship recipients was published in last September's issue of *FRAtoday* and is also posted on the FRA website. Questions about the program can be sent 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 for your continued support. We look forward to helping more students reach their education goals this fall! **FRA**

Joe Barnes is president of the FRA Education Foundation.



Joe Barnes
President, FRA
Education
Foundation

1. BRANCH 59, CHEYENNE, WYO.

Branch 59 recently participated in the annual Cheyenne Christmas Parade. Cold and snowy weather did not dampen the spirits of the Shipmates as they contributed to the Christmas festivities while honoring our veterans.

2. BRANCH 15, WALHALLA, S.C.

Branch 15 President Larry Jones (L) and Secretary/Treasurer Jim Jones (R) stand proudly beside the branch's decorated truck, which participated in the Oconee County Veterans Day Parade in Westminster, South Carolina on Nov. 11, 2023.

3. BRANCH 15, WALHALLA, S.C.

Branch 15 Shipmates had a busy Veterans Day weekend last November, participating in back-to-back parades to honor fellow sea service veterans. Branch Secretary/Treasurer Jim Jones (L) and Shipmate Phil Smith (R) helped prepare the branch's decorated truck for the Pickens County Veterans Day Parade in Liberty, South Carolina, on Nov. 12, 2023.

4. BRANCH 15, WALHALLA, S.C.

(L to R) Branch Secretary/Treasurer Jim Jones, Board Member Tom Smith and Branch Chaplain Doug Olson stop for a photo with the decorated truck that represented Branch 15 in the Pickens County Veterans Day Parade in Liberty, South Carolina, on Nov. 12, 2023.

5. BRANCH 23, BUFFALO, N.Y.

Shipmate Louis Rossi, proud member of FRA Branch 23 in Buffalo, New York, received his 60-Year Continuous Membership Certificate in December. In addition to his 60 years in the FRA, Rossi completed 20 years in the military, serving in the Army, Air Force and Navy. He first enlisted in the military when President Harry S. Truman was in office!

6. BRANCH 23, BUFFALO, N.Y.

This 60-Year Continuous Membership Certificate was presented to Shipmate Louis Rossi of Buffalo Branch 23 in recognition of his six decades of loyalty, protection and service.

7. BRANCH 23, BUFFALO, N.Y.

Branch 23 Shipmate Louis Rossi's garrison cap is a testament to his many accomplishments over his 60 years of FRA membership. He was formerly a member of Branch 306.





8

8. BRANCH 130, INDIANAPOLIS, IND.

Attendance has been steadily increasing at the meetings of the USS Indianapolis Memorial Branch, with a number in the low teens at the Dec. 4, 2023, meeting, including a new member who came bearing gifts. Pictured is a recent breakfast meeting at Denny's. (L to R) Jerry Cromer, Ron Walters, Membership Chairman Gene Maresca, James Teague, Branch Chaplain George Dow, Branch President Dan Marlett, Dora Marlett, Branch Secretary/Treasurer James Hayes and Branch Public Relations. Chairman Jerry Bennett.



9

9. BRANCH 208, JACKSONVILLE, N.C.

Camp Lejeune Branch 208 held their Annual Holiday Dinner on Dec. 12, 2023. The dinner was held at the Golden Corral in Jacksonville, North Carolina. Members brought plenty of toys for the Toys for Tots program, as well as food items to be donated to local charities.



10

10. BRANCH 222, SLIDELL, LA.

At Branch 222's Annual Christmas Brunch, Shipmate Ron Rodrigue was presented with an award for his 40 years as an active member of the FRA. (L to R) Branch First Vice President Dawn Stokes, Shipmate Ron Rodrigue and Branch President Henry James.



