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FRA *today*

RETURN TO CIVILIAN-IZATION!

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to the civilian world

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"O" Mark of the New Orleans Mint

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On January 26, 1861 the State of Louisiana seceded from the United States. Days later Rebel forces took control of the U.S. Mint in New Orleans, seizing a fortune in gold and silver bullion. Soon it became an official mint of the Confederate States of America.

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There among the glittering gold coins Odyssey brought up from the SS *Republic*: Silver half dollars bearing the date "1861" and the "O" mint mark of the old New Orleans Mint. "I could hardly believe my eyes," recalls Odyssey co-founder Greg Stemm. "We'd pored over the historical records. There was no reference to these coins in our research. We were surprised... and mystified".

The 1861-O half dollars were entrusted to the world's foremost experts. After months of painstaking study and research with government records, the weight of evidence was overwhelming. Numismatic Guaranty Corp (NGC), the nation's foremost independent rare coin conservation and grading service, was able to attribute and certify individual 1861-O silver half dollars found on the SS *Republic* to the Confederate States of America.

An Extraordinary Opportunity — If You Act Now. Authentic artifacts of the Civil War are highly coveted today. Many are locked away in museums such as the Smithsonian or are beyond the reach of all but the wealthiest. An original Confederate Army coat has sold for \$70,000. A CSA flag brought a record \$956,000. A Civil War canteen brings \$5,500. Today, due to this history-making discovery, you can be one of the first to own an 1861-O

silver half dollar, officially attributed to the Confederate States of America, from the fabulous treasure of the SS *Republic*. A limited number are being released to the public for just \$1,497 (plus shipping and insurance).

Your 1861 New Orleans Mint silver half dollar will be sealed in its official NGC holder with certification attributing it as an authentic coin of the Confederate States of America from the SS *Republic* treasure.



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MONEY-BACK SATISFACTION GUARANTEE

KNOW YOUR WORTH. As I read Lauren Armstrong's feature column "Return to Civilian-ization," the concept of knowing one's worth really struck me as an important concept for all current and prospective members of FRA.

Every day the Headquarters' staff talk to shipmates to help answer a legislative question, get a reunion placed, take a dues payment, solve a problem, receive a donation...the list goes on and on. We, as a staff, realize that each member is priceless to the Association. "The members are why we're here," is the common theme.

Dues are \$25 a year, and you are worth so very much more than that to us.

The converse is true. FRA is worth far more than \$25 a year to you. Consider this...the feature article focuses on what military experience is worth in the civilian work world. Think of what it is worth on Capitol Hill as the legislative team explains the needs of current and former enlisted personnel. There is no substitute for experience, so a question on how a TRICARE fee increase would affect a retiree should be answered by a retiree, for instance. The majority of Congress does not have military experience. You have a tremendous team with over 100 collective military service years to give the real-world response to the question, "How would this impact military personnel?"

You have a staff of 18 full-time and 2 part-time professionals who are fighting for your rights, keeping you informed, bringing you benefits and offering you assistance. You pay your staff \$25 a year. If you have a multiple year membership, that annual investment is less (and it's a real deal if you are a life member!).

Know your worth. Know the worth of the association that represents you.

As we continue our membership drive "Operation FRA (Former, Retired and Active)," we ask for your input. Please write testimonials of why FRA dues are a tremendous investment — and why you believe you are worth more than \$25 a year to FRA — and send them to eileen@fra.org. I'll publish these on the website, in *FRA Today*, in marketing material and make sure they get to Members of Congress. You deserve to be heard.

We thank you for your service. We thank you for your membership. Please, let your friends, family and neighbors know how important to you are to FRA, and how important FRA is to you.

Eileen Murphy is the Director of Marketing and Communications and serves as the Managing Editor of *FRA Today*. Please contact her at eileen@fra.org.



EILEEN MURPHY
Director of Marketing and Communications

'07-'08 MEMBER DRIVE

Operation FRA (Former, Retired and Active)

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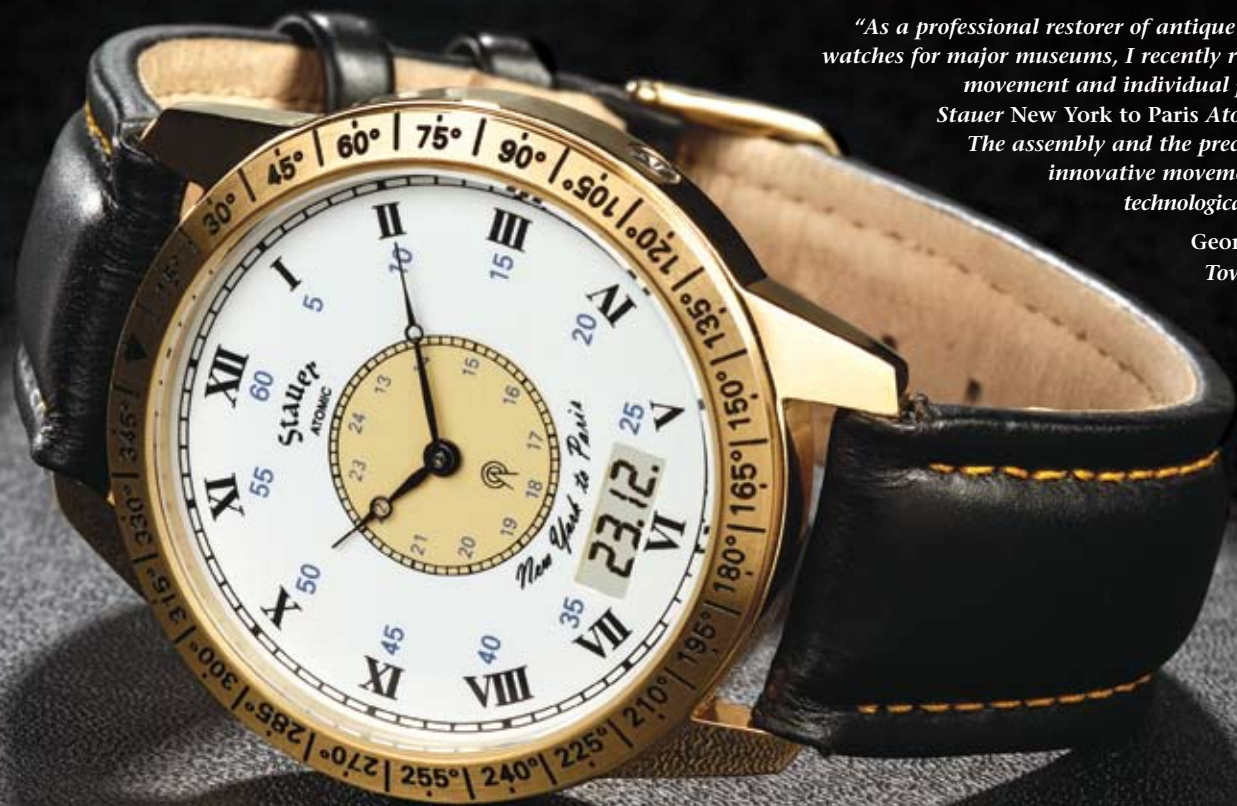
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ON THE COVER

Transitioning from military life to the civilian world can be daunting. There are thousands of details to consider, hundreds of decisions to make, and it's likely to involve some heavy lifting — both literally and figuratively.




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George Thomas
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Social Security Tax Exemption

I subscribe to *Tin Can Sailor* publication and in the "April/May/June 2007" edition, there is an article concerning veterans who served 16 September 1940, through 31 December 1956. The article states we did not pay social security tax, which I knew at the time. The article further states that vets of that era, although we did not pay into the social security system, are eligible to receive funds for that period.

Is anyone who served in that period of time and drawing retirement pay eligible? I would appreciate any help FRA can provide me with on this subject...

RMC Dave Baca, USN (Ret.)
Member at Large

From FRA: *If you served in the military from 1940 through 1956, including attendance at a service academy, you did not pay Social Security taxes. However, you will be credited \$160 a month in earnings for military service from 16 September 1940, through 31 December 1956, if:*

- *You were honorably discharged after 90 or more days of service, or you were released because of a disability or injury received in the line of duty; or*
- *You are applying for survivors benefits based on a veteran's work and the veteran died while on active duty.*

You cannot receive these special credits if you are receiving a federal benefit based on the same years of service, unless you were on active duty after 1956. If you were on active duty after 1956, you can get the special credit for 1951 through 1956, even if you are receiving a military retirement based on service during that period.

Predatory Lending Protection

After reading about the proposed loan protection in the April 2007 issue, the FRA is certainly on the right track on this legislation. I cannot understand why there is ANY opposition to ANYONE having to pay a 36 percent or greater loan rate, let alone service members. This just adds to problems for the less fortunate people, and as I stated before, especially those in the military. A 36 percent loan rate is atrocious.

AGC Jim Allen, USN (Ret.)
Member at Large

Membership is Powerful

The military's "Tricare For Life" was the result of a public outcry and storm of letters convincing Congress to enact these earned benefits into law several years ago. For some forty years we and our veteran's organizations worked overtime and gradually built up this storm of protest to Congress.

During my USN service starting in 1939, we enlistees were thoroughly indoctrinated with the promise that upon retirement we would be entitled to medical services for life; as shown in my ancient copies of "Blue Jackets Manual" and "Division Officers Guide." This was promised through many years as a recruiting tool, later only implied. However when, after 22 years' service, I transferred from active duty to the USN Fleet Reserve ("retired") in 1959; my family and I were entitled to "space available" medical treatment in any military facility; almost non-existent due to a shortage of funds to support the military. History shows this shortfall routinely occurs following wars.

It is important that those serving today are indoctrinated in the power of letters to Congress and to newspaper editors.

EMC Richard E. Law, USN (Ret.)
Branch 90

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House FY 2008 Defense Bill Advances

AS FRA TODAY GOES to press, the FRA Legislative Team is closely monitoring the House and Senate Armed Services Committees markups of their respective versions of the FY 2008 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). In recognition of continuing concerns about DoD's plan for drastic health care fee increases, the House Personnel Subcommittee prohibited TRICARE fee increases included in the Pentagon's budget in its markup. The Subcommittee wants to see the recommendations from the Task Force on the Future of Military Health Care that is scheduled to issue its final report in December and a report from the Government Accountability Office (GAO). The committee also prohibited fee increases within the TRICARE pharmacy program for another year. Adequate health care funding is a top FRA priority.

The Subcommittee also authorized a 3.5 percent pay raise, which is 0.5 percent above the Administration's proposed budget and 0.5 percent above the Employment Cost Index (ECI). FRA strongly supports annual active duty pay increases that are at least 0.5 percent above the ECI along with targeted increases for mid-career and senior enlisted personnel to help close the remaining 4 percent pay gap between active duty and private sector pay.

The bill also expands concurrent receipt effective 1 October 2008 for those with Combat-Related Special Compensation with fewer than 20 years of service (Chapter 61) but more than 15 years of service if their disability rating is 60 percent or greater.



JOHN DAVIS
*FRA's Director of
Legislative Programs*

The bill also transfers the Reserve Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB) program from DoD to the Department of Veterans Affairs. FRA believes that the integration of active and Reserve force MGIB programs under Title 38 will improve administration and oversight of the program.

The legislation authorizes a survivor indemnity allowance up to \$40 per month to spouses who are denied the full amount of their annuity under SBP because the offset required by Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) effective 1 October 2008.

The bill increases end strength above the Administration's FY 2008 request for all branches that includes 9,000 for the USMC and nearly 700 for the Navy. Specifically the Navy increased end strength is intended to halt military to civilian conversions within the medical services. FRA has consistently expressed concern about the adequacy of personnel end strengths available to meet the demands of OIF, OEF and other operational requirements.

In addition the legislation includes all provisions of "The Wounded Warrior Assistance Act" (H.R. 1538) that recently passed the House with a unanimous vote.

The full committee is scheduled to mark up the bill on 9 May and the legislation may be on the House floor the following week. The Senate version of the legislation is tentatively scheduled for markup the week of 21 May.

John Davis is a member of Navy Department Branch 181.

Supplemental Appropriations Bill Passes and is Vetoed

The emergency FY 2007 War Supplemental Appropriations Conference Report (H.R. 1591) passed both chambers of Congress and was vetoed by the President on 1 May 2007. Of special importance to FRA's legislative agenda is the inclusion of \$3.3 billion for the Defense Health Program (TRICARE), \$1.8 billion for VA health care, \$1.7 billion for military construction, and \$3.1 billion for base closings all designated to be spent in the current fiscal year that ends 30 September 2007. As anticipated, the President vetoed the bill due to the Iraq withdrawal

language and more than \$21 billion in add-ons to the bill. The legislation then went back to Capitol Hill for a failed House vote to override and a rewrite of the legislation. DoD warned that if the supplemental is not passed soon there could be dire consequences for military and training operations.

