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FRA *today*



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ONE BY ONE

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18 MULTIPLYING THE FORCE — ONE BY ONE

When young men and women join the Navy, they often get unexpected duty assignments. While most don't envision boots-on-the-ground duty with Army operational units, thousands of Sailors are doing just that as Individual Augmentees.

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LOYALTY, PROTECTION AND SERVICE

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ON THE COVER

Thousands of Sailors, Marines and Guardians are participating in Overseas Contingency Operations as Individual Augmentees, or IAs. They are serving in Iraq, Kuwait, Bahrain and Afghanistan, the Horn of Africa, and other locations around the world.



Eileen Murphy

Individual Augmentees

AS I READ THIS month's feature article, *Multiplying the Force One by One*, I was struck by the potential correlation between the important role Individual Augmentees play in helping a unit complete its mission and the part FRA members have in helping FRA complete its mission. In both cases, without the support from an individual with specialized skills, the larger group is at a disadvantage and the desired outcome is at risk.

There are shipmates who are fantastic recruiters. Others are tremendous at serving in office at the branch, regional or national levels or serving on committees. Ideally, each member is taking time to consider what special talents or training he or she has that will benefit FRA and, furthermore, how to put those skills to good use.

Some recent examples:

- In early May, we received a donation from a shipmate who said he could no longer participate at the branch level, but could contribute financially to FRA to help further its mission.
- A branch member e-mailed me in April letting me know he had just taken over the branch's Website. He's very technologically talented, and when he heard the previous Webmaster could no longer perform the duties, he jumped at the chance to assist.
- A Member-at-Large wrote to find out if she could get extra copies of *FRA Today* to take to a local VA hospital for the patients to learn more about FRA. (The answer was "absolutely," by the way — and anyone who would like to distribute magazines as a recruiting tool can contact me at Eileen@fra.org or 1-800-372-1924 ext. 127).
- A young, active duty Sailor asked for some fact sheets on the Post 9/11 GI Bill to share with his shipmates, to make sure they understood the facts and that FRA was a force in the enactment of the benefit.

Please take a moment to consider what you can do to augment FRA's mission of proudly representing current and former enlisted Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard personnel on Capitol Hill. Each individual can play an incredibly important part — what will your role be?

FRA Today readers are invited to join Eileen Murphy for a free teleconference on June 9 at Noon, EDST to take a virtual tour of www.fra.org. Learn about editing your profile, requesting duplicate membership cards, subscribing to NewsBytes, requesting publications, tour the Member News page, Communities and more. To participate in the free tele-conference, please call 1-800-391-1709 and enter bridge number 444143 when prompted.

It is helpful, but not necessary to be online during the call. If you've never logged into your online account before, your username is your member number (found above your address on this magazine) and your password is your first initial of your first name, followed by your last name.

The call will be recorded and posted on the Member News page for reference at a later date.

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.