11

11. BRANCH 163, PHOENIX, ARIZ.

Members of the FRA and LA FRA presented wreaths during the National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day ceremony at the USS ARIZONA monument in Phoenix, Arizona, on Dec. 9, 2023. Front Row (L to R): Carmencita Gonzales-Flick of Unit 163, Remy Ginter of Unit 163, LA FRA PNP Bea Parco of Unit 152, and LA FRA RVPSW Myrna Sales of Unit 302. Back Row (L to R): Bryan Ginter of Branch 163, FRA RPSW Chris Chapman of Branch 289, FRA PRPSW Roger Bacud of Branch 302, and FRA RVPSW Ed Labao of Branch 302.

12. BRANCH 163, PHOENIX, ARIZ.

(L to R) Arizona Secretary of State and Marine Corps veteran Adrian Fontes, LA FRA PNP Bea Parco, Joe Bland of Branch 163, and Arizona state Sen. Ken Bennett stopped for a photo in Wesley Bolin Memorial Plaza while there for the National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day ceremony on Dec. 9, 2023.

13. BRANCH 163, PHOENIX, ARIZ.

FRA Shipmates and LA FRA unit members from around the Southwest Region gathered to participate in the National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day ceremony at the USS ARIZONA monument in Phoenix, Arizona, on Dec. 9, 2023, which included a musical performance.

14. BRANCH 163, PHOENIX, ARIZ.

Members of Branch and Unit 163, as well as officers of the Southwest Region, represented the FRA and LA FRA in a wreath-laying ceremony at Wesley Bolin Memorial Plaza in Phoenix, Arizona, as part of a National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day ceremony on Dec. 9, 2023. Other veterans service organizations also paid tribute to those lost in the attack 82 years prior.

15. BRANCH 163, PHOENIX, ARIZ.

FRA Shipmates and LA FRA unit members from around the Southwest Region watched a military flyover as part of the National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day ceremony at the USS ARIZONA monument in Phoenix, Arizona, on Dec. 9, 2023.

16. BRANCH 136, MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.

(L to R) National Chaplain Robert Behm, National Vice President Maria Behm and North Central Regional Vice President Mark Melton attended the Christmas party that Branch 136 held on Dec. 14, 2023.

Submit a photo by email as a high-quality attachment in jpeg format to FRAtoday@fra.org. Please include a brief description and include the names of those pictured.