FRA strongly supports additional funding for the key personnel programs listed above, and is concerned about the negative impact of the delays on personnel, benefits and quality of life programs.

TRICARE ACTION ALERT!

Thanks to all members who used the FRA Action Center to oppose TRICARE fee increases! Your efforts are paying off. The e-mails to Capitol Hill supporting "The Military Retirees Health Care Protection Act" (H.R. 579) have helped garner more than 150 co-sponsors for the bill. This legislation sponsored by Rep. Chet Edwards (Texas) and Rep. Walter Jones (N.C.) would prohibit the Department of Defense from increasing TRICARE fees, specifying that the authority to increase TRICARE fees exists only in Congress. In the Senate, FRA is supporting "The Military Healthcare Protection Act" (S. 604) sponsored by Senators Frank Lautenberg (N.J.) and Chuck Hagel (Neb.) that would limit TRICARE fee increases to the amount of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) which is the basis for annual military retired pay increases. As previously reported, DoD has assumed authorization of substantial TRICARE fee increases in its FY 2008 budget. And the Department will be able to increase many TRICARE fees by regulation beginning 1 October 2007 unless legislative changes are enacted. All FRA members should contact their elected officials to urge support for this legislation.

FRA believes that the DoD has not sufficiently investigated other options to make TRICARE more cost-efficient as alternatives to shifting costs to retiree beneficiaries under age 65. Please use the FRA Action Center to contact your elected officials at www.fra.org

Military Pay Improvement Introduced

Rep. Gus Bilirakis (Fla.) has introduced "The Military Pay Improvement Act" (H.R. 2027) that provides an additional one-half percent increase in the rates of military basic pay above the FY 2008 pay increase proposed by the Department of Defense. The legislation would ensure at least a minimum pay increase of 3.5 percent for service members next year. Bilirakis is a member of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, is pushing for a bigger raise to continue closing the gap between military and private-sector wages, which is about 4 percent today when comparing average military and private-sector wage growth over the past two decades. The Administration requested a 3 percent military pay raise for all ranks effective 1 January, that would only match the average increase last year in private-sector wages, leaving the current pay gap unchanged.

The 2.2 percent across the board basic military pay increase that was enacted for FY 2007 was the smallest increase since 1994. Noteworthy is the inclusion of a 3.5 percent military pay increase in the House Military Personnel Subcommittee mark up of the House FY 2008 Defense Authorization bill.

Disability Commission Examines USFSPA

FRA presented a White Paper on the Uniform Services Former Spouse Protection Act (USFSPA) to members and staff of the Veterans Benefits Disability Commission in connection with the panel's examination of garnishment of benefits at its April meeting. National Veterans Service Officer Chris Slawinski told the panel that FRA continues to advocate for the introduction of legislation addressing the inequities of the USFSPA and hearings on legislation addressing this issue. FRA believes that the law is one-sided and that Congress must amend it so that the Federal government is required to protect its service members against State courts' wide interpretations of its provisions. The Association believes that this law should be more balanced in its protection for both the service member and the former spouse. A copy of the White Paper is available on the FRA website (www.fra.org).

Predatory Lending Update

FRA staff briefed Capitol Hill staffers on the predatory lending protections that cap pay day loans for service members and their dependents at 36 percent. DLP John Davis explained provisions included in the FY 2007 National Defense Authorization Act that take effect on 1 October 2007. FRA is closely monitoring the legislative process to halt any effort to add an amendment to legislation to repeal, extend the effective date, or in anyway reduce the impact of the predatory lending protections that have not yet taken effect.

The draft proposed regulation on predatory lending includes no carve-outs for specific financial institutions and addresses products to be covered including refund anticipation loans, pay day loans up to \$2,000 with maturities up to 91 days, and vehicle title loans with maturities up to 181 days. The draft would not apply to residential mortgages, purchase money vehicle loans (including leases) or loans secured by personal property or a qualified retirement account. It also would not apply to other credit that is not "consumer credit" or which is not subject to Truth in Lending Act disclosures.

The 63-page regulation has been published in the 11 April 2007 *Federal Register* to allow for a 60-day comment period. FRA will provide a written statement expressing specific concerns on the proposed regulation.

TFL Explanation of Benefits Will Continue

DoD announced that it would no longer mail paper copies of the TRICARE for Life (TFL) Explanation of Benefits (EOBs) to Medicare patients for bills that have been paid and that require no further out-of-pocket payment from beneficiaries. Through concerns and comments received from FRA and other TMC organizations, DoD delayed implementation of the new policy and beneficiaries will continue to receive TFL EOBs as they have in the past. TFL beneficiaries, who have registered on TRICARE4u.com to receive an email indicating that a claim was processed, will continue to receive that notification.

House and Senate Budget Resolutions Passed

The House and Senate both passed their respective budget resolutions (H. Con. Res. 99 and S. Con. Res. 21). Both measures allow for more funding for wounded service members offer upgrades for veterans benefits above the Administration's FY 2008 request, provide for a three percent pay increase for active duty, and reject the Administration's request for new health care fees for veterans and military retirees under age 65. As *FRA Today* goes to press, legislators are working on a joint budget resolution that will resolve the differences between the House and Senate resolutions. The final conference report approved by both chambers of Congress will serve as a blueprint for funding by establishing discretionary funding caps for the appropriations committees. The Congress has passed appropriations bills without a finalized budget framework in three of the past five years.

FRA Hosts Armed Forces Retirement Home Briefing

FRA hosted an Armed Forces Retirement Home (AFRH) briefing at NHQ to receive an update on conditions at the Washington, D.C., campus and to learn more about the rebuilding plan for the Gulfport, Miss., location to be completed by May 2010. Members of The Military Coalition organizations attended the briefing.

FRA staff expressed concern about recent revelations of inadequate care at the AFRH in Washington, D.C. Tim Cox, Chief Operating Officer for the AFRH, assured those in attendance that personnel have been fired and other steps taken to correct problems with inadequate care.

FRA staff also expressed concern about the apparent lack of progress to build a replacement for the Armed Forces Retirement Home in Gulfport, Mississippi, previously known as the U.S. Naval Home. This facility sustained significant damage from Hurricane Katrina in August 2005 forcing the relocation of residents to the AFRH Washington, D.C. campus. Cox explained that plans for reconstruction are progressing and that control of the AFRH Gulfport campus project has been transferred to the General Services Administration (GSA) with demolition of the old building to begin in July 2007. Rebuilding is scheduled to start next October, despite inadequate funding for the project. To help address the shortage, the Senate's FY 2007 Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Bill includes \$175 million in additional money for rebuilding the Gulfport home. The Association strongly supports rebuilding the Gulfport facility as soon as possible to enable residents to return to Gulfport.

Rep. Bill Young receives FRA's 2007 Pinnacle Award

FRA presented its 2007 Pinnacle Award to U.S. Congressman C.W. Bill Young (Fla.) at a special reception on Capitol Hill on 17 May 2007. The Pinnacle Award is the highest honor given by the Association and has been presented since 1996 to recognize distinguished members of Congress who have championed improved benefits for men and women in uniform. Young was chosen in recognition of his strong leadership and continued support for improving health care, pay and other benefits for active duty, Reserve, and retired military personnel.



Young represents the tenth district in Florida and was first elected to Congress in 1970. Throughout his tenure in Congress, he has maintained as his highest priority an untiring commitment to a strong national defense. His record is long and distinguished. As a former Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, former Chairman of the House Appropriations Defense Subcommittee, and a current member of the House Armed Services Committee, he has focused on improving the quality of life for those who serve our nation in uniform and on ensuring that they have the best equipment and training available to do their job.

To that end, Congressman Young and his wife Beverly meet on a regular basis with enlisted personnel and officers stateside and around the world to learn more about their needs, both on the job and with their families. These visits are not limited to garrison locales and have included field duty, at sea deployments, imminent danger areas, and combat zones. In short, they go where we ask our troops to go. Because of these meetings, Chairman Young's appropriations bills have consistently addressed many of the needs of enlisted service members, which include improved base housing, better medical care, and a significant investment in more modern equipment.

Multitude of Panels Study Walter Reed Scandal

In the wake of the media coverage of inadequate care at Walter Reed Army Medical Center (WRAMC) numerous congressional committees and subcommittees held hearings. In addition, the White House and the Pentagon have created at least eight overlapping investigations, commissions, task forces, and study groups. Many of these panels are issuing final or interim reports. A summary of three reports that have been completed as *FRA Today* goes to press follows.

VA AND DOD ORDERED TO COOPERATE ON CARE FOR DISABLED VETS

The Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs have been ordered by President Bush to create a joint process for establishing a disability rating system for injured service members, and to implement 24 other recommendations from the Task Force on Returning Global War on Terror

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VETERANS' AFFAIRS VETERANS' AFFAIRS VETERANS' AFFAIRS VETERANS' AFFAIRS VETERANS' AFFAIRS VETERANS' AFFAIRS VETERANS' AFFAIRS

VA Claims Backlog Numbers

Department of Veterans Affairs claims backlog numbers are being referenced by many members of Congress, in FRA's and other Veterans Service Officer's (VSO) recent Congressional testimony to the House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committees, and also in news reports associated with the Walter Reed fiasco and it's important to clarify what these vastly different numbers mean. There are roughly 400,000 VA rating cases pending; the total Compensation and Pension (C&P) cases pending is over 600,000; and finally, the total C&P and cases on appeal is currently about 700,000. As with seamless transition and other related issues, case backlogs are a continuing challenge and have been addressed by FRA for many years.

Benefits for Veterans

Sen. Patty Murray (Wash.) and Rep. Steve Rothman (N.J.) introduced "The Honor Our Commitment to Veterans Act" (S. 1147 and H.R. 463 respectively), which would allow new Priority 8 veterans to enroll in the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) healthcare system. Priority 8 veterans are those veterans with non-service-connected disabilities whose income is above a modest level that varies by location. These FRA supported proposals would reverse the decision more than four years ago to cut off all Priority 8 veterans' access to the VA healthcare system and has requested this change in testimony before Senate and House Veterans Affairs Committees.

Federal Task Force Launches Web Site

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Jim Nicholson, head of the new inter-agency task force examining the processes for combat veterans seeking services and benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and other federal agencies, announced the creation of a dedicated web page to solicit input on the ease of accessing federal services.

"As the task force moves forward in studying how we can enhance services and cut red tape, we believe it's important to provide veterans, their family members and others with the opportunity to share their ideas and experiences," said Nicholson.

People can email their comments to the task force at TFHeroes@va.gov or fax comments to 202-273-9599. Task Force information and mailing address can be obtained on the VA home page, www.va.gov/taskforce.

The Web page allows active duty service members, veterans, family members and others to comment directly to the task force on the accessibility, timeliness and delivery of services. Comments will be studied by the task force, used in the panel's evaluation of gaps in service and form the basis of recommended solutions.

Called the "Task Force on Returning Global War on Terror Heroes," the panel consists of the secretaries of Defense, Labor, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, and Education, plus the administrator of the Small Business Administration and the director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Under the terms of the executive order creating the task force, the group has 45 days to identify and examine existing federal services for returning Global War on Terror service members; identify gaps in such services; seek recommendations from federal agencies on ways to fill those gaps and ensure that appropriate federal agencies are communicating and cooperating effectively.

Additional Life Insurance for Totally Disabled Veterans

Congressman Walter B. Jones (N.C.) introduced "The Disabled Veterans Insurance Improvement Act" (H. R. 2026), that would increase the amount of supplemental life insurance available for totally disabled veterans. Currently veterans who are 100 percent disabled can obtain \$10,000 in life insurance, obtain a waiver for the premium and purchase up to \$20,000 more in coverage. The bill would increase the coverage available by \$20,000, making a total of \$50,000 of life insurance available to totally disabled veterans. Senator Daniel Akaka (Hawaii), Chairman of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, has also introduced similar legislation in the U.S. Senate, "The Disabled Veterans Insurance Act" (S. 643), that increases life insurance available to totally disabled to \$40,000.

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THERE ARE MANY OPPORTUNITIES to serve in the FRA and at this time of year Branches are nominating and electing officers for the upcoming year, as are Branch and Regional leaders. In addition, they (along with the National Vice President, if a candidate for National President) are seeking Shipmates to serve in other capacities which include chairing and/or serving on key committees.