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VOLUME 89 NUMBER 6



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



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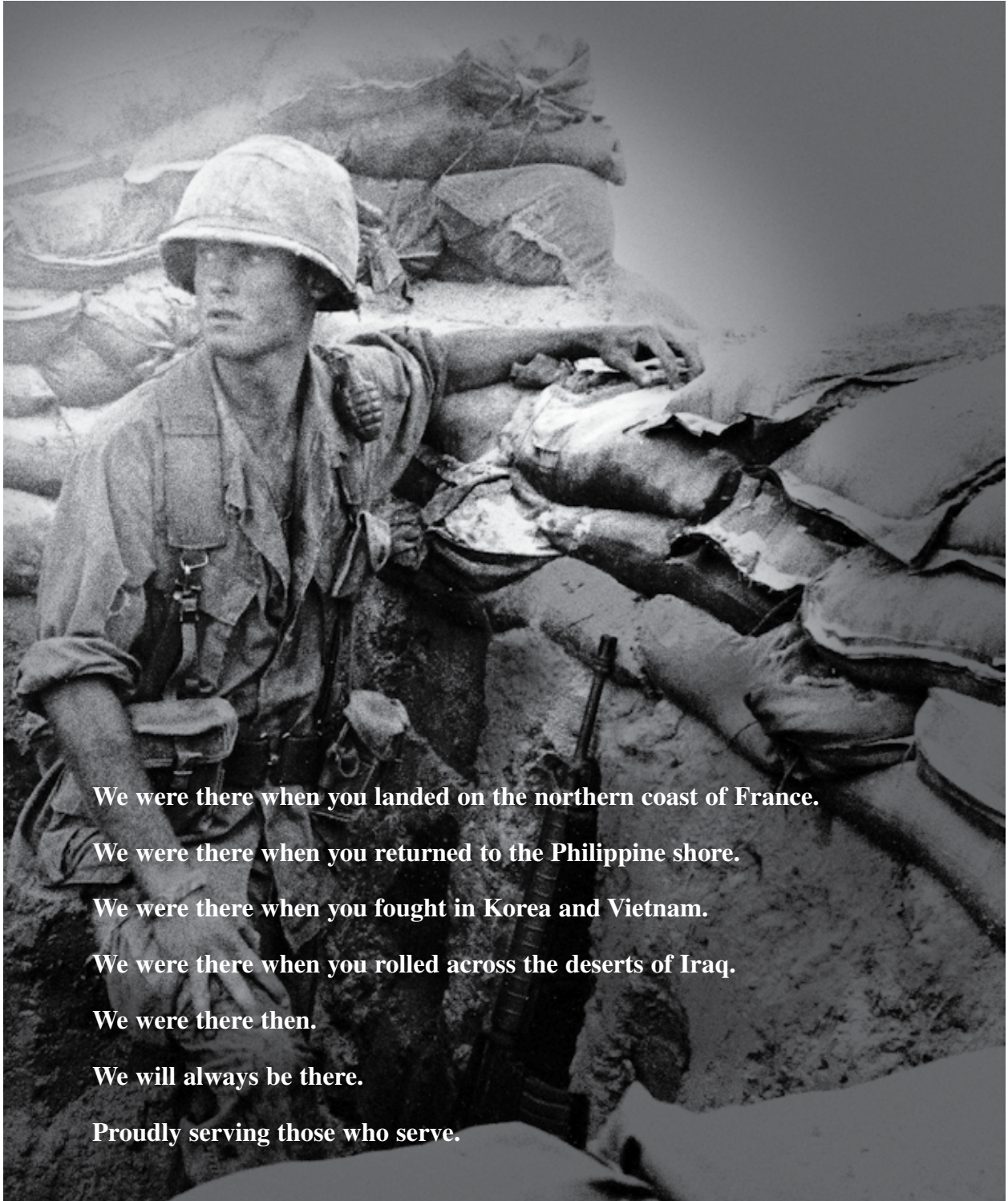
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Joe Barnes

The (People) Costs of Defending our Nation

DOD OFFICIALS, UNIFORMED LEADERS and others are again speaking out in opposition to a military pay increase for 2011 higher than the 1.4 percent requested by the Administration. There's also been significant and continuing attention to health care costs and imposing higher health care fees on retirees — something that's been in the benefit issues' queue since 2006.

All of this coincides with the House and Senate Armed Services subcommittees' mark-ups in anticipation of full committee debate and subsequent floor action on next year's defense authorization bills during the coming months.

Senate Personnel Subcommittee witnesses — including experts from the Government Accountability Office, Congressional Budget Office and Rand Corporation — voiced familiar opposition to authorizing additional higher-than-Employment-Cost-Index (ECI) pay raises, citing the value of health care benefits and tax advantages associated with housing and food allowances as justification to end efforts to close the 2.4-percent pay gap that remains between military and civilian pay scales.

The cost of benefits was also a hot topic during the Navy League's recent Sea-Air-Space symposium, when the CNO and Commandants of the Marine Corps and Coast Guard all spoke about rising health care costs and the challenges associated with funding personnel programs within their respective services. Tom Philpott consistently references military pay and other benefit issues in his *Military Update* columns and a story appeared on the front page of the Washington Post (May 8, 2010) that highlights the challenges of funding these important programs. The *Post* article cites Secretary of the Defense Robert Gates'

serious concern that military health care costs are “eating us alive” and references California Rep. Susan Davis' call for the Pentagon to do a better job of setting priorities. Davis, who chairs the House Personnel Subcommittee, asks — and answers — the critical question: “Are we going to fund weapons or are we going to fund people? The reality is, we need both.”

The health care fees challenge will continue, but FRA and its Military Coalition partners are up to the task.

Rep. Joe Wilson (S.C.), the panel's ranking member, told *Congressional Quarterly*, “The assertion that personnel costs are crowding out our ability to fund other defense priorities should not be solved by asking military personnel to take less, but [by] a Defense budget that provides both the personnel and other requirement to fully defend this nation.” FRA agrees and cites the relatively low level of wartime defense spending compared to past wartime periods.