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— W.K. Stephens

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In Memoriam

Name	Rating	Branch	Name	Rating	Branch	Name	Rating	Branch
Alvarez, Jose A.	CPO, USN	367	Halgren, Raymond T.	ADJC, USN	136	Raiter, John L.	BMC, USN	145
Arnold, Martin	ICC(SS), USN	174	Hall, Eugene L.	SK1, USN	90	Riley, Howard K.	CTRCM, USN	MAL
Arriola, Edward A.	SKC, USN	MAL	Hathaway, Kenneth V.	SCPO, USN	MAL	Rockefeller, Robert	EMCM, USN	166
Ballard, Thurman E.	CSC, USN	91	Hayes, Michael F.	ADCS, USNR	146	Safir, Howard	PFC, USMC	24
Barber, Harold B.	LICS, USN	MAL	Herz, Maurice L.	HMCS, USN	40	Schmid, Eugene O.	QMC, USN	MAL
Barkow, Arnold T.	MRCS, USN	40	Heying, Ernest H.	LCDR, USN	192	Sexton, William L.	MS1, USN	68
Bjornebo, Jerry J.	CS2, USN	MAL	Hill, Olen D.	ADRC(TAR), USNR	89	Siford, Norman "Sy" C.	GMTC, USN	MAL
Brooks, Richard J.	MMCM, USN	293	Holland, John W.	AMCS, USN	MAL	Sill, John W.	AFCM, USN	MAL
Brooks, Roger	PNCS, USN	276	Hopper, Seybourn E.	CAPT, USMC	112	Smith, Donald L.	AVCM, USN	MAL
Brown, Bruce	AT1, USN	276	Hornsby, Jack D.	AFCM, USN	MAL	Snapp, Eric H.	BM2, USN	172
Brustmaker, James O.	AEC, USN	289	Johnson, James D.	AK1, USN	136	Snyder, Robert L.	BM1, USN	MAL
Bullington, William F.	AMCS, USN	22	Johnson, Robert L.	ENC, USN	MAL	Sparger, Richard K.	TMCS(SS), USN	269
Burchfield, James E.	ADJC, USN	MAL	Jones, Roy E.	MGYSGT, USMC	MAL	Stoddard, James W.	CPO(SS), USN	MAL
Burke, John J.	QM3, USN	24	Laguana, Gregorio C.	SKC, USN	73	Sumser, Robert W.	AMSC, USN	MAL
Buss, Carl F.	RDCM, USN	290	Lee, Joseph L.	BM1, USN	302	Talbot, Henry C.	PNC, USN	23
Butler, Albert L.	BTC, USN	212	Masters, Bill D.	RADM, USN	367	Tefft, Earl A.	BMC, USN	298
Byers, Charles P.	AO3, USN	184	McCrary, John C.	EQCM, USN	MAL	Thomson, Raymond	HM1, USN	MAL
Carr, Robert A.	ATC, USN	MAL	McFarland, James L.	ACC, USN	97	Thorne, William H.	BUC, USN	18
Casillano, Inocencio	MCS, USN	MAL	McLuckie, Thomas A.	RMCS, USN	MAL	Toellner, Mark L.	MMCS, USN	MAL
Chaffinch, Curt W.	E-7	290	Mercado, Victorino R.	SKCM, USN	MAL	Ward, Susan	CTRC, USN	24
Cichowski, Harry	HMC, USN	MAL	Middlebrooks, Jesse H.	RMC, USN	MAL	Warne, Russel C.	BMC, USNR	MAL
DelParto, Rogelio M.	MSCS, USN	127	Morris, John L.	BMC, USN	MAL	Werba, Robert G.	AECS, USN	MAL
Donahue, Theron	EMC, USN	290	Mucciarone, Amalio L.	ATC, USN	13	Wilson, Lawrence H.	AFCM, USN	22
Eggleston, Robert B.	AEC, USN	MAL	Mudge, Richard A.	ATCS, USN	MAL	Windle, Don G.	LCDR, USN	MAL
Fowler, Harvey J.	UT1, USN	MAL	Murphy, Patrick J.	LCDR, USN	MAL	Zakroff, Michael	PN3, USN	MAL
Fowles, Joseph N.	SGT, USMC	137	Olszak, Harry A.	HMCM, USN	MAL			
Gardiner, William R.	AVCM, USN	93	Parks, Janet M.	PNCS, USN	178			
Gates, Edward W.	HMCM, USN	MAL	Penney, Jack L.	QMCM(SS), USN	20			
George, Charles E.	CPO, USN	70	Philippi, T. J.	CTCS, USN	212			
			Potts, Edward R.	TMC, USN	269			



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.

Military Programs Help in the Fight Against Hearing Loss

By Ken Cornwell

Among the many unique challenges of military life, one thing remains consistent: noise.

“Within a military population, it’s noisy. It’s a noisy world in general,” said U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Brandon Tourtillott, an audiology consultant stationed at Travis Air Force Base. “Noise-induced hearing loss is our number one concern, and it’s the number one workplace health hazard within the military and civilian workforce. Hearing is critical to everything we do in life, and especially in the military because it can impact communication. Any type of loss can affect communication.”

Hearing loss among service members has remained steady, he noted.

“We track trends such as a permanent and temporary threshold shift change — a change in hearing ability — and the trends in those areas have plateaued recently,” said Tourtillott. “We’re not seeing large increases or decreases.”

“The Defense Health Agency publishes an annual hearing health report; the latest one is from fiscal year 2021,” said U.S. Navy Lt. Cmdr. Robert Summers, an audiologist and specialty leader. “The trends we see within the report of both permanent and temporary change in hearing performance, with some fluctuation, has been pretty stable. So, we have relatively stable levels of hearing loss going back to about 2014.”