These situations are opportunities to serve and should be viewed as such in the context of the work of the entire Association which is directly related to its mission. Unfortunately, this is not always the case and many look upon requests to serve in whatever capacity with dread. This is understandable, however, it's important to always remember that throughout its 82 plus years, the FRA has consistently depended upon dedicated Shipmates filling elected and appointed positions from Branch level to the National Board of Directors. And we would not be where we are today without the willingness of countless Shipmates stepping forward as candidates for elected office or to volunteer as leaders of boards and committees.

In addition to identifying someone to stand for election or take over key jobs, our leaders also face the challenge of successfully training and turning over responsibilities to their relief. Often there's a turnover plan which may include a binder or file with carefully assembled information and reference materials — and other times there's not too much to go on, which makes the change more challenging (and may be a major disincentive for others to step forward to assume that particular job).

To help with orientation and to provide consistent reference information, the FRA Branch Administrative Manual was published some years ago. And I'm pleased to report that thanks to the efforts of the NHQ Staff, an updated version of this important reference is now posted on www.fra.org and can be found under MY FRA on the Area for Branch and Regional Officers page. Please check it out and use it as necessary to assist with not only routine administrative functions but for orientation of newly elected officers and board members and committee chairs. (A plan for ordering print copies will be announced after the 80th National Convention.)

In conjunction with turnover, I must express a serious concern. At the end of their term (or terms) of office or active involvement in conducting other Association business and fulfilling their respective responsibilities, far too many Shipmates are ending their active involvement in the FRA. It's understandable to look forward to the relief of completing a term in a challenging or difficult position — however, we collectively must urge leaders to continue their involvement and support after their terms end. There are simply

too many challenges facing the FRA for these leaders to simply walk away from Branch, Region or National issues or responsibilities. Note that I fully understand and appreciate the difficult challenges in some Branches whereby a small number of dedicated (and often aging) Shipmates are (and some have been for years) keeping the respective Branch operating.



JOE BARNES
FRA's National Executive Secretary

Related to this are often missed opportunities for training and orientation at mid-year meetings — something that's a long standing tradition in the Association. These meetings also provide an important opportunity for Past Regional Presidents and others who've served in key positions to meet and discuss what's happening in the Association and throughout the Region. Two Regions have eliminated (one at the discretion of the sitting RP) mid-year meetings and unfortunately, I speak from experience when I report that training is not happening in some of the other Regions.

The work at the Branch and Regional level is important and essential to addressing our challenges — the most important of which is membership. And having opportunities to brief Shipmates on key initiatives and programs like the IMIS system, membership campaigns and the Bring 'em Back Call Program are essential.

To help address this situation, we're incorporating plans for training opportunities from members of the NHQ staff for regional mid-year and other meetings as part of our new outreach program. In addition to the availability of NHQ staff for briefings, we must increase awareness of other training and orientation experts including senior enlisted Sea Service personnel serving in key positions.

Your National Headquarters Staff is working hard on expanded responsibilities and new opportunities to increase awareness about the FRA and its highly effective legislative work and other important programs. And we need a more sustained and stronger commitment by former National, Regional and Branch officers to assist in spreading the word by establishing and maintaining contact with local commands and activities, recruiting offices, reserve centers, hospitals and clinics, commissaries and exchanges, etc.

There are fewer and fewer opportunities to interact with active and Reserve personnel, and we must collectively find ways to provide support and expand awareness about the Association and its programs at the Branch, Regional and National levels.

Joe Barnes is FRA's National Executive Secretary and Chairman of the National Committee on Legislative Service. A member of Navy Department Branch 181, he is also an advisor to the National Committees on Budget and Finance and Membership and Retention.

Sunday, 18 February

After a 1,597 mile, 3 hour, 30 minute flight from Manila, we arrived at Agana, Guam at 0440. Even at that early hour of the morning, Latte Stone Branch and Unit 73 (Agana) Presidents Shipmate Enrique (Rick) and Lady Sophie Losongco, Branch VP Jim and Lady Sullenger, Branch Secretary/Treasurer Scott and Lady Carrie Duenas, Tony and Lady Millie Artero, and Jack and Lady Terry Shimizu met us at the airport — and yes, with another ‘welcome aboard banner’!

We were then taken to the Royal Orchard Hotel Tumon Bay and checked in. We managed to rest a little before the National President’s Reception at 1400. After the Reception, a combined branch and unit general assembly meeting was held at 1500 with about 60 shipmates and ladies present. The rest of the afternoon and evening was ‘leisure time,’ which was really appreciated.

Monday, 19 February

At 0830 all of the shipmates and ladies who met us at the airport on Sunday morning and PUP Lady Joyce I. Martratt, left for an office call with Fred Gofigan, Veterans Affairs Administrator. We then toured the War in the Pacific Memorial Park in Asan, the Veterans’ Cemetery in Piti, WWII Memorial Site, at the Asan Overlook and other local historical sites. All of us then went to lunch at a local restaurant.

After lunch we departed for the Lt. Governor’s Office at Governor Ricardo J. Bordallo’s Complex in Adelup. While there we had a courtesy call with Lt. Governor Mike Gruz and we discussed legislative and military issues concerning Guam.

At 1400 we arrived at the Guam Legislature Building for an office call with Senator (and former Speaker) Antonio “Tony” Unpingco, Military and Federal Affairs Chairman. During the visit, Speaker Mark Forbes came in and we all had a lengthy conversation concerning the proposed move of two U.S. Marine Corps Battalions from Okinawa to Guam and the additional assignment of more U.S. Navy, Air Force and Army personnel between now and 2014.

The Speaker presented me with two Guam coffee

mugs as a remembrance to visiting his and the Senator’s office. We then departed for the “I Guma I Taotao Tano” (Government House) at Agana Heights and were met by Ms. Di Cruz, Governor’s Chief of Protocol who gave us an extended tour of the Government House.

Tuesday, 20 February

What a busy and full day this would turn out to be. All of the branch and unit members from yesterday (minus Shipmate Jim and Lady Margie Sullenger – who were unable to join us) departed the hotel at 0800 and proceeded to the USCG Sector Guam Commander’s Office for an office call at 0900 with Captain William Marhoffer. We received a very warm Coast Guard welcome. The Captain was well aware of FRA’s legislative and quality of life issues before the Congress and pledged his full support.

The next visit would be a very pleasant surprise. We had an office call with Captain Janice Wynn, Chief of Staff and Regional Master Chief Tony Graham at the COMNAVMAR Headquarters. Captain Wynn is the daughter of Shipmate PRPNW Floyd and Gwen Solum in Oak Harbor, Washington. Sandy and I lived in Oak Harbor for 19 years and knew Janice when she was in high school. In fact she reminded us that she had won one of Branch 97’s Americanism Essay Contests and had received a \$100 Savings Bond. All these many years later — she is the Chief of Staff at COMNAVMAR — what a small world!

At 1035 we proceeded to the Guam Naval Base for an office call with Commanding Officer Captain Ken Freeman. We then departed for the Club Typhoonz for a luncheon with Regional Leadership. After lunch, I hosted a Question and Answer Period with approximately 30 senior leadership personnel in attendance. One Master Chief was so impressed with FRA’s action that he said he



NP Sweeney and Capt. Janice Wynn holding a photo of her father PRPNW Floyd Solum.



NP Sweeney and LAFRA PNP Sandy Sweeney touring the sites with shipmates and ladies.

was going to sign up for membership on line that afternoon. (When we saw him the next morning, he told us that he joined online and was FRA's newest member!)

After lunch, a tour of Naval Base Guam's Historical Monuments was conducted by Regional Master Chief Tony Graham and the Naval Base Guam Command Master

Chief. After a very interest-

ing and productive tour we proceeded to U.S. Naval Hospital Guam in Agana Heights for an office call with Commanding Officer Bob Kellogg and Command Master Chief Sam Lovette. The Captain discussed all of the medical challenges on Guam and the working relationship with the local civilian hospital. After an extended tour of the hospital, we returned to the hotel to get ready for the Dinner Reception at 1830.

The Dinner Reception was hosted in our honor by Branch and Unit 73. Attendees were Branch and Unit 73 members, key military leadership (many of whom we had met during the day) from the United States Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard and Air Force. Also in attendance were representatives from the local veteran organizations, the Lt. Governor, Speaker and Senate Chairs, and military-federal affairs department heads.

After dinner, Captain Wynn was asked to introduce me to the audience — what an honor! I then informed all in attendance on the function of FRA, all of our legislative work done on Capitol Hill and many of the programs sponsored by FRA. This was followed by a question and answer period.

After my presentation, the Branch and Unit presented Sandy and I with many mementos of our visit to Guam.

Wednesday, 21 February

After breakfast the group departed for Andersen Air Force Base where we met with the Base Commander, Brigadier General Douglas H. Owens, Vice Commander Colonel Joel S. Westa and Command Chief Master Sergeant Robert D. Wicks at 1115.

The entire group went to lunch at the 'Top of the Rock.' From the club, we departed for an office call with the Commanding Officer, Executive Officer and Command Master Chief (CDR Chris Brunett, CDR John Menoni

and Roger Etienne respectively) of HSC-25. This Naval Command is a tenant on Andersen AFB and they are very proud of that fact — U.S. Navy was very prevalent everywhere within the command. The CO and XO took us on a tour of the hangar and we viewed the helicopters close up.

After a busy afternoon, we returned to the hotel in Tumon Bay. Later that evening, Presidents Shipmate Rick and Lady Sophie picked us up and took us out for a delicious dinner. We then returned to the hotel to prepare for departure back to the States after an extensive 18 day trip to overseas Pacific.

Thursday, 22 February

Departed the hotel at 0500 via the hotel courtesy van for the airport for our scheduled 0710 [Continental Micronesia Airline (3,801 miles)] departure to Honolulu, Hawaii.

CROSSED INTERNATIONAL DATE LINE

Wednesday, 21 February

After the 7 hour flight, we landed in Honolulu on schedule at 1815. We were scheduled to change to a Northwest Airline flight from Honolulu to Seattle, so after clearing customs and immigration, rechecked our luggage at Northwest baggage. When we arrived at the Northwest ticket counter, we were informed the flight had been canceled because of a generator problem on the engine (was glad it canceled before we got in the air), so were transferred to United for a 5 hour flight to Los Angeles.

Thursday, 22 February

After the 2,556 mile flight from Honolulu, we arrived in Los Angeles at 0530, then departed Los Angeles at 0630 on a 2 hour, 40 minute (954 miles) flight to Seattle, arriving at 1010.

Our son met us at the airport, Sandy then returned home with him and I continued on to Washington, D.C., for a business meeting on Friday.

It was an amazing journey to Japan, the Republic of the Philippines and Guam. The shipmates and ladies in these locations do a great job and deserve a big Bravo Zulu from the entire membership. Personally, I would like to thank all for the outstanding hospitality and a lifetime of memories.

Do you have questions for the National President regarding his trip to Guam? Post those questions on www.fra.org under Communities and he will respond to as many as possible in the coming weeks.

IN THE MAY ISSUE of *FRA Today*, we included a list of some of the ships that are now serving as museums. This was not a comprehensive list, but rather a sampling from around the country. The feedback was tremendous, and so here are a few additional ships we have been asked to mention by our readers. Please note that we will not have space in future issues to publish additional ships, but have dedicated an entire discussion area on www.fra.org/community for you to share your opinions, experiences and recommendations of museum ships and other sites.

USS Alabama (BB-60) and the USS Drum (SS-228) – Mobile, Ala.
 Located in Battleship Memorial Park.
<http://www.ussalabama.com/>

USS Cassin Young (DD-793) – Boston, Mass.
 Berthed across the quay from USS Constitution. Considered a National Historic Landmark. Cassin Young was named for CDR Young, a WWII Medal of Honor awardee.
http://www.nps.gov/archive/bost/Cassin_Young.htm

USS Kidd (DD-661) – Baton Rouge, La.
 "The Pirate of the Pacific" this ship was named after Rear Admiral Isaac C. Kidd, Sr.
<http://www.usstkidd.com/>

USS Little Rock (CL-92, Later CLG-4), USS The Sullivans (DD-537), and USS Croaker (SS-246, Later SSK-246) – Buffalo, N.Y.
 A cruiser, a submarine and a destroyer – there is so much to see.
<http://www.buffalonaivalpark.org/>

USS Massachusetts (BB-59), USS Joseph P. Kennedy Jr. (DD-850), USS Lionfish, USS Fall River – Battleship Cove, Mass.
 A great variety of Navy history – conveniently located in one place!
<http://www.battleshipcove.org/exhibits.htm>

USS Orleck (DD-886) – Orange, Texas
 The 390-foot Gearing Class destroyer returned to the city in which it was built after serving in Korea, Vietnam and the Gulf War.
<http://www.ussorleck.org/>

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ONWATCH

Chiefs Taking Care of Chiefs

MCPON(SW) William H. Plackett, USN (Ret.)