Davis also referenced nine years of war and related stresses on service members and their families during the House Personnel Subcommittee's mark-up hearing and the panel then voted unanimously to increase military pay by 1.9 percent next year — half a percent higher than ECI. The outlook on the Senate side is unclear; however, the House action sends a strong message about wartime support for military personnel.

Although not addressed in the subcommittee's mark-up, Congress and policymakers are also exploring higher TRICARE and pharmacy fees for military retirees. A front-page story in *USA Today* (April 23, 2010) quotes Navy RADM Christine Hunter, deputy director of the TRICARE Management Activity, saying, “Higher out-of-pocket expenses are being explored by the Pentagon. We want to be grateful for people's service, absolutely. But the costs are up. What's fair?”

The health care fees challenge will continue, but FRA and its Military Coalition partners are up to the task. Noted economist Gail Wilensky, who co-chaired the Task Force on the Future of Military Health Care, calls the military retiree lobby “a very tough, aggressive group. The influence of the big health care lobbies in the civilian sector — the American Medical Association, hospital and nursing home associations — pales alongside that of military retirees.”

So what does all of this mean? It reflects the effectiveness of our grassroots advocacy work on behalf of all members of the Association and the power of shipmates' collective voice on Capitol Hill. It is also an acknowledgement that providing adequate pay and benefits is part of the cost of defending our nation and that commitments must be honored for those currently serving and those who've served in the past.

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

Home Depot Discounts

A few issues back you referenced that Home Depot gives a discount to military personnel. I tried and was informed by the clerk at Home Depot that the military only receive discounts on Veterans Day and maybe another special day. I sent an e-mail to Home Depot and received [a message stating that the discount was only in effect on certain holidays]. Can you please clarify?

Jim Mendoza

FRA Response: We appreciate you and others bringing this to our attention. Calls to Home Depot's corporate offices assured us the military discount was in effect year round, but that veterans and military personnel had to ask for it; it wouldn't be offered automatically. The letter you received from Home Depot, however, says the discount is offered only on the Fourth of July and Veterans' Day. We apologize for the confusion. Although Home Depot's policy seems inconsistent, we want to assure readers that Lowe's offers a military discount throughout the year.

Kudos for "Looking For"

FRA recently helped me to locate my first Navy chief. We had not seen or heard of each other for 58 years! I saw his name in "FRA Today" and, with Eileen Murphy's help, I found him. He is about as quick minded as he was when I worked for him, long ago.

Harvey Swinford

Thank you for printing the list of missing shipmates from the USS Greenwich Bay. I received a reply from someone who can help locate missing shipmates. You are so appreciated. Since my original e-mail to you, we have located three more shipmates; one is deceased and the other two were very happy to be contacted.

Lois Vanderlaan

FRA Response: We're thrilled we could be of assistance in your search.

Four Paws For Veterans

I have Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) from serving in Iraq in 2004. I am constantly on guard, depressed and anxious. I have been unemployed for six months, it is hard to leave [my home], I am on loads of medication and often feel that life is no longer meaningful or productive.

In February, I found Four Paws for Veterans. The companionship of a dog that is totally dedicated to me has been a life-changing event. After six weeks, I have finally had the privilege of taking a 10-month old poodle, Bobby Bee, home with me. The nightmares I'd been having finally stopped, my anxiety is greatly reduced and I have been exercising daily, which is very different from how my life has been for the past five years.

I cannot tell you how much a service dog has changed my life in just six weeks. I have tried group therapy, individual therapy, medication and hospitalization, but nothing has helped me as much as having a dog that helps me feel safe out in the world, keeps me company and loves me unconditionally.

At Four Paws for Veterans we are in desperate need of help. We want to help any veteran willing to go through our program, but we need help getting the word out to all veterans in our area. With a little support, we will be able to provide this service to many more vets and help them recover and regain their freedom from PTSD. Anything you could do to raise awareness of this great program will be a big help.

Matthew Schrick

FRA Response: It's our pleasure to let others know how well you're doing thanks to this program. For more information, visit www.fourpawsforvets.net.



Submissions: Send *Shipmate Forum* letters to: Editor, *FRA Today*, 125 N. West St. Alexandria, VA 22314. E-mail submissions may be sent to fratoday@fra.org. Please include "Shipmate Forum" in the subject line. FRA reserves the right to select and edit letters for publication. Letters published in *Shipmate Forum* reflect the opinions and views of FRA members. They do not necessarily reflect the official position of FRA as a whole. FRA is not responsible for the accuracy of letter content.