Summers attributed the steady rate to the military’s hearing conservation programs.

“There’s always going to be hearing loss that happens in life. The fact that it’s not getting worse shows our programs are effective,” he said. “Is there something that we could do to get it better? That’s something we’re always working on.”

“It’s good that we’re not seeing an increase, but our goal is to reduce hearing loss,” said Tourtillott. “That means we still have more work to do.”

Proactive Hearing Conservation Programs

Military hearing conservation programs are an important factor in decreasing those rates, said Tourtillott.

“Hearing loss is a silent thing,” Summers added. “Generally, you don’t know that it’s occurring until it’s too late, or somebody’s complaining, or you are having a hard



The Department of Defense uses wireless, boothless audiometry as a convenient hearing testing method both on the battlefield and in clinical and non-clinical settings available to all service members. It has expanded as the new standard for testing. Photo courtesy of DVIDS.

time to the point where it’s affecting your life and you need to go get seen. We try to prevent that.”

Hearing conservation programs aim to combat noise-induced hearing loss by stopping it from happening.

“It’s a proactive approach, versus a reactive approach,” Summers said.

U.S. Army Lt. Col. Kara Cave, chief of the Fort Liberty Hearing Program and audiology consultant for the Office of the U.S. Army Surgeon General, said, “A change occurred a little over a decade ago where hearing conservation programs focused on preserving hearing as a key performance enabler.”

According to Tourtillott, “hearing conservation programs are a component of a larger occupational and environmental health program. These programs are command-driven, and they’re designed to reduce or eliminate hazardous noise exposure.”

Tourtillott said the Department of Defense DOD outlines requirements for everyone within the DOD to follow. Each service also has additional requirements.

The tools of these programs are outreach, education and training prevention activities, said Summers.

“There’s a plethora of things that can be done that fall in those categories,” he noted. “Audiologists and hearing conservation program managers visit noisy areas, ensuring people are following guidance and follow regulatory hearing protection requirements.”

Advancements in Testing

An innovative tool called boothless audiometry has been fielded to better monitor service members’ hearing, especially those exposed to hazardous noise. Boothless hearing technology can be used in a variety of environments

awareness through the use of certain hearing protection devices,” said Cave. “If a service member feels they may miss mission-critical information, they will choose not to wear the hearing protection. By educating [service members] and dispensing devices that enable detection of key auditory cues, like speech and sound source location, we increased the likelihood of user compliance with hearing protection measures.”

Just as situational awareness is important while wearing hearing protection, a hearing protector that fits properly is also critical, according to the Hearing Center of Excellence. A procedure called “hearing protector fit testing” measures the amount of noise reduction a person is getting from their hearing protection while it’s being worn.

“One exciting area that is picking up steam, not only in the military, but nationwide, is the concept of fit testing,”

“Hearing is critical to everything we do in life, and especially in the military because it can impact communication. Any type of loss can affect communication.” – *U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Brandon Tourtillott*

to test service members’ hearing soon after noise exposure, while they are still in the field.

“Boothless hearing technology that allows for on-site hearing testing is a key innovation for the evolution of hearing health care and hearing conservation programs,” said U.S. Army Lt. Col. Michael Murphy, an audiology liaison officer for the Defense Health Agency’s Hearing Center of Excellence. “Boothless technology enhances conventional testing capability beyond a traditional brick-and-mortar legacy health care system. It can assess the patient at the point of injury in an operational environment. The outcome for medical intervention after an acoustic trauma or hearing injury is time-sensitive.”

“When people hear ‘hearing conservation program,’ the first thing that often comes to mind is annual testing,” Tourtillott said. “The annual test is super important because that’s how we get the data. That’s how we track how well the program is doing. ... But the real key to a good hearing conservation program is the education and training piece. If we focus only on tracking the annual test, then we’re just documenting what’s happening.”