Our Navy is one of heritage and tradition. One of the strongest traditions is the sanctity of the CPO Mess. Bonds developed by shared hardships, common experiences and long separations from their families by the members of the mess, have, over the years, made the CPO mess a sanctuary for its members. What happens in the mess stays in the mess; when a shipmate needs help, we try to the best of our ability to provide it from within the mess. These strong traditions, combined with dedication and professionalism are the hallmark of Chief Petty Officers and have resulted in the recognition, at all levels of the chain of command, the vital role that Chief Petty Officers play in the day-to-day functioning of any Command.

In recognition of the contributions Navy Chiefs make to our Navy, the USS Chief (MCM-14) was commissioned in our honor on November 5, 1994 at the Naval Amphibious Base at Little Creek, Virginia. Chief Petty Officers throughout the Navy raised the funds to support the commissioning ceremonies. Their generosity resulted in a significant surplus of funds after commissioning expenses were paid. At the urging of the third Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy, Robert Walker and the seventh Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy, Duane Bushey, these funds became the first contribution to the Chief Petty Officer Scholarship Fund (CPOSF). The formal charter for the CPOSF was signed in January 1998 at the Senior Enlisted Academy in Newport, Rhode Island. The CPOSF is a not-for-profit fund dedicated to providing scholarships for higher education to dependent children or spouses of Active Duty, Reserve or Honorably Retired Chief, Senior Chief or Master Chief Petty Officers.

The mission of the CPOSF is to be a viable non-profit organization established with the sole purpose of generating funds to provide education opportunities for eligible family members of qualified CPOs. As stated by

Thomas Crow, the fourth Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy, "this program provides a great incentive and assists our CPO families in achieving increased opportunity and access to the colleges and universities that they simply could not afford without assistance." Since its inception, CPOSF has granted almost \$150,000 to over 200 applicants. We anticipate awarding another \$50,000 in 2007.

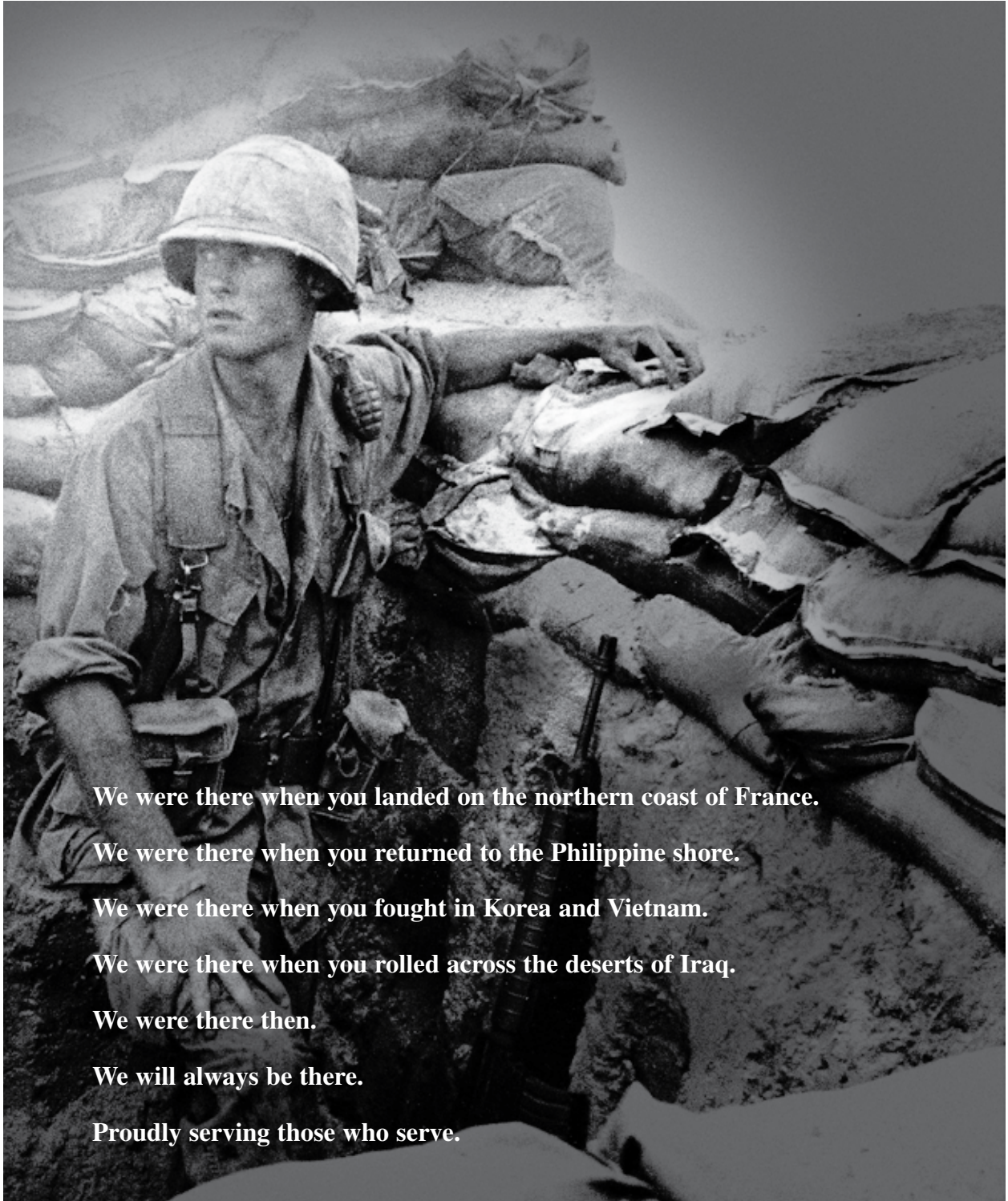
Our fund is made possible because of the generosity of Active, Reserve and Retired Chiefs who contribute to the fund either individually through allotments or the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC#11549), or as a group through their respective CPO Mess or Association. "Without donations, the scholarships wouldn't exist," said retired CPO David Hale, USN, (Ret.), CPOSF Treasurer. In my mind, our success is directly related to our heritage of "Chiefs Taking Care of Chiefs" and I anticipate the CPOSF will continue to grow exponentially in the next few years.

Please join with us today in "Chiefs Taking Care of Chiefs." For further information on the CPOSF visit our website at www.cposf.org or write to us at 1034 Creamer Rd., Norfolk, VA 23503.

MCPON(SW) Bill Plackett, USN (Ret.)
Sixth Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy
4 October 1985 – 9 September 1988

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FRA'S 2006-07 "Membership is the Heart of FRA" Membership Program closed 31 March 2007, the end of the Association's membership year. The drawing for the prizes in conjunction with the program was held at the National Headquarters on 19 April 2007. The following shipmates are the winners:

1ST PRIZE: (\$400)

Karl W. Zuege, Branch 235

2ND PRIZE: (\$300)

Michael P. Norman, Branch 46

3RD PRIZE: (\$200)

Michael T. Wilson, Branch 103

4TH Thru 10TH Prizes

(5 years dues in FRA or LA FRA)

Ralph A. Preston, Branch 99

Edward J. Nutick, Branch 94

Kenneth Carter, Branch 24

George N. Kollarik, Branch 124

Paul J. Hendry, Branch 290

James Hammond, Branch 283

George N. Dorsey, Branch 219

Thanks to all the shipmates and ladies who participated in the Member Drive '06 Membership Program. This year's membership program — OPERATION FRA (Former, Retired, Active) started on 1 April 2007. Please see page 16 of the May *FRA Today* for a flyer or visit the Association Member News page under *My FRA* on www.fra.org.

All who recruit 3 or more members receive a free pin and are eligible for many other prizes.

FRA NHQ STAFF

PROFILE: TABBI SMITH



Chances are pretty good that if you have called Member Services at FRA Headquarters, you have talked with Tabbi Smith. If you are a Member at Large and are late with your dues, Tabbi is also likely to call you with a friendly reminder! To say that Tabbi enjoys being on the phone with Shipmates and Ladies is an

understatement, and is part of the reason she's so great at her job!

Tabbi was born and raised in Brooklyn, N.Y. and is a graduate of York College in New York City. The responsibilities of work are made easier with the support and encouragement of her Robert, her wonderful husband of ten years and the giant smiles of her adorable sons Carson (5 years) and Chaze (the newcomer – 4 months old in June!). Before moving to Alexandria in 2004, Tabbi was Manager of New York City 911 Dispatch Call Center for five years and managed a telemarketing/call center for ten years.

"Every day is a great day at FRA," says Tabbi. "I don't just say that on my phone message, I really believe it. My job is to help the members have a great FRA day too."



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Service: _____ Status: _____ Membership Preference: Branch No. _____ Nearest to Home Member-at-Large

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Transitioning from military life to the civilian world can be daunting. There are thousands of details to consider, hundreds of decisions to make, and it's likely to involve some heavy lifting — both literally and figuratively.

RETURN CIVILIAN-IZING

The skills you learned during your tenure in uniform will serve you well during the transition process. Your military training will not only make you an asset to future civilian employers, but your organizational and operational skills will also assist you in the process itself. According to many who've made the leap, the key is to start early and do your homework.

Vince Patton, former Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard (MCPOCG), and FRA's National Chaplain, started planning his retirement nearly four years before he actually left the service. "I knew one thing for sure," says Patton, "when I became the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard, it assured I would be leaving the service at the end of my tour. I knew I had a planned departure timeframe, and I didn't lose sight of the fact that I had to start thinking about what I was going to do when my term was up." Not everyone has that luxury and Patton adds, "It's never too early to think about life after the military, whether one stays for a full career, or leaves after the first enlistment."

The law requires that military personnel receive pre-separation counseling no less than 90 days before leaving the service, but according to Military OneSource (www.militaryonesource.com), even two years from your retirement or separation date isn't too early to begin preparing for your transition.

Frank Welch, another former MCPOCG who retired in 2006 and is now working for L-3 Communications, urges shipmates to learn as much as they can about the transition process as a whole. "I believe, for a lot of folks, the biggest obstacle in transitioning is the fear of the unknown," says Welch. "My advice is not to be intimidated by the process. Use the resources available (books, TAP seminars, online resources, etc.) to learn about the steps involved in transitioning. You'll be much more successful if you research those unknowns before you make the leap. Have a plan."

There are literally thousands of resources available to men and women who are separating from military service. Near the top of your separation to-do list should be a visit to your installation's Transition Assistance Office (TAO). Whether you are retiring, going to continue

your education or looking for a new career, the TAO has counselors, literature and other resources designed to help. Visit www.dodtransportal.dod.mil to find a list of TAO locations, a pre-separation guide, and other valuable information.

Unless you recently won the lottery, chances are you'll be looking for another source of income once you separate from the military. Many who've served 20+ years in uniform and receive retainer pay don't retire, they are simply rehired.

Civilian and government employers alike recognize the value of hiring former members of the military. According to Corporate Gray Online (www.corporategray.com) those with military experience are generally well disciplined and appreciate the concept of teamwork. They tend to be goal-oriented, demonstrate strong leadership skills and have a strong sense of loyalty. Prospective employers would be crazy not to want you.

Finding the right job in the right location that offers the right pay and benefits package will involve weighing numerous variables, many of which have subjective values. Are you willing to accept a lower salary in order to have the flexibility of telecommuting? How much further will your new salary go if you relocate to an area where the cost of living is lower? How important is it for you to be near your extended family?

LOOKING IN A NEW WAY

The advent of the Internet has changed the entire job-search scene, which may be intimidating to some who haven't looked for a job in while. A lot has changed since today's retiring service member joined up 20 or more years ago! One important change is that job seekers are now encouraged to include key words in their resumes.

Employers now enter digital or scanned resumes into a database and use software to search for specific keywords that relate to a particular job opening. Katharine Hansen, author of several job-search books and a writer for *Quintessential Careers*, suggests that more than 80 percent of resumes are searched for job-specific keywords. Additionally, employers who search third-

TRANSITION!