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John Davis

Pace of Legislative Process Will Increase

AS THIS ISSUE OF *FRA Today* goes to press, subcommittee mark-ups of the FY 2011 Defense Authorization have begun. The pace of the legislative process will increase as elections draw near and the FRA Legislative Team will be working to advance FRA's legislative agenda as Congress works on a 2010 war supplemental bill and 2011 authorization and spending bills. Key issues include:

- Preventing any retiree TRICARE fee increase
- Improvements in the concurrent receipt of military retired pay and VA disability compensation
- Authorizing service connection status related to veterans and retirees who served off the coast of Vietnam for exposure to Agent Orange herbicide
- 1.9 percent pay increase for active duty

- Repeal of SBP/DIC offset for survivors
- Retro-active early retirement for frequently deployed reservists

These and other issues are addressed in legislation and are listed on the FRA Action Center on www.fra.org where Shipmates and others can actively participate in promoting FRA's agenda. When constituents contact their elected officials on these and other issues it complements the work of the FRA legislative team and has a direct impact on FRA's advancing legislative agenda. Using the Action Center is easy. Pre-written letters are available on specific legislation and issues or a member can compose his or her own e-mail message. Shipmates are urged to visit the Action Center and use it on issues of importance to them.

FRA Testifies Before House Armed Services and MilCon/VA Subcommittees

FRA's National Executive Director (NED) Joe Barnes testified before the House Armed Services' Personnel Subcommittee on behalf of FRA and as co-chair of The Military Coalition (TMC). Barnes and other TMC representatives addressed top legislative priorities, as did witnesses from the Gold Star Wives and the Congressional Budget Office (CBO).

The testimony addressed a broad range of active, guard and Reserve, retiree, survivor and military family issues, including health care concerns, end strengths, stress on the force, military pay, PCS benefits, military recruiting, Reserve retirement, gray area retiree benefits, wounded warrior programs, Post-9/11 education benefits, concurrent receipt, the SBP/DIC offset, Former Spouse Protection Act (USFSPA) reform, family readiness, MWR programs and commissaries.

FRA's Director of Legislative Programs (DLP) John Davis also testified before the House Military Construction/Veterans Affairs (MilCon/VA) Appropriations Subcommittee. FRA asked panel members to ensure adequate care for wounded troops, their families and survivors, as well prompt adjudication of disability claims; access to quality health care, support and benefits; expanded coverage for "blue water" veterans; medical and prosthetic research and a "seamless transition" for veterans transitioning from DoD to the VA for care. Davis also expressed FRA's concern about the growing backlog of unresolved disability claims at the VA, problems associated with disbursement of Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits, and the reduction in the military construction budget. The statements are posted on www.fra.org.



Report: Independent Evaluation Needed for OEF/OIF Programs

The Institute of Medicine (IOM) recently released preliminary findings from a study on the readjustment needs of current and former service members deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan and their families. IOM recommends that the Departments of Defense and Veterans' Affairs organize an independent evaluation of their various transition programs to determine effectiveness and eliminate redundancy to help ensure the needs of service members, veterans and their families are met. It is important to learn how many mental health care providers are needed and where, what works best in treating traumatic brain injury (TBI) over the long term and whether giving service members time to decompress before returning home would be beneficial. VA also needs to institute a process of forecasting the amount and types of resources necessary to meet the needs of veterans and their families in the next 30 years or more when their demand for health care and disability compensation will likely peak.

The study sought to identify the most pressing needs of this population through an initial review of the limited scientific literature available, as well as media reports and testimony from veterans and their families at town-hall meetings. A follow-up report will present more detailed findings and recommendations based on an in-depth review of additional sources, including data anticipated from several ongoing studies.

Veterans' Improvements Signed Into Law

"The Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act," (S. 1963) has been signed into law by the President. Among its many provisions, the law creates a caregiver support program, improves health care services for rural and female veterans and expands the mental health services provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

It also creates a program to offer caregiver training, access to mental health counseling, and 24-hour respite care for a disabled veteran in his home, allowing caregivers temporary relief without having to leave the veteran at a medical facility. Veterans who served in Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) are eligible to select a caregiver to receive a financial stipend along with travel and lodging expenses associated with the veteran's care.

Key provisions also improve health care for rural veterans by authorizing stronger partnerships with community providers and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). These collaborations will allow VA to offer health care options to service members living far from VA medical facilities and also requires the VA to establish a grant program for veteran service organizations to provide transportation options to veterans living in highly rural areas. Additionally, the measure expands and improves VA services for the 1.8 million women veterans' currently receiving VA health care.