Improving Hearing Protection

“One issue we as military audiologists address through education is how to improve auditory situational

said Tourtillott. “It’s really going to get at some of our biggest challenges protecting people’s hearing. It’s been a best practice within our regulation, but it’s going to become a DOD requirement.”

Hearing protector fit testing will help ensure that service members get the maximum benefit from their hearing protection devices, according to Tourtillott.

“For example, each earplug has a noise reduction rating on it, but that depends on multiple factors, such as how well you put it in your ear,” Tourtillott explained. “Not everybody fits it in their ear just right, gets it in there deep enough, or gets a full seal. This testing procedure allows us to get an objective measurement of how much sound that plug is blocking out.”

It also helps the user wear their protection better, Tourtillott added.

“We’ll be able to help them refit and seat that hearing protector in their ear correctly, and then they’ll know what correct placement feels like in their ear,” he said.

Tourtillott is optimistic about fit testing as a step forward for the hearing conservation program.

“Making it a requirement in the regulation will help us tackle an age-old problem of getting an appropriate fit with the member’s personal hearing protection,” he said. **FRA**

This article was provided by the Defense Health Agency.

New Bladder Control Pill Sales May Surpass Adult Diapers By 2025

Drug-free discovery works, say doctors. Many adults ditching diapers and pads for clinical strength pill that triggers day and night bladder support.

By T.J. Roberts
Interactive News Media

INM — Over 150,000 doses have shipped to bladder sufferers so far, and sales continue to climb every day for the 'diaper replacing' new pill called BladderMax.

"We knew we had a great product, but it's even exceeded our expectations," said Keith Graham, Manager of Call Center Operations for BladderMax.

"People just keep placing orders, it's pretty amazing," he said.

But a closer look at this new bladder control sensation suggests that maybe the company shouldn't have been caught off guard by its success.

There are very good reasons for BladderMax's surging popularity.

To begin with, clinical studies show BladderMax not only reduces embarrassing bladder leakages quickly, but also works to strengthen and calm the bladder for lasting relief.

Plus, at just \$2 per daily dose, it's very affordable.

This may be another reason why American diaper companies are starting to panic over its' release.

"With daily use, BladderMax offers day and night bladder control relief without side effects," says Diane Lewis, Chief Researcher for BladderMax.

"And seniors in clinical studies reported a higher quality of life in just days as a result of needing less diapers. That's why so many doctors nationwide are now recommending it to patients," added Lewis.

WHAT SCIENTISTS DISCOVERED

BladderMax contains a proprietary compound with a known ability to reduce stress, urgency, and overflow leakages in seniors suffering from overactive bladder.

This compound is not a drug. It is the active ingredient in BladderMax.

Studies show it naturally strengthens the bladder's muscle tone while relaxing the urination muscles resulting in a decrease in sudden urgency.

Many sufferers enjoy a reduction in bathroom trips both day and night. Others are able to get back to doing the things they love without worrying about embarrassing leakages.

"I couldn't sit through a movie without having to go to the bathroom 3-4 times," says Theresa Johnson of Deluth, GA. "but since using BladderMax I can not only sit through a movie, but I can drive on the freeway to another city without having to immediately go to the bathroom."

With so much positive feedback, it's easy to see why sales for this newly approved bladder pill continue to climb every day.

SLASHES EMBARRASSING LEAKAGES BY 79%

The 6 week clinical study was carried out by scientists in Japan. The results were published in the

Journal of Medicine and Pharmaceutical Science in 2001.

The study involved seniors who suffered from frequent and embarrassing bladder leakages. They were not instructed to change their daily routines. They were only told to take BladderMax's active ingredient every day.

The results were incredible.

Taking BladderMax's active ingredient significantly reduced both sudden urges to go and embarrassing urine leakages compared to the placebo.

In fact, many experienced a 79% reduction in embarrassing accidents when coughing, sneezing, laughing or physical activity at 6 weeks.