TRANSITIONAL RESOURCES

The following websites are aimed at those leaving military service, but many of the suggestions and related resources are also useful for those looking to transition from one civilian job to another.

www.fra.org allows members to interface with the nation's largest database of job openings. Simply click the Career Center option at the top of the home page.

www.military.com provides a comprehensive group of features to assist military job hunters. The site offers a job search function, assistance in building and posting a resume, a list of upcoming job fairs, and more. Another helpful feature is the site's Career Network, a function that allows service members to connect with veterans who may be able to assist in the job search.

www.baseops.net/transition offers tips on building a military resume and how best to present yourself to civilian employers. It also provides a recommended reading list and suggests links to a variety of other transition-oriented sites.

www.furtheryoureducation.com provides a wealth of information. Although the site's primary focus is educational opportunities, there is a section for military personnel that outlines the steps in a successful transition to the civilian world, in addition to an overview of military education benefits.

www.hirevetsfirst.gov/pdf/GI_Jobs_Top_50.pdf lists the top 50 "most military friendly employers" based on company responses to a formal survey. A brief overview of each company is available at www.gijobs.net/top50.

www.quintcareers.com/networking.html suggests that "networking is one of the most important – if not the most important – activity" that job seekers need to master to be truly successful in their job search. The article includes links to a wide variety of networking resources.

party databases and online resume-posting boards (such as Monster.com, for example) are using the same technology. To learn more about using appropriate keywords in your resume, read Ms. Hansen's thorough discussion of the subject at www.quintcareers.com/resume_keywords.html.

The vast majority of jobs are never advertised. According to About: Job Searching (<http://jobsearch.about.com/cs/networking/a/networking.htm>), at least 60 percent of all jobs are found by networking with people you already know or meet. Although the concept of networking may be intimidating to some, you may be surprised how many people are already in your "network." Coworkers, neighbors, fellow FRA members, your spouse, your dentist, folks you know from church, even the guy sitting next to you on an airplane all have the potential to connect you with a possible job opportunity.

Peter Calvanese, a retired Marine gunnery sergeant who now works for defense contractor Booz Allen Hamilton, believes networking was the key to his successful civilian job search. "During my military career, I had the opportunity to interface with a lot of defense contractors, which made my transition very easy. I highly recommend cultivating a professional network and staying in touch with the folks you know."

MCPOCG Welch, who also used networking to secure his current position, echoes that notion. "Nothing can replace skill and expertise, but 'who you know' is very important."

KNOW YOUR WORTH

Realistically determining what your skills and talents are worth in the civilian workplace can also cause confusion. Welch recommends that transitioning service members do their homework and take a good look at their entire military compensation package, particularly if they're using their military income as a basis for the salary range they will seek in their civilian career.

"In the military, I didn't realize the value of non-taxable allowances like BAH (Basic Allowance for Housing) and BAS (Basic Allowance for Subsistence). In the civilian realm, you are taxed on every penny you earn and it can be a rude awakening if you haven't done the math," says Welch. "Again, doing your homework and truly understanding the minimum salary you need to maintain your current standard of living is a big factor when considering a job offer."

"And don't underestimate your marketability," adds Calvanese. "The work you've been doing for years may seem like old hat to you, but those skills can be very valuable in the outside world."

So how marketable are you? It's sometimes difficult to know how your military skills will translate into a civilian career, and it may be equally challenging to articulate your military experience in a way that a civilian employer can understand.

MCPOCG Patton, who now directs Military.com's community outreach programs, used the features of his future employer's website to build a resume that reflected the breadth of his military experience. "It was rather hard for me to write a resume," says Patton. "It was a challenge to condense 30 years of military experience into two pages, and at the same time use phraseology that would be understood by civilians. Luckily, I knew that Military.com had some tools such as a 'skills translator,' where I was able to better define what a 'Yeoman' means in civilian terms, and better describe my military duties and experiences."

Some military certifications and licenses are transferable to the civilian workplace, and can potentially make you more valuable to a prospective employer. Visit www.cool.army.mil to learn more about the licensing and certification requirements for many occupations. Although the site is tailored for Army personnel, there is valuable information for all service members, including links to credentialing agencies and information on using your military education benefits to secure civilian certifications and licenses.

An active security clearance is a valuable asset for many service members moving to the civilian workforce, and can increase your civilian salary substantially – in some cases by more than \$15,000 per year. Even a lapsed security clearance can be an advantage, as many employers are willing to sponsor a new employee in his/her pursuit of a renewed clearance. Also, it often takes less time to process a clearance for people who've had a one in the past. According to a survey conducted by ClearanceJobs.com (www.clearancejobs.com), your earning potential also increases if you've passed a Counter Intelligence or Lifestyle Polygraph. The March 2007 survey shows that candidates with polygraphs earn an average of almost \$10,300 more per year than cleared candidates without polygraphs.

Some employers, particularly in areas where many retirees settle, may offer reduced salaries to prospective employees who will be receiving military retired pay. They know the retiree's civilian salary will be supplemented with his/her retired pay and hope the candidate will be willing to accept a lower salary. This is another reason to do your homework and be confident in your salary requirements. Don't settle for less than your skills are worth.

In the civilian world, you can negotiate for what you want, which is a very different dynamic from the military pay system. Don Larson, a Navy 1st Class Petty Officer who retired in 1998 and now works for Applied Global Technologies, says doing your homework in this arena can also pay big dividends. "I managed to negotiate a slightly higher salary than was originally offered, but I also understood what the going rate was for my geographic location," says Larson. "There are a lot of web resources that can help you determine what jobs in your area of expertise are paying in your particular region. Going into the negotiation process, I had a general idea of what to expect and what was realistic."

Because your starting salary in the civilian marketplace sets a benchmark, Calvanese suggests negotiating the highest salary possible. "It's been my experience in the corporate world that you might get a generous starting salary, but that pay increases are slow from there. Also, the 30 days of annual leave you had on active duty are not an option with civilian employers. Two or three weeks of vacation time is norm."

BENEFITS ADD UP

Whether you are separating or retiring from military service, you will need to reassess your life and health insurance needs. As you begin to plan your transition, it's wise to examine what transitional benefits are available to separating service members. For example, the Transitional Assistance Management Program (TAMP) offers transitional TRICARE coverage (up to 180 days) to certain separating service members and their eligible family members. (Visit www.military.com for a list of transitional health care programs.) It's also a good idea to schedule medical and dental appointments before separating in order to take advantage of the healthcare resources you have through the Department of Defense (DoD).

All service members who served honorably are eligible for healthcare services through the Veterans Administration (VA), however access to care varies by your geographic location, your level of service-connected disability and your income.

Those retiring from military service are eligible to continue their TRICARE coverage, with three optional plans to consider. For many retirees, this is the most cost-effective health insurance available, but access to care can sometimes present a challenge, particularly for those who live in remote locations. Visit www.TRICARE.mil to examine the TRICARE benefit options for retirees.

Many separating from military service neglect to consider life insurance coverage. While many civilian employers offer a variety of life insurance plans, it is useful to also examine the benefits offered through your military service to determine the total benefit package your family will receive in the event of your untimely demise. Those separating from military service can elect to continue their Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) coverage for an annual premium. Military retirees can also elect to enroll in the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP), which provides up to 55 percent of their retired pay to a surviving spouse or family member.

GEOGRAPHICALLY SPEAKING

Does your dream of civilian life include year-round golf? Or are you hoping to experience the change of seasons in your new home? Are you anxious to relocate closer to your extended family? Or is your goal to get as far away as possible from your mother-in-law?

Climate and proximity to family are just two factors to consider when looking at a new location from which to re-enter civilian life. Employment options for spouses and the cost of living can play an important role in determining your civilian lifestyle. A quick Internet search can lead you to a variety of online calculators that can help you compare the cost of living at your current residence with that at a future home. Be sure to check a variety of sources, as results can vary widely for the same comparison.

Those who are relocating should also consider the local tax structure. Some states offer full or partial tax exemptions on military retired pay, while others charge no state income tax at all. The lack of a state income tax doesn't necessarily ensure a low total tax burden, however, according to the Retirement Living Information Center (www.retirementliving.com). Using the absence of state income tax as the only criteria for determining your new state of residence could be a mistake, as higher sales and property taxes can sometimes more than offset the lack of a state income tax. This applies to anyone relocating, not just retirees. (For a state-by-state overview of tax policies, visit www.retirementliving.com/RLtaxes.html.)

Leaving the military life behind can be bittersweet. Returning to the civilian world is, in many ways, a new beginning – full of unlimited possibilities. And it's also like going home. After all, every member of the military was a civilian before they donned a uniform. Preparation, perseverance and a positive attitude will make your "homecoming" a resounding success.

TAP PROGRAM IS A RECRUITING OPPORTUNITY FOR FRA

Shipmates Rick Steward (Branch 99), Ray Santee and Norm Gapter (both of Branch 166) bring an FRA presence to the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) seminars conducted at the Norfolk (Va.) Naval Base. The seminars are presented more than 40 times per year and, thanks to these dedicated shipmates, FRA is seen and heard at each and every one.

According to Santee, membership organizations like FRA are not allowed to solicit for funds or members during the seminar, but they are permitted to highlight the outstanding work done by FRA and explain why citizen involvement is so important in the legislative process. The shipmates also point out that many FRA members are retirees who've made the transition to the civilian workforce and can be assets in networking within the civilian community.

"We show the DVD and the PowerPoint presentation [available through FRA Headquarters] and also have an information table set up in the hall," says Santee. "We gained

permission to make our presentation during the lunch break, so we call it the 'FRA Lunch Box.'"

The shipmates are not allowed to pitch FRA membership unless a TAP attendee asks or approaches the information table. "We work very hard to sell the FRA as a whole and not push our individual branches on new members," says Santee. "We ask where he or she is going to be moving, which demonstrates a genuine interest in the prospect's future. Then we recommend a branch that's most convenient for them."

The presentations are made under the auspices of the Tidewater Area Council and are successful in growing FRA's membership. "Our success rate goes in cycles. Sometimes we only get one or two applications a month; other times we get two or three a week. We feel that if we bring one or two new members into the organization from each presentation, it's been worth our time," says Santee.

EACH YEAR, THE BEST and brightest students from all over the country submit thousands of essays to FRA branches for the “FRA Americanism Essay Contest.” This year’s essay theme was “The Bill of Rights and Me,” and the outstanding essays were narrowed down to the regional and national levels. The contest is open to students, grades 7–12 and the overall winner receives a Grand National prize of a \$15,000 savings bond. A prize of a \$5,000, \$3,000 and \$2,000 savings bond is awarded to the first, second and third place winners in each grade category. All regional winners are judged at the national level and receive a certificate of recognition.

OVERALL WINNER

Emily Diamond, Grade 9, Branch 1, North East Region

GRADE 7 WINNERS

First place, **Mary-Grace R. Reeves**, Branch 22, South East Region; second place, **Katelyn Staggs**, Branch 282, South Central Region; third place, **Rebecca Feis**, Branch 275, West Coast Region.

GRADE 8 WINNERS

First place, **Nathan Filipowski**, Branch 99, East Coast Region; second place, **Esther Wong**, Branch 147, South East Region; third place, **Christina Atterbury**, Branch 87, North East Region

GRADE 9 WINNERS

First place, **Emily Diamond**, Branch 1, North East Region; second place, **Stephanie Nill**, Branch 267, North Central Region; third place, **Ryan Geary**, Branch 269, South East Region.

GRADE 10 WINNERS

First place, **David Herrera**, Branch 22, South East Region; second place, **Chandler Bonham**, Branch 251, South Central Region; third place, **Regina Nappi**, Branch 229, North East Region.