FY 2011 Budget Battles Begin

Leaders in both the House and Senate had hoped to pass their FY2011 Budget Resolutions before adjourning for the two-week Spring recess (March 29–April 9), but the debate on health care legislation delayed their mark-ups and floor votes. Although the statutory deadline for passing the Budget Resolution is April 15th, there is no penalty for being late. In the absence of a finalized Budget Resolution, appropriating committees can begin writing their spending bills on May 15th.

Once approved, the FY2011 Budget Resolution will be used as a guide for authorizing, appropriating, and taxing committees and designates congressional spending priorities for the upcoming fiscal year that starts October 1, 2010. The Administration requested a three-year freeze on non-defense discretionary spending, but both House Budget Committee Chairman John Spratt (S.C.) and Senate Budget Committee Chairman Kent Conrad (N.D.) have indicated they want to go further to reduce the federal deficit.

The FRA Legislative Team is closely monitoring the process with regard to its impact on the Association's legislative agenda.

FRA Presents its 2010 Pinnacle Award to Senator Webb

FRA presented its 2010 Pinnacle Award to Senator Jim Webb (Va.) during a Capitol Hill reception in his honor in conjunction with the National Board of Directors' Hill visits on April 22, 2010. Webb was recognized for his efforts to improve the quality of life for military personnel and his leadership in developing enhanced education benefits for veterans, military personnel and their families.

FRA annually presents its Pinnacle Award to a member of Congress who has championed legislative initiatives that advance the Association's agenda of preserving and enhancing pay and benefits for current and former members of the Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard. Webb was selected to receive FRA's highest honor in recognition of his leadership in enacting the Post-9/11 GI Bill, efforts to improve care for wounded warriors and work to clarify that TRICARE beneficiaries meet requirements for health care coverage mandated by the new health care reform legislation.

Shipmates Storm Capitol Hill

Members of FRA's National Board of Directors (NBOD) recently visited their respective senators and representatives in Washington, D.C. During the more than 30 Capitol Hill office visits, shipmates discussed priority legislative issues including fully funding TRICARE, adequate reimbursement for doctors serving TRICARE and Medicare patients, and the impact of national health care law on TRICARE and VA health care. The members also expressed support for expanding the concurrent receipt of military retired pay and VA disability compensation. Each member of Congress received point papers outlining FRA's positions on these important issues and the Association's full legislative agenda.



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RETIREE ISSUES

TRICARE Fee Clarification

FRA has been assured by the TRICARE Management Activity (TMA) that no TRICARE fee increase will be proposed this year. This assurance came in response to a story in April 23, 2010 *USA Today* in which the TMA leader, RADM Christine Hunter, USN was interviewed. This was one of several issues discussed by members of FRA's National Board of Directors during their recent Hill visits with their respective members of Congress and/or their staffs. FRA opposes excessive TRICARE fee increases and believes that retirees have earned health care and other benefits through many years of arduous military service to our nation. The Association also believes that the Defense Department should investigate and implement cost-saving measures as alternatives to shifting costs to TRICARE beneficiaries. Shipmates are encouraged to use the FRA Action center (www.fra.org) and urge support for H.R. 816, a measure that would require congressional approval to increase TRICARE premiums.

FRA Briefs Retiree Councils

FRA National Executive Director Joe Barnes and other members of the Military Coalition (TMC) provided a legislative update to members of the Secretary of the Navy Retiree Council, addressing the importance of fully funding TRICARE, concurrent receipt improvements, repeal of the existing Survivor Benefit Plan/Dependency Indemnity Compensation (SBP/DIC) offset, Agent Orange claims, reform of the Uniformed Services Former Spouses Protection Act (USFSPA) and other military retiree benefit issues. The Council is co-chaired by former Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps Gene Overstreet and VADM John Totushek, USN (Ret.) The 24-member SecNav Retiree Council was established in 1968 to consider issues of importance to retired military personnel and their families, and reports annually to the Secretary of the Navy with recommendations on the same.

John Davis, FRA's director of Legislative Programs, and representatives from the Military Officers of America Association (MOAA) also provided a legislative update on priority retiree issues to members of the National Coast Guard Retiree Council. In addition, FRA hosted the council for a reception at NHQ. The Coast Guard Retiree Council, which is co-chaired by former Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard and former FRA National Chaplain Vince Patton (Ret.) and RADM Fred L. Ames, USCG (Ret.), ensures that retirees' concerns are brought to the attention of USCG leadership and that members of the retired community are kept informed on key legislative initiatives.