They also enjoyed a 39% decrease in daytime trips to the bathroom, and a 68% decrease in nighttime trips.

With these studies medical doctors and researchers have now proven BladderMax to be a clinically effective treatment for reducing embarrassing bladder leakages and incontinence.

The findings are impressive, no doubt, but results will vary.

But with results like these it's easy to see why thousands of callers are jamming the phone lines trying to get their hands on BladderMax.

HOW IT WORKS IS INCREDIBLE

Studies show that as many as one in six adults over age 40 suffers from an overactive bladder and embarrassing leakages.

"Losing control of when and how we go to the bathroom is just an indication of a weakening of the pelvic muscles caused by age-related hormonal changes," says Lewis.

"It happens in both men and women, and it is actually quite common."

The natural compound found in BladderMax contains the necessary ingredients needed to help strengthen bladder muscles to relieve urgency, while reducing frequency.

Plus, it helps relax bladder muscles allowing for complete emptying of the bladder.

This proprietary compound is known as 'EFLA940'®.

And with over 17 years of medical use there have been no adverse side effects reported.

This is a bonus for incontinence sufferers who have been taking prescription and over the counter medications that can cause dry mouth and constipation.

This seems to be another reason why BladderMax's release has triggered such a frenzy of sales.

RECOMMENDED BY U.S. MEDICAL DOCTORS

"Many of my patients used to complain that coughing, sneezing or even getting up quickly from a



As new pill gains popularity, products like these will become unnecessary.

chair results in wetting themselves and they fear becoming a social outcast," reports Dr. Clifford James M.D. "But BladderMax changes all that."

"BladderMax effectively treats urinary disorders, specifically overactive bladder," said Dr. Christie Wilkins, board certified doctor of natural medicine.

"I use BladderMax everyday for my overactive bladder. I also have my sister and mother taking it regularly as well," said Dr. Jennifer Freeman, G.P. from NY.

DOUBLE YOUR MONEY BACK GUARANTEE

Users of BladderMax report incredible results. That's why it comes with an equally incredible guarantee.

"There's only one reason why we can offer such a guarantee," said Kyle Harris, Founder of BladderMax. "It works for those who use it. It's as simple as that," he added.

Here's how it works: Take the pill exactly as directed. Then follow the simple instructions. You must be thrilled and amazed as your bladder control greatly improves.

Otherwise, return the product as directed and you'll receive double your money back!

FRA READERS GET SPECIAL DISCOUNT SUPPLY

This is the official release of BladderMax and so for a limited time, the company is offering a special discount supply to our readers. An Order Hotline has been set up for our readers to call, but don't wait. The special offer will not last forever. All you have to do is call TOLL FREE 1-800-303-7236. The company will do the rest

These Statements Have Not Been Evaluated By The Food And Drug Administration. This Product Is Not Intended To Diagnose, Treat, Cure Or Prevent Any Disease. All Clinical Studies On BladderMax's Active Ingredient Were Independently Conducted And Were Not Sponsored By The Makers Of BladderMax. Offer Not Available To Iowa Residents



PHOTO COURTESY OF DVIDS

Reunions

Swift Boat Sailors Association

4/11/24 – 4/15/24
 San Diego, Calif.
 Contact: Bob Barnett
 Email: swift.boat.reunion.2024@gmail.com
 Website: www.swiftboats.org

USS DONNER (LSD-20) Memorial Association

4/22/24 – 4/24/24
 Gettysburg, Pa.
 Contact: Dennis Heimbach
 Telephone: 601-775-7539
 Email: dennisheimb@gmail.com

USS CONSERVER (ARS-39)

4/24/24 – 4/29/24
 Savannah, Ga.
 Contact: Dale E. Hower
 Telephone: 619-449-4499
 Email: dcwoodworking1@yahoo.com
 Website: ussconserver.org/reunion-information/

USS BAINBRIDGE (DLGN/CGN-25)

5/19/24 – 5/21/24
 Norfolk, Va.
 Contact: Charles Gilbert
 Telephone: 412-609-1035
 Email: charlesgilbert63@gmail.com
 Website: ussbainbridgeassociation.org

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.