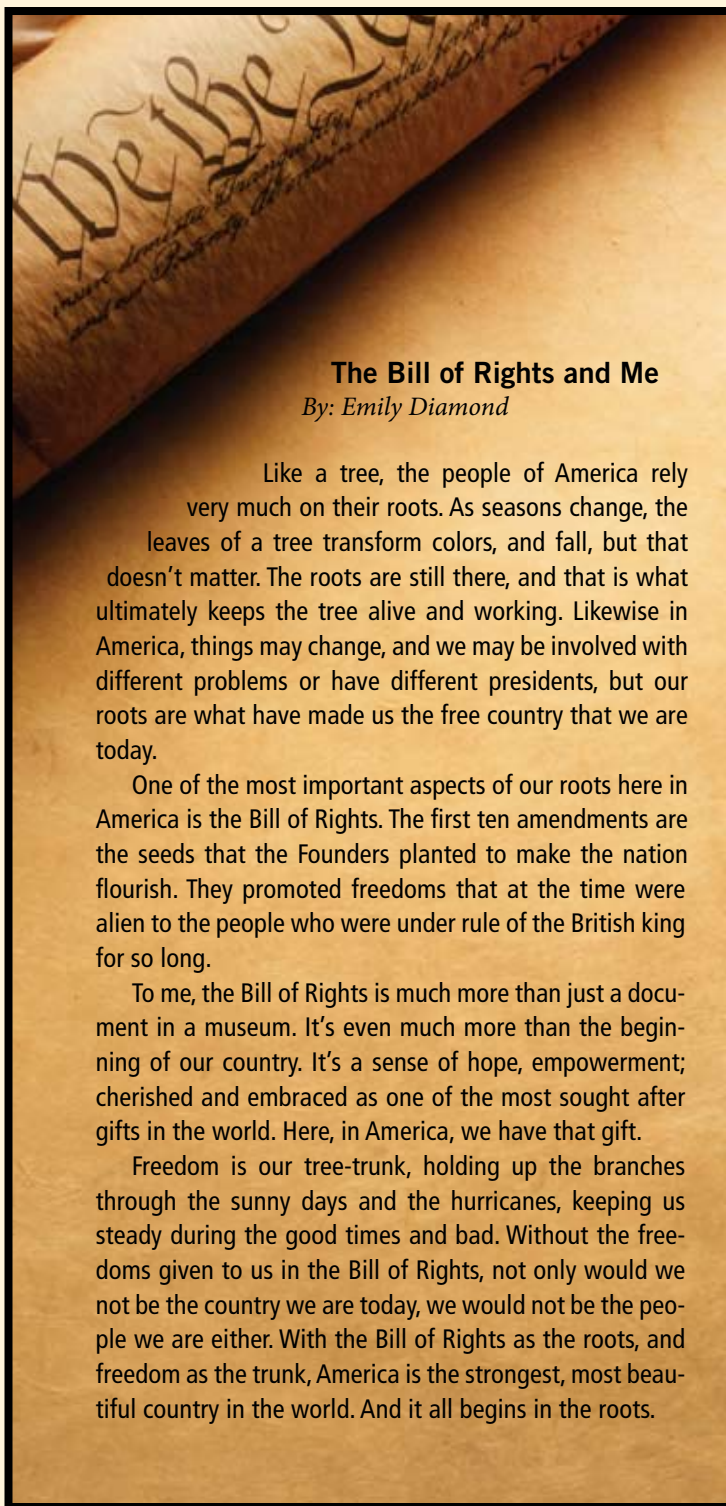
GRADE 11 WINNERS

First place, **Lydia Burns**, Branch 264, South Central Region; second place, **Tamiah Liebersbach**, Branch 342, North West Region; third place, **Bailey Jenkins**, Branch 89, South East Region.

GRADE 12 WINNERS

First place, **April Hoffman**, Branch 142, East Coast Region; second place, **Frederic T. Lu**, Branch 89, South East Region; third place, **Kasey Girton**, Branch 42, New England Region.

The FRA National Committee on Americanism-Patriotism sponsors the annual contest based on a theme announced each Spring. Each entrant must be sponsored by an FRA member in good standing or by a currently chartered branch or unit. The theme for next year’s essay will be “Why I am Proud to be an American.”



The Bill of Rights and Me

By: Emily Diamond

Like a tree, the people of America rely very much on their roots. As seasons change, the leaves of a tree transform colors, and fall, but that doesn’t matter. The roots are still there, and that is what ultimately keeps the tree alive and working. Likewise in America, things may change, and we may be involved with different problems or have different presidents, but our roots are what have made us the free country that we are today.

One of the most important aspects of our roots here in America is the Bill of Rights. The first ten amendments are the seeds that the Founders planted to make the nation flourish. They promoted freedoms that at the time were alien to the people who were under rule of the British king for so long.

To me, the Bill of Rights is much more than just a document in a museum. It’s even much more than the beginning of our country. It’s a sense of hope, empowerment; cherished and embraced as one of the most sought after gifts in the world. Here, in America, we have that gift.

Freedom is our tree-trunk, holding up the branches through the sunny days and the hurricanes, keeping us steady during the good times and bad. Without the freedoms given to us in the Bill of Rights, not only would we not be the country we are today, we would not be the people we are either. With the Bill of Rights as the roots, and freedom as the trunk, America is the strongest, most beautiful country in the world. And it all begins in the roots.

NEW ENGLAND REGION: 21–22 SEPTEMBER 2007**Holiday Inn, Tewksbury**

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Hosted by New England Region*Chairman:* RPNEng Paul F. Loveless, Jr., (207) 725-0946,
gnglove@blazenetme.net*Candidate for President:* RVPNEng William J. Waite**NORTHEAST REGION: 27–28 JULY 2007****Holiday Inn, Scranton-East**

(570) 343-4771

www.holidayinn.com/scrantonpa

200 Tigue Street, Dunmore, PA 18512

Hosted by Branch 288*Chairman:* RPNE Francis D. Tyson, (570) 342-9582,
fdtyson@epix.net*Candidate for President:* James E. Brown, Branch 226**EAST COAST REGION: 26–29 JULY 2007****Wilmington/Christiana Hilton Hotel**

(302) 454-1500

www.hiltonestate.com

100 Continental Drive, Newark, DE 18713-4319

Co-Hosted by Branches 309 and 168*Chairman:* James M. Jackson, Branch 309, (302) 834-1719*Candidate for President:* RVPEC Claire Purdy, Branch 24*Candidates for Vice President:* Ray E. Santee, Branch 166
and Joseph H. Palmer, Jr., Branch 259**SOUTHEAST REGION: 5–9 SEPTEMBER 2007****Chattanooga Choo-Choo Holiday Inn**

(423) 266-5000

www.choochoo.com

1400 Market Street, Chattanooga, TN 37402

Hosted by Branch & Unit 187*Chairman:* Jerry Brice, (423) 821-1147,
jbrice@greeley-hvac.com*Candidate for President:* RVPSE Roger E. Mitchell,
Branch 188*Candidate for Vice President:* John E. Sutton, Branch 290**NORTH CENTRAL REGION: 9–11 AUGUST 2007****Howard Johnson Hotel**

(800) 446-6242

www.howardjohnson.com

3650 S. 72nd Street, Omaha, NE 68124**Hosted by Branch 276***Chairman:* PRPNC Joe LaPadula, (402) 496-7993,
lucijoe123@cox.net*Candidate for President:* RVPNC Marty J. Posekany,
Branch 298**SOUTH CENTRAL REGION: 22–25 AUGUST 2007****Holiday Inn Financial Plaza**

(318) 688-3000

www.holiday-inn.com/shreveport-fin

5555 Financial Plaza, Shreveport, LA 71129

Hosted by Branch 159*Chairman:* PRPSC Terry D. Merten, (832) 559-8035,
mertprpsc@aol.com*Candidate for President:* RVPSC Melvin R. Harper,
Branch 251*Candidate for Vice President:* JrPRPSC Donald Larson,
Branch 94**SOUTHWEST REGION: 24–25 AUGUST 2007****Clarion Hotel Tucson Airport**

(800) 526-0550

www.choicehotels.com

6801 South Tucson Blvd., Tucson, AZ 85706

Hosted by Branch 70*Chairman:* PNP Dick Smith, (858) 748-5190,
powaydick@cox.net*Candidate for President:* RVPSW Harry N. Lyons,
Branch 77*Candidate for Vice President:* David J. Hart, Branch 176**WEST COAST REGION: 30 AUGUST–1 SEPTEMBER 2007****Marriott Sacramento Rancho Cordova**

(916) 638-1100

www.marriott.com/sacmc

11211 Point East Drive, Rancho Cordova, CA 95742

Hosted by Branch & Unit 275*Chairman:* NVP Lawrence J. Boudreaux, (530) 677-3925,
larryboo@pacbell.net*Candidate for President:* RVPWC Lee M. Hollowell, Jr.,
Branch 281*Candidate for Vice President:* Roberto Little Cloud,
Branch 10**NORTHWEST REGION: 17 –18 AUGUST 2007****The Coachman Inn**

(360) 675-0727

www.thecoachmaninn.com

32959 SR20, Oak Harbor, WA 98277

Hosted by Branch & Unit 97*Chairman:* RVPNW Robert Gilmore, (360) 679-1862,
rrgilmore@gte.net*Candidate for Vice President:* Robert Gilmore, Branch 97



BRANCH 67 SUITLAND, MD.

At the recent East Coast Mid Year meeting NP Jerry Sweeney presented PRPEC Duane Robertson with his 50 Year Continuous Membership Certificate. National President Sweeney (front row right) poses with (left to right) Shipmates Cordell Campbell, Herman Holman, PRPEC Duane (Robbie) Robertson and (back row left to right) PRPEC Bob Reynolds, Del Powell, Mintry (Bob) Muse, Bruce Davis and PRPEC Jerry Butler (former member of Br 67, now with 141).



BRANCH 117 ORLANDO, FLA.

NP Sweeney and members of Branch 117, Orlando, Florida during a trip by the NP on April 12, 2007.



BRANCH 181 ARLINGTON, VA.

Ed Dockery, Branch Vice President (and FRA HQ's Assistant Director, Legislative Programs) presented Ms. Deborah Claiborne with a certificate and FRA coin at Coast Guard Headquarters in Washington D.C. as she was awarded Civilian of the Quarter.



BRANCH 264 MERIDIAN, MO.

William Mott received his 30 year pin. He is pictured (left to right) with RPSC Leo Vance, Secretary "Flash" Gordon, President Joseph Lemoine and Treasurer James Moultrie.

BRANCH 298 GRAND RAPIDS, MICH.

Alyssa Krudy was the Branch 298 and the North Central Region Essay Contest twelfth grade first place best overall. She received the NCR Leonard "Swede" Nelson award for best essay and a plaque. Branch 298 presented a special framed certificate with a carved state of Michigan. She has been awarded savings bonds totaling over \$800 and the NCR Scholarship award of \$500.



BRANCH 108 RIVERSIDE, CALIF

10th grader Joshua Grenowich receives his first place Americanism Patriotism Essay Participation Certificate from Branch Secretary Frank Ruml. Joshua is a two-year member of the NJrOTC Unit at Corona High School, Corona, Calif.

To submit a photo for News From the Branches, please e-mail a photo as an attachment in jpeg format to FRA Today@fra.org or mail a high-quality photograph to *FRA Today*, 125 N. West Street, Alexandria, VA 22314. Please include a brief description of the photograph and include the names of those pictured. Laser prints and scanned copies of photographs cannot be accepted.

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American Association of Navy Hospital Corpsmen (AAoNHC)

12–16 September 2007, Quantico, VA. Contact Ron Wilson, #6 Wheel Wright Ct., Manchester, MO 65021, 636-394-6868, seadocret@aol.com.

Marine Corps Air Transport Association (MCATA)

26–30 September 2007, Laughlin, NV. Contact Ted Newman, 2601 Silverton Dr., Las Vegas, NV 89134, 702-242-5564, tedn66@cox.net.

NAS New York (Floyd Bennett Field)

25–28 October 2007, Virginia Beach, VA. Contact Chet Atkinson, P.O. Box 62066, Virginia Beach, VA 23466, 757-495-1338.

Navy Lithographers Association

10–14 October 2007, Colorado Springs, CO. Contact Julian Dracon, 6671 S. Race Cir. W., Centennial, CO 80121, 303-795-5350, jiffy@rmi.net.

Navy Nuclear Weapons Association

19–23 September 2007, Niagara Falls, NY. Contact Dave Cobb, 1536 Lozano Ave., Lady Lake, FL 32159, 352-753-3285.

NMCB 11 All Eras

11–14 September 2007, Gulfport/Biloxi, MS. Contact Bill O'Ferrall, 1102 Selman Ct., San Angelo, Texas, 76905, 325-655 0788, seabeeof@aol.com.

PBY — All Squadrons and Tenders

24–30 September 2007, Omaha, NE. Contact Al Skinner, 8391 Globe Run Rd., Petersburg, PA 16669-3644, 814-667-2380.

unHoly 4 USS Presidents Jackson, Adams, Hayes, USS Crescent City

25–29 July 2007, Mobile, AL. Contact Bill Vormbrock, 9 Dee Bee Lane, Griswold, CT 06351, 860-376-5557, billv16@sbcglobal.net.

USS Anthon (AS-24)

11–14 October 2007, Orlando, FL. Contact Reese Morgan, 2709 6th St., Cuyahoga Falls, OH 44221, 330-671-0098.

USS Castor (AKS-1)

5–8 April 2007, Nashville, TN. Contact Ray & Susan Kelley, 305 Occidental Dr. Holly Springs, NC 27540, 919-557-7071, raykelley@yahoo.com.