Both Retiree Councils meet once yearly to develop a list of priorities and recommendations on important retiree issues.

New DFAS Website for Retirees

The Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) recently launched a new and improved Web site for retired military and annuitant customers (www.dfas.mil). The updated Web site offers easier navigation and more relevant content, which is organized into four topical sections:

- Retirement Pay
- Annuities
- Disability Benefits
- Planning for Retirement

There's also a "News and Events" section, which is a new feature that includes press releases, current events, newsletters and retiree seminars. You can find all of this information and more by clicking "Retired Pay" on the yellow bar at the top of the DFAS website at: <http://www.dfas.mil/>.

TRICARE Affirmation Enacted into Law

"The TRICARE Affirmation Act" (H.R. 4887) passed in both the House and Senate and became law in late April. The law clarifies the intent of the recently passed health care legislation by explicitly stating that the TRICARE health plan meets all standards for individual health insurance required by the new law. This reflects FRA's and other organizations' work to keep TRICARE and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care benefits separate and distinct from health care reform efforts.

Rep. Bob Filner (Calif.), also Chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee has issued a statement that the recently enacted health care reform legislation does not undermine or change the VA mandate to provide comprehensive health care to veterans. Enrolled veterans also meet the individual responsibility requirements under the bill to maintain quality health coverage.

New ID Cards Slow in Coming

FRA has received several queries from military retirees who have been frustrated when requesting new Department of Defense (DoD) ID cards that do not show the sponsor's Social Security Number (SSN). A September of 2009 DoD press release explained that retirees' could request new ID cards without SSNs as of January 1, 2010, but things are apparently not going as planned.

According to representatives at local ID card offices, only military family members are currently receiving the new cards and it unclear when they will be available to service members and retirees.

To find the nearest ID card center, visit the RAPIDS site. The RAPIDS site locator provides a directory of over 1,500 locations around the world where you can renew or replace your military ID card. The directory also includes phone numbers, and shipmates are encouraged to call first to see if/when the new cards are available.

Senior Enlisted Leaders Testify on Capitol Hill

Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (MCPON) Rick West, Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps (SMMC) Carlton Kent, and the top enlisted advisors from the Army and Air Force testified before the House Military Construction Veterans Affairs Appropriations Subcommittee (MilCon/VA) to discuss quality-of-life programs, recruiting and retention, Reserve force and Veteran Affairs issues. MCPON West noted the added stress on the force (including 11,000 Individual Augmentees in Iraq, Afghanistan and other overseas locations) and that the Navy is taking steps to support Sailors and their families. According to MCPON, the Post-9/11 GI Bill has helped with recruitment and retention and more than 18,000 active duty Sailors have transferred education benefits to a family member. MCPON also stressed the importance of affordable and high-quality child care for Navy families.

SMMC Kent stressed the importance of taking care of Marine Corps families, pointing out that nearly half (47 percent) of currently-serving Marines are married, and almost 70 percent of today's Marines are on their first enlistment. The Marine Corps recently hired 400 full-time civilian family readiness officers to ensure family concerns are addressed. The Marine Corps is currently providing 64 percent of child care needs and hopes to meet the 80-percent standard required by DoD within 18–24 months. Rep. Chet Edwards (Texas), who chairs the panel, thanked the senior enlisted leaders for their efforts to add more appropriation dollars for child development centers.

The Association provided its own testimony to the MilCon/VA Subcommittee earlier in the year and thanked the subcommittee for regularly seeking input from the senior enlisted community. (Note: The Coast Guard was not represented at this hearing because the service is part of the Department of Homeland Security, over which the subcommittee has no jurisdiction.)

Senate Panel Reviews Military Pay Raise

The Senate Armed Services Committee's Personnel Subcommittee recently heard testimony from the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), the Government Accountability Office (GAO) the Rand Corporation and others indicating that across-the-board pay increases are not necessarily the most effective way to keep the military fully staffed. There is continuing debate about the existence of a pay gap between military and civilian pay levels, and witnesses suggested that targeted special pay, incentive pay and bonus payments (in lieu of the annual across-the-board-pay increase) could provide substantial savings for the Pentagon budget.