What I Love About the LA FRA

I joined the LA FRA to meet other military spouses and make friends. I was new to the life of an active-duty spouse and living on a military base.

As an active member, I enjoy the fellowship of the LA FRA and the FRA, and my favorite event of the year is the Annual Gift Wrap. I belong to Mo-Kan Unit 161, and each year we raise funds and purchase Christmas gifts for the area's homes for children. On the Friday after Thanksgiving, branch and unit members spend the day wrapping the gifts and enjoying lunch together. The gifts are delivered to the homes before Christmas, except for two homes where we have a Christmas party with food, music and



PNP Doris C. Fri, RPNC

Santa, who distributes the gifts to the children.

As the North Central regional president, I look forward to increasing our membership, as well as teaching the newly elected and returning unit officers the proper procedures

for conducting monthly meetings, filling out the necessary reports, and getting these reports to the proper regional and national officers. Each unit secretary and president shall have copies of the National Officers and Appointments Roster, provided by the national executive secretary; the Regional Officers and Appointments Roster from the regional president; and the Unit Presidents/Secretaries Roster, received from the national executive secretary.

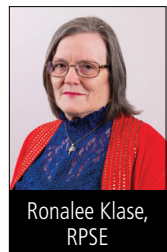
As regional president, my most rewarding experience has been assisting a branch with the sponsorship of a new unit — completing the documentation, receiving that new charter, initiating the new members, installing the new officers, and instituting the new unit. Gaining a new unit and members for the LA FRA is an exhilarating experience.

In Loyalty, Protection and Service,
PNP Doris C. Fri, RPNC

Doris is the LA FRA North Central regional president.

Why I Joined the LA FRA

My family has an extraordinarily strong military background. Multiple generations of my family have served or are serving in the Army, an uncle was in the Army Air Corps, my grandson is in the Air Force and my granddaughter is in the Tennessee National Guard.



Ronalee Klase, RPSE

When my oldest son informed me that he was joining the Navy, it was a surprise. I had never dealt with the sea services.

Who would I be able to turn to for an understanding of the Navy? Fortunately, a friend introduced my son to the Fleet Reserve Association, and a couple of months later, introduced me to the auxiliary. Now I had friends who

understood the sea services and were able to explain to me anything I did not understand.

The unit that I joined was amazing. It only goes to show just how small the world really is that two of the women in

the unit knew my family. One had worked with my mother in the nursery at St. Anthony's Hospital for years. The other woman had sons who had been Civil Air Patrol cadets with my sisters and me years before.

The members of the auxiliary have been instrumental in helping me understand how the sacrifices that are made by members of the sea services differ from those made by members of the other services. Over the years, I have had the privilege of making new friends within the auxiliary and the Fleet Reserve Association from all over the country. The opportunity to travel within this great country to attend various activities that involve the auxiliary has been amazing.

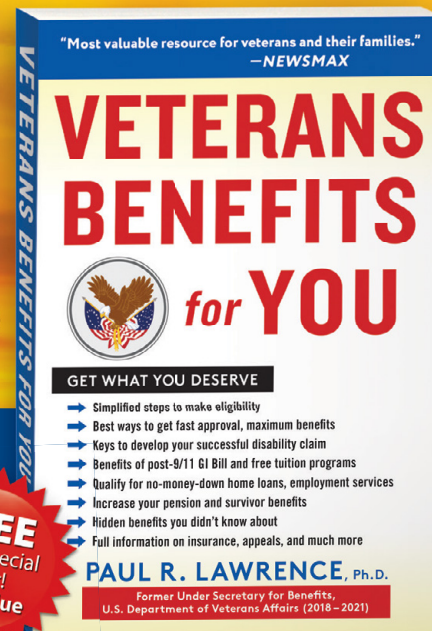
In Loyalty, Protection and Service,
Ronalee Klase, RPSE

Ronalee is the LA FRA Southeast regional president.