USS Chewaucan (AOG-50)

11–14 October 2007, Virginia Beach, VA. Contact Bill Becker, 1168-1 Village Creek Lane, Mount Pleasant, SC 29464, 843-849-6252.

USS Chilton (APA-38)

8–11 November 2007, Orlando, FL. Contact Bill Shields, Norwalk Gardens, 1220 Norwalk Rd., Unit B3/203, Philadelphia, PA 19115, 215-330-1802, jdubois42@msn.com.

USS Cole (DDG-67) Assoc.

13 October 2007, Norfolk, VA. Contact GMC(SW) Norm Larson (Ret.), 9046 1st View Street #G104, Norfolk, VA 23503-4547, 757-480-2409, DDG67Association@aol.com.

USS Fanshaw Bay (CVE-70)

Squadrons VC68/VOC2/VC66/VC10
20–24 September 2007, Washington, DC. Contact Donald Kurtze, 928-763-7258.

USS Grand Canyon (AD/AR-28)

23–27 August 2007, Peabody, MA. Contact Robert Dunn, 7654 Landau Lane, Indianapolis, IN 46227-2517, 317-881-8866, robertdunn4217@sbcglobal.net.

USS Guadalupe (AO-32)

4–7 October 2007, San Antonio, TX. Contact Frank Walker, 361-579-9797, EVDussor@aol.com.

USS Hassayampa (AO-145) (TAO-145)

20–22 September, 2007, Las Vegas, NV. Visit www.uss Hassayampa.com. Contact Norman Barron, 4987 Pond Dr., Harrah, OK 73045, 405-590-3717 or barronnp@aol.com.

USS Higbee (DD/DDR-806)

19–23 September 2007, Chicago (Deerfield), IL. Contact Gil Rodello, 541-747-1408, gilrodhigbee@comcast.net.

USS Hull Association (DD350 DD945)

14–16 October 2008, San Diego, CA. Contact Bob Modell, 818-701-0882, 2008reunion@usshullassociation.org.

USS Iowa (BB-61) (Veterans Association of the USS Iowa)

4–8 September 2007, Buffalo, NY. Contact: Paul Ogg, 7233 Stanford Ct. NW, Bremerton, WA 98311, 360-692-6032 kjoggpr@aol.com



USS John Rodgers (DD-574)

11–15 October 2007, Mobile, AL. Contact Jack Mindock, 326 W. 3rd St., Oglesby, IL 61348, 815-883-8443.

USS Julius A. Furer (DEG/FFG-6)

9–11 November 2007, Charleston, SC. Contact Bruce Strong, 405 Marion Quimby Dr., Stevensville, MD 21666, 410-643-9455, bwstrong3@verizon.net.

USS Keppler (DD-765/DDE-765)

11–14 October 2007, Myrtle Beach, SC. Contact Will Darrell, 631-586-4565.

USS Kimberly (DD-521)

15–18 October 2007, Myrtle Beach, SC. Contact George Scott, 8351 Sylvan Dr., West Melbourne, FL 32904, 321- 676-2307, ggs33@aol.com.

USS Kitty Hawk (CV/CVA-63) Veteran's Association

13–18 August 2007, Baltimore, MD. Contact Jim Melka, 917 W. State Rd. 11, Janesville, WI 53546, 608-752-6443, jfmelka@charter.net.

USS Kleinsmith (APD-134)

27–30 September 2007, Norfolk, VA. Contact Ron Black, 11 Riverpointe Road, Hastings on Hudson, NY 10706, 914-591-0260.

USS Mahan Association (DD-364/DLG-11/DDG-42/DDG-72)

31–4 November 2007, Charleston, SC. Contact Dick Hallowell, 9339 Praful Ct., Santee, CA 92071, 619-606-3173, webmaster@ussmahan.org.

USS Mars (AFS-1)

10–14 October 2007, San Diego, CA. Contact Everett Jones, 1947 Gotham St., Chula Vista, CA 91913, 619-421-3721, oneerj@pacbell.net.

USS Maury (AGS-16)

10–14 June 2007, Branson, MO.
Contact Terry Gann, 6221 Hallet,
Shawnee, KS 66216, 913-962-6084,
tgann@kcnet.com.

USS Mispillion (AO-105/TAO-105)

19–21 October 2007, San Diego, CA.
Contact Steve Dengler, 1211 Pueblo
Lane, Auburn, IL 62615, 217-438-
3529, stevedsr@verizon.net.

USS Murray (DDE576)

14–16 September 2007, Arlington, VA.
Contact Jim McMullan, 3737 Brisban
St., Harrisburg, PA 17111,
717-887-0115.

USS Ozbourn (DD-846)

12–16 September 2007, Seattle, WA.
Contact Warren Zschach,
1311 Ponderosa Dr., Petaluma, CA
94954-4393, 707-762-0469.

USS Solace (AH-5) WWII

10–12 October 2007, San Francisco,
CA. Contact Sandra Sanders, 1240
Clearview Dr., El Dorado Hills, CA
95762, 916-933-1288.

USS U.S. Grant (SSBN631)

17–25 October 2007, Jacksonville, FL.
Contact Mike Arterburn, 210 Marywood
Ave., Claremont, CA 91711, 800-350-
5445, SubmanSSBN631@aol.com.

USS Wilkes-Barre (CL-103)

11–14 October 2007, Norfolk, VA.
Contact Bob Didonno, 283 Spruce
Brook Rd., Berlin, CT 06037,
860-690-9215, Vntguitar@aol.com.

VAH-11

21–24 June 2007, Sanford, FL.
Contact John Cooke, 618 East Main St.,
Branford, CT 06405, 203-606-3160,
jicooke@reunionvah11.com.

Members can post reunions online at www.fra.org,
submit to reunions@fra.org or mail to: FRA Reunions,
125 N. West St., Alexandria, VA 22314.

Multitude of Panels Study Walter Reed Scandal

continued from page 9

Heroes, detailed in its final report. The panel was created by Presidential Executive Order on 6 March 2007 and focused on improvements that could be made within the authority of the individual departments or agencies, using existing resources with regard to health care, benefits, employment, education, housing and outreach activities. VA Secretary James Nicholson is Chairman of the Task Force, and will provide a progress report to the White House within 45 days. A copy of the full report is available at <http://www1.va.gov/taskforce/>

VDDB CHAIR CRITICIZES DISABILITY RATING SYSTEM

Testifying before a joint hearing of the Senate Armed Services and the Senate Veterans Affairs Committees, retired Lt. Gen. James Terry Scott, Chairman of the Veterans Disability Benefits Commission, explained problems in the DoD and VA disability ratings systems that include ratings that are easily manipulated to limit disability payments and create undue confusion in a claims system already strained to the limit. According to Defense Department data, the Army and the Marine Corps tend to award lower disability ratings than the Navy and the Air Force. Also, officers tend to receive higher disability ratings than enlisted personnel. Senators urged that the VA and DoD disability systems be merged to provide more consistent disability ratings. FRA supports adequate funding for DoD and VA health care resource sharing in delivering seamless, cost effective, quality services to personnel wounded while participating in Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom, other veterans, service members, reservists, and other beneficiaries.

REBUILDING THE TRUST

“Rebuilding the Trust” is the title of the just released final report by the Independent Review Group appointed

by Secretary of Defense Robert Gates to study rehabilitative care and admin processes at Walter Reed Army Medical Center and the National Naval Medical Center. The Independent Group was established following the disclosure of deficiencies at Walter Reed in stories published by the *Washington Post* last February. The panel is chaired by former Secretary of Veterans Affairs Togo West and former member of Congress and Secretary of the Army John O. Marsh, Jr. Much of the report addresses problems within the Army and two main shortcomings at Walter Reed which are continuum of care for wounded personnel plus leadership, policy and oversight. Noteworthy (and not surprising) is reference to the breakdown in health services and care management that occurs once the service member transitions from impatient to outpatient status. In addition, the Group referenced staffing shortages and inadequate training which impact the delivery of care at both facilities which is resulting in “compassion fatigue” among staff personnel.

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On & Off Capitol Hill is written by Joe Barnes, National Executive Secretary and John Davis, Director of Legislative Programs with input from Bob Washington, Health Care Advisor and Director of Membership Development, Chris Slawinski, National Veterans Service Officer and Ed Dockery, Assistant Director of Legislative Programs.

Cpl. Fagean

We served aboard the Yorktown together in 1942 for two years. We put on boxing exhibitions aboard the ship. Contact Mack Helmerich at 502-366-3388 or 200 Southwood Terrace, Louisville, KY 40214.

Shipmates from recruit company 199 May-June 1946 NTC, San Diego

Contact Robert W. Welch Sr., CW04 (Ret.) 619-995-7161.

Lt. Pamela Rudd, RDCS Chuck Termini, PNZ Stu Van Buren, YN2 John McDonald

Rudd's last known duty station Comeight HQ New Orleans 1970-71. Termini, Van Buren and McDonald stationed at USNRTC Whitestone, NY 1971-73, Contact YNC Dave Grudzinski (Ret.) 360-923-0755.

Senior Chief Eugene Elvis Smith

Stationed on the USS Enterprise CVA "65" from 1964-1968 NAS Miramar, California. Last known address Brunswick, MA. Contact Robert L. Smith AKZ, 214 Campground Rd., Urbana, OH 43078-9403.

William (Bill) Barker and wife Lee

Last known address was Long Beach, VA 1967-8. Contact BMC Jack B. Smith, 432-523-2191, Andrews, TX.

Shipmates who served aboard USS Essex CVA9 from January 1956 to June 1959 / Storekeepers from S-1 DIV

Contact Mr. Jose Delagarza Jr. Sk2 (Ret.) 526 Idylwood Lane, Laredo, TX 78045-2426.

HM2 James H. Yarnall

Last station USS Pocono age 16. Contact Gene Pasahow HMC USN (Ret.) 361-852-8416 or epasahow@stx.rr.com.

BM2 or BM1 Roger C. White USN (Ret.)

USS Stormes DD780 in Norfolk, VA, July 1955 to 1957. Birthday 26 February, from Peoria, Ill. Contact William A. Cash PC2 USNR (Ret.) 505 Helen St, Kannapolis, NC, 28083-3651 or 704-938-9549.

Shipmates from USS Essex, first Air Group Nine and AG-12 aboard the USS Randolph

Contact Richard Weston, 978-546-9753.

V. Gonzales SFP3 1957-1958, Thomas L. Tillery SFP3 1959-1960, Wallace G Yates SFM3 1959-1960

Contact H. Paul Adams USN, (Ret.) 200 Rivertrail Road, Hermann, MO 65041-1803, 573-252-4593 or abamsrib@ktis.net.

Dalevs Phillips RM2 and Michael Chuckray

Transferred with me from Navy 3N5 Hollandia, New Guinea, December 1944 for FFT to Col. Wendel Gertig's command behind Japanese lines in Mindanao, P.I. Contact Charles Robison 702 NW Martingale Rd., Prineville, OR 97754.

MS3 Fernando Reyes-Medina

Last known duty station was USS Cleveland (LPD-7), San Diego, 1991-92. Contact Joe Ploucha NCC (Ret.) at fixinit4u@yahoo.com or 215-803-4854.

Entourage from Detroit to Great Lakes to Trinidad via Portsmouth and San Juan aboard Canadian Navy ship "Prince Henry."

Contact Murdoch A. "Scotty" MacDonald, ADC USN (Ret.) 225 E Ernst St. #3, Oak Harbor, WA 98227-2543 or call 360-240-8161 or email murdokay@yahoo.com.

HMC Rex Shaw, USNR

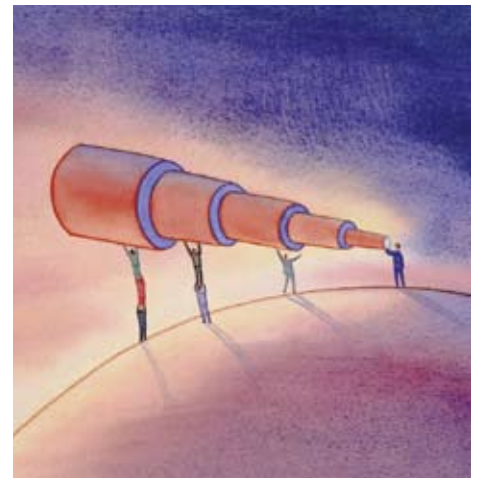
Last known duty station USNRTC at Bayview Park, Toledo, Ohio, in the late 1950's. Wm. R. Vanderslice, PO1, USN (Ret.) 315 Aquamarine Court, Cold Springs, NV 89506-6885.