Military pay increases were kept below private sector pay growth (Employment Cost Index or ECI) for most of the 1980s and 1990s, which resulted in a 13.5-percent basic pay gap between military and comparable non-military occupations in 1999 that compounded retention and recruitment problems. Congress responded to FRA's and The Military Coalition's advocacy on the matter by authorizing higher-than-ECI military pay raises every year since 1999 (except FY2007) and today the cumulative basic pay gap has been reduced to 2.4 percent. While some policymakers believe that increased housing allowances, tax breaks and other benefits have eliminated the gap altogether, FRA believes that a pay gap remains and has referenced the issue in congressional testimony and interaction with lawmakers and their staffs. FRA cites the unique demands associated with military service and advocates a FY2011 annual active duty pay increase of 1.9 percent, which is one-half percent (0.5 %) above the ECI and the Administration's budget request of 1.4 percent.

Shipmates are encouraged to use the FRA Action Center (www.fra.org) to express their support for H.R. 4427.

Allow Families of Fallen Heroes to Mourn in Peace



Rep. John Boccieri (Ohio) recently introduced a measure (H. Con. Res. 261) expressing the sense of Congress that the Supreme Court should uphold the law that allows the families and friends of fallen members of the Armed Forces to mourn their loved ones in peace and privacy. In the pending court case *Snyder v. Phelps*, war protesters are challenging the constitutionality of the law that prohibits protests within 300 feet from the entrance of any cemetery under control by the National Cemetery Administration and at Arlington National Cemetery from 60 minutes before and 60 minutes after the funeral service.

FRA strongly supported the "Respect for America's Fallen Heroes Act" and urges shipmates and others to use the FRA Action Center to contact their representatives to ask that this resolution be passed to send a strong signal to the Supreme Court not to overturn this important law.

ACTIVE DUTY ISSUES

Financial Regulation Bill Should Include Auto Dealers

FRA is particularly concerned about a possible amendment to The Restoring American Financial Stability Act that would exclude auto dealers and their lending practices from the financial reform bill. In conjunction with this, John Davis, FRA's director of Legislative Programs, met with Senate Banking Committee staff this week to discuss the draft legislation that would regulate lending.

In a recent letter to the Department of the Treasury's Assistant Secretary for Financial Institutions, Dr. Clifford Stanley, Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, references informal polling data that shows 72 percent of military attorneys and personal financial advisors counseled service members in the past six months on one or more unscrupulous practices associated with auto financing.

This is one of the most significant financial obligations for many enlisted service members and FRA believes it is important to address auto dealers' financing and sales in the reform bill to ensure greater protections for our service members and their families. Dishonest practices include bait-and-switch financing, falsification of loan documents, failure to pay-off liens and "packing loans." FRA will continue to monitor this measure as it advances on Capitol Hill to ensure that adequate protections are included for members of the military community.

Members are urged to use FRA Action Center (www.fra.org) to let their Senators know their concerns on this issue.

President Nominates DoD's Top Doc

President Obama nominated Army Reserve Brigadier General Jonathan Woodson, an associate professor of surgery and associate dean at Boston University School of Medicine, to serve as Assistant Secretary Defense (Health Affairs). Woodson was deployed to Iraq, Afghanistan, Kosovo, Saudi Arabia, and Central America. He is currently the deputy commander of the Army Reserve Medical Command and assistant surgeon general for reserve affairs, force structure and mobilization in the Office of the Army Surgeon General. If confirmed by the Senate, Woodson will be the principal adviser to the Secretary of Defense on health issues and direct the country's Military Health System.

DFAS Will Begin Recoupment of Separation Pay

The Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) will resume recouping military retirees' Voluntary Separation Incentive, Special Separation Benefit and other separation payments in August. These separation benefits were offered to active-duty service members to reduce manpower in certain career fields, primarily during the 1990s. Because federal law prohibits service members from receiving both separation and retirement payments for the same period of service, provisions of these programs required repayment of the separation pay if an individual joined the Ready Reserve or returned to active duty and earned status as a military retiree.

In response to retirees' concerns, DFAS officials temporarily stopped deducting these repayments from retirement pay on June 1, 2009, so that DoD could conduct a formal review of the recoupment process. Before the review, the federal statutes did not allow DFAS to provide alternative repayment plans, regardless of the financial hardships a retiree may be experiencing. The review is now complete and new policies help limit the financial strain on affected military retirees by reducing the maximum recoupment rate from 90 percent to 40 percent. DFAS also will consider more lenient repayment plans for retirees who are experiencing financial hardship.