ATTENTION: ALL VETERANS

Get the VA Benefits You've Earned



Tough time understanding your VA benefits? Don't know which benefits you're entitled to or why you got rejected?

Millions of retired and active-duty service members miss out on critical VA benefits every day because the system is too confusing. Those days are over with ***Veterans Benefits for You: Get What You Deserve***.

This **NEW book** is your easy-to-understand, comprehensive, step-by-step “how to” road map. Direct from a VA insider, you get clear answers and expert guidance on getting the benefits you deserve — including hidden benefits you didn't know about!

This Book Is Written by Paul R. Lawrence, Former Undersecretary for Benefits U.S. Dept. of Veteran Affairs



For almost three years, Paul served as the undersecretary for benefits in the Department of Veterans Affairs. As undersecretary, Paul led a team of 25,000 people with an operating budget of \$4 billion, administering \$120 billion in benefits annually. He serves on the board of directors of Vets2Industry, a nonprofit helping veterans pursue a career in the private sector.

Get ***Veterans Benefits for You*** with **FREE OFFER!** (A \$25 value)

Veterans Benefits for You reveals which benefits are available to you, how to know if you're eligible, exact steps to apply, pitfalls to avoid, and much more.

Disability, grants, loans, pensions, survivor's benefits, insurance, appeals, counseling, special compensation, employment help, the post-9/11 GI Bill — it's all in here.

“Veterans need this book!”

— **Robert L. Wilkie**,
10th Secretary of Veterans Affairs

PLUS Discover:

- ➔ 3 ways to connect your injury or disability to your time in the military
- ➔ VA benefit decisions can be appealed — discover which ones and how to appeal
- ➔ Get peace of mind knowing your mortgage is paid if you die
- ➔ Help for homeless, jobless, and incarcerated vets
- ➔ Learn length of service requirements
- ➔ 6 insurance programs — 3 for vets and 3 for service members
- ➔ Learn how to appeal a decision
- ➔ Learn how to get accrued and survivor benefits
- ➔ Dependent education assistance — a survivor benefit!
- ➔ Learn which forms to fill out
- ➔ Get more money from the GI Bill
- ➔ Get military pay and disability compensation
- ➔ Free checking accounts at select banks and credit unions just for military vets — and your money is insured!
- ➔ Why you don't want to miss the window on signing up for life insurance or you won't be eligible
- ➔ And more!

Thanks to the ***Veterans Benefits for You: Get What You Deserve***, you'll know exactly which VA benefits you're eligible for, discover benefits you didn't know about, and find out how to get your benefits faster — without the confusion or rejection. Hurry! Order your **FREE COPY** today with our special offer. Supplies are limited.

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See website for terms, conditions, and eligibility for this offer.

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FRA
125 N. West Street
Alexandria, VA 22314-2754



Care

for those who served

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or visit **brookdale.com/fra**.

Applicable to all discounts: Residents under a Life Care Agreement are not eligible for the discounts. These discounts do not apply to any room, board or services which are paid for all or in part by any state or federally funded program. Discounts are available to FRA members and their family members, including spouse, adult children, siblings, parents, grandparents, and corresponding in-law or step adult children, siblings, parents, and grandparents through current spouse. Subject to availability. Further restrictions may apply.

*Discount is only applicable to new residents of a Brookdale independent living, assisted living, or memory care community admitting under an executed residency agreement. Discount applies only to the monthly fee/basic service rate, excluding care costs and other fees and is calculated based on the initial monthly fee/basic service rate.

**Discount is only applicable to new clients of personal assistance services by a Brookdale agency under an executed service agreement.

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monthly fee/basic
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IN-HOME SERVICES:

10% OFF
service
rate**

SHORT-TERM STAY:

**% DISCOUNTED
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BY COMMUNITY*****

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