RMC Fern Couture

Last know duty station - NAVCOMMSTA Morocco in 1968. Originally from New England. Contact RMC Bob Cutcher at bobcutcher63@yahoo.com.

Eugene Collis ABCM (Ret.)

Last contact at NAS OCEANA as CMC. I was port cat Capt. and he was stbd. cat Capt. on the USS HANCOCK. Our flight deck jerseys had our jobs on them so we were referred to as "Port" and "Stbd." Contact David McCord, 1916 Dahlia Dr. Nashville, TN 37210-2317 or dlmcordabecusnret@comcast.net.

**Shipmates from USS Grant County (LST)1174 (Commissioning crew)**

BM1 Albert L. Young, BM2 Harry J. Taylor, BM2 Clyde Thomas or any others on board upon commissioning 17 DEC 1957. Contact MCPO Jim Dawkins, USN (Ret.) at James. Dawkins@navy.mil or 912-573-9377.

Captain John A. Pickering and Lt. Cmdr. Bob Babbett

Served with Capt. Pickering on the USS Ranger CV-61 San Diego, CA. and with Lt. Cmdr. Babbett on the Pacific Board of inspection and survey in San Diego, CA. Contact CWO4 Arthur P. Calvert USN (Ret.) 619-980-5553.

Raymond David Baker

Hometown Ft. Worth, Texas. Last known duty station Norfolk, VA 1960-1961, then Bethesda, MD 1965-1968. Contact Felicia Bonner, 910-488-4434 or 7105 Hunter Point Dr., Fayetteville, NC 28311 or email feliciabonner@ncrr.com.

MMC Bill Hunt USN

Last known duty station was shore duty at USN&MC Reserve Center, Albuquerque, NM. 1966-1968. Wife Doris. Contact Ray A. Merrill USN (Ret.) 505-313-5245 or phoenixram@hotmail.com.

HM1 Al Greer

Served with him on USS Point Defiance LSD 31 during 1967-1968. Living in Florida now I think. Contact Jack Vannorsdel at vannorsdel@roadrunner.com or 928-376-0831.

Crew members of WWII Q-Ships, especially USS BIG HORN AO45

Contact John Di Filippo, USN (Ret.) 732-350-6329 or difilippojohn@verizon.net.

Raymond J. Greene

Last known duty station USS Block Island CVE-106 on 12/15/52. Contact YN3, now YNCS Ronald J. Sybers (Ret.) at 512 Canterbury Rd., Virginia Beach, VA 23452 or 757-486-1985.

Those who served on USS Dutchess (APA-98) during World War II.

Looking for reunions or shipmates who knew William H. Gagnon. My father passed away on April 16th of this year. Contact: Bob Gagnon, bobjan24@netzero.net.

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New Releases!**•F-14 Tomcat And Navy Fighter Weapons School "Top Gun," at NAS Miramar 1970s**

Overview of the early days of the Navy's Top Gun school at Miramar, CA. Documents the 5 weeks of training F-14 pilots received. Includes excellent scenes of F-14s in training combat missions against T-38 Talons and F-5E Tigers. Excellent footage of F-14s in action, as well as interviews with Tomcat pilots. Ground scenes were filmed at NAS Miramar & the air sequences were shot over the CA desert. 100 min.

•USS Essex (CV-9) 1940s-1960s

This narrated video documents the history of "the fightingest ship in the Navy" from the time she was commissioned through her role in the space program in the late 1960s. Film footage from the carrier's WWII history includes the Essex firing her AA guns at Japanese attackers during the Battle for Leyte Gulf! Also covers her Korean War battle history, night carrier operations, crash landings on Essex, the carrier's participation in Apollo 7, as well as day-to-day activities aboard the ship. 50 minutes.

Aircraft Carrier Action:

- USS Roosevelt (CVB-42) 1940s-50s, 45 min.
- USS Roosevelt (CVB-42) 1960s, 90 min
- USS Philippine Sea, (CV-47) 1940s-50s, 50 min.
- USS Wasp (CVA-18) 1944-1972, 60 min.
- USS Hancock (CV-19) 1940-50s, 60 min.
- USS Ranger (CVA-61) 1956-1983, 70 min.
- USS Randolph (CV-15) 1945-1967, 45 min.
- USS Valley Forge (CV-45) 1949-1966, 60 min.
- USS Shangri-La (CV-38) 1944-1968, 45 min.
- USS America (CVA-66) 1965-1968, 60 min.
- USS Midway (CVA-41) 1945-1970, 60 min.
- USS Constellation (CVA-64) 1964-1970, 45 min.
- USS Enterprise (CVAN-65) 1960-1970, 90 min.
- USS Coral Sea (CVA-43) 1965-1970, 50 min.
- USS Kitty Hawk (CV-63) 1961-1979, 75 min.
- USS Boxer (CV-21) 1950s, 70 min.
- USS Ticonderoga (CVA-14) in Vietnam, 30 min.
- USS Bon Homme Richard (CVA-31) 1950s-60s, 45 min.
- USS Franklin (CV-13) in WWII, 90 min.
- USS Oriskany (CV-34) in Vietnam, 40 min.
- USS Hornet (CV-8, CV-12) WWII, 60 min.
- USS JF Kennedy (CVA-67) 1970s-80s, 70 min.
- USS Independence (CVA-62) in Vietnam, 60 min.
- USS Forrestal (CV-59) 1950s-60s, 90 min.
- Carrier History: Langley To Enterprise and Hook Down, Wheels Down, 90 min.

- Carrier Pilot Training Pensacola 1970s, 60 min.
- Essex Class Carriers WWII ("Fighting Lady"), 60 min.
- Carrier Action Off Korea, 75 min.
- Escort Carrier 1940s-50s, 75 min.
- Light Carriers: Heavy Hitters 1940s & 1950s, 70 min.
- Carrier Crashes & Landings 1940s-1960s, 60 min.

Navy Aircraft:

- Trainers: T-28, T-34 & T-2J, 55 min.
- A-4 Skyhawk: Bomber, 55 min.
- A-6 Intruder/Prowler & A-7 & A-7E Corsair, 75 min
- F6F Hellcat Goes To War, 60 min.
- PBV Goes To War, 60 min.

**Amphibious Craft:**

- LCS(L)(3) & LSMR, 50 min.
- LSD and LCI(L), 45 min.
- Landing Vehicle Track (LVT), 30 min.
- LST Training In World War II, 80 min.
- LSTs In The Pacific: WWII, 65 min.
- LSTs In World War II: European Theater, 72 min.

Historic Boot Camp:

- Naval Training Center Great Lakes: 1940s, 45 min.
- Naval Training Center San Diego: 1940s, 50 min.
- Naval Training Center San Diego: 1950s, 75 min.
- N.T.C. San Diego: 1960s & Advanced Training, 60 min.
- N.T.C. San Diego: 1970s & Advanced Training, 50 min.

Ships Of The Fleet:

- Iowa Class Battleships, BB-61-64, 1940-50s, 120 min.
- Heavy Cruisers: 1930s-1960s, 90 min.
- Light Cruisers Go To War: 1930s-1950s, 70 min.
- Naval Gun On Iwo Jima & Okinawa, 40 min.
- Underway Replenishment 1940s-1960s, 100 min.
- Destroyer Escorts of the 1940s and 1950s, 50 min.
- Destroyers & Their Sailors, WWI-Vietnam, 100 min.
- Shipboard Living 1940s-50s: Destroyers, 65 min.
- Suicide Attack In The Pacific In WWII, 93 min.
- Navy Gun 1950s, Firing the Big Guns, 90 min.
- Fleet Ocean Tugboats 1960s, 40 min.
- Hospital Ship: USS Repose & Corpsmen, 50 min.
- Operation Highjump 1946 (Antarctic), 70 min.

More Navy Titles:

- Armed Guard & Merchant Marine WWII, 80 min.
- Seabee & Marine Corps Ops Pacific WWII, 70 min.
- Navy Frogmen, UDT, SEALs, 105 min.
- King Neptune Ceremony 1930s-70s, 60 min.
- Small Boat Warfare Vietnam, 90 min.
- Submarine Training 1960s, 60 min.
- Coast Guard In WWII, 45 min.
- Submarine Service 1940s-50s, 104 min.

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Connell, Clarence W., GYSGT	MAL	Helman, Cory, E5 USMCR	061
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Crangle, Richard H., CDR USN	MAL	Herbert, Robert W., LCDR USN	MAL
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Daniels, Arthur, MM1	075	Holloway, Daniel B., Jr., ATC	MAL
Decker, Richard E., DPC	MAL	Horvath, Alex L., HT1	MAL
Deiss, Harry, LI1	MAL	Hough, Edward M., CDR USN	MAL
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Mears, Henry R., BM1	290	Sherburne, Sayward, CPO USN	MAL
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Merry, Robert S., ADC	MAL	Smith, Carol B., HTC	089
Miller, Theodore C., PR1	MAL	Smith, George W., CPO USN	MAL
Miller, Urcel D., ACC	MAL	Smith, Ralph E., PNCS	041
Mitchell, Edwin E., E9 USN	MAL	Spangler, Stanley L., DKC	003
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		Travazos, John W., ADJC	MAL
Nichols, William T., EOC(SCW)	MAL	Tribett, Clifford D., AMHC	334
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		Ward, William M., Jr., AO1	MAL
Pacilio, Jerry A., CAPT USN	MAL	Warden, Kenneth, BT2	MAL
Parkinson, Louis H., PR2	MAL	White, Monroe T., GMT1/E6	049
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Richard, Joseph, PO2 USN	MAL	Yorden, Stephen P., CW03 USN	001
Riddlebarger, Dev P., CW04 USN	022	Young, Donald A., AKC	289
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Ruberg, Albert, HMCS	182		
		Zeigler, William J., AMHC	MAL
Schibbelhute, Edward, BMC	MAL		
Schlauch, Donald E., AEC	043		
Seawright, Walter T., AOC	234		

Names in blue indicate 50 year continuous members.
Names in bold indicate a Past National Officer.

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

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Dr. Steffanie Seaver PSY.D is an expert in the area of interpersonal relationships. Researcher, author and accomplished public speaker, she has lectured nationwide for over a decade. Dr. Seaver has also been involved with several publications covering relationship and lifestyle issues.

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*See Reader's Note for details.



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Jason M.
Manhattan Beach, CA

A: Well Jason,

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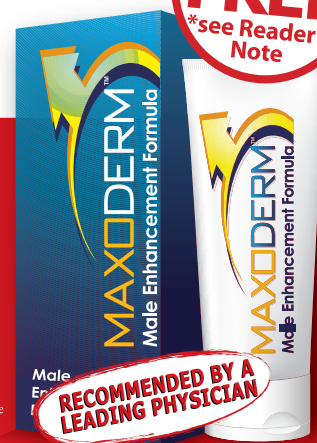
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application, maximizing absorption, resulting in a performance to be proud of each and every time. I'm a huge (and grateful) fan of Maxoderm and trust me, I *know* my husband is too.

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*see Reader's Note



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A Message from the East Coast Regional President

IT IS AGAIN AN honor to serve as East Coast Regional President. As I travel to the units, there are some familiar faces and many new ones, but all have one goal in mind and that would be what is good for the Fleet Reserve Association and the Ladies Auxiliary of the Fleet Reserve Association.

Traveling from unit to unit has provided a wealth of information about the East Coast Region. Each unit is busy working with their own agenda for the welfare of their members, families, communities and also the troops that are serving abroad. It is interesting to hear what the units have been sending to the troops such as basic articles like underwear and socks. They have requested personal items as well as goody bags and bandanas that can be worn over the face or around the neck for comfort and sand control. The members always feel that it is a privilege to be able to provide for the troops and do it in abundance. That is what makes us a great organization because of the diversity of the members and their different goals as units.

We have added one new unit to the East Coast Region, Unit 5 Norfolk. What an exciting time. We started the unit with 45 members which included lots of new members, transfers and reinstated members. Branch 5 has been wonderful to work with and such a help. Our Institution and Installation was great. We had many guests who attended from up and down the East Coast to celebrate with us.

I can not thank the ladies enough for the hospitality shown during unit visits. Their kindness and love has been overwhelming and I look forward to visiting as many units as possible this year.

In Loyalty, Protection and Service.



Photo by: Vince Cuthie

MARGARET FISHER
Regional President East Coast

Fran Hoadley is the editor of *LA FRA News* and the *FRA Today* Liaison.



Ladies at a Unit 293 meeting



The first meeting of Unit 5

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2. Submit applications to: FRA, 125 N. West Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22314-2754. One is available on page 17. Remember to include payment with application and your full name and membership number.

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