Retirees impacted by recoupment will receive notification letters at least 90 days before recoupment begin again. Former spouses affected by this recoupment will also receive a notification letter before the recoupments resume.

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2009–2010 ESSAY CONTEST

What Memorial Day Means to Me



Overall Winner

Nocona Jackson
Br 251, South Central Region

To me, Memorial Day is a very important day. It is a day of remembrance of great soldiers who fought for our country. It is a day to recognize the men and women who believed in something bigger than themselves. Some people don't remember what Memorial Day is really about. Some people see it as just a day off work, or a picnic with the family. It is really so much more than that. It is a day that all soldiers who are heroes to this country should be honored, respected and remembered. To their credit, they responded. To our shame, we've forgotten.

Memorial Day to me is a day we should all repay our forefathers' sacrifices. Sacrifice is meaningless without remembrance. Often our nation takes for granted the freedoms all Americans enjoy. Let us remember these freedoms were bought and paid for by the lives of others who were brave enough, and had the heart to fight for our nation. They are owed more than we can ever repay so the least we can do is show our respect for those who fought for it.

On this day, let us not forget the men and women who paid the ultimate price for our freedom. By honoring the nation's war dead, we preserve their memory, service and sacrifice, for our nation. The survival of freedom in the country has depended again and again on the strength and success of the armed forces of the United states, both fighting and fallen.

The most important part of Memorial Day is to show our honor and respect for the men and women who have done much more for us, more than we can ever repay. We should recognize the soldiers who gave some, along with the soldiers who gave their all. It is a day to honor all those who are, have been, and will be fighting for our nation.

2009–2010 FRA American Essay Contest Winners

OVERALL WINNER

Nocona Jackson, Br 251 South Central Region

GRADE 7 WINNERS

- 1st Place:** Thomas Ritter, Br 251, South Central Region
- 2nd Place:** Rachel Koenig, Br 18, Northwest Region
- 3rd Place:** Gabriel Sanvictores, Br 289, Southwest Region

GRADE 8 WINNERS

- 1st Place:** Grant Hollander, Br 267, North Central Region
- 2nd Place:** Rachael Sucheich, Br 253, Northeast Region
- 3rd Place:** Rachel Kneebone, Br 212, East Coast Region

GRADE 9 WINNERS

- 1st Place:** Nocona Jackson, Br 251, South Central Region
- 2nd Place:** Taylor Coover, Br 8, West Coast Region
- 3rd Place:** Dima Jaber, Br 14, North Central Region

GRADE 10 WINNERS

- 1st Place:** Desiray Daniblle Immoos, Br/Unit 296, West Coast
- 2nd Place:** Allison Ross, Br 256, Southeast Region
- 3rd Place:** Spencer McLane Clark, Br 130, North Central Region

GRADE 11 WINNERS

- 1st Place:** Sarah Parmacek, Br 001, Northeast Region
- 2nd Place:** Allison Thibeault, Br 338, New England Region
- 3rd Place:** Allison Marie Turner, Br 293, East Coast Region

GRADE 12 WINNERS

- 1st Place:** Katie Lynn Noah, Br 251, South Central Region
- 2nd Place:** Jill C. Lundeen, Br 136, North Central Region
- 3rd Place:** Ramon Pellizzaro, Br 44, Southeast Region

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Welcome Branch 301

WE'RE GLAD TO WELCOME FRA's new Branch 301, Eastern North Carolina, in Greenville, N.C. Establishing a new branch is the best way to get prospective members to join the Association, and how Branch 301 was formed. RPEC Joe Palmer (Branch 259), PRPEC Jerry Butler (Branch 141), PRPEC Les Zavadil (Branch 201) and others worked very diligently to schedule meetings with potential members to discuss FRA's mission and purpose. The team posted ads in local papers inviting prospective members to attend awareness meetings on several occasions. It was through this process that 26 new, reinstated and transferred personnel became the charter members of Branch 301.

The ceremony to institute and install Branch 301 was held on May 3 and over 50 people attended. RPEC Joe Palmer kicked off the program by welcoming FRA and LA FRA current and past national officers, FRA branch and LA FRA unit members in the East Coast Region, Branch 301 members and their spouses, and other guests. NVP Jim Scarbro presided over the

branch's institution and PRPEC Jerry Butler conducted the installation. The new Branch 301 officers installed were Shipmates Don McWhorter, President; Robert A. Moore, Vice President; Jerry Leatherwood, Secretary; Mike Langley, Treasurer; and Samuel Hardy, Jr., Chaplain, along with others who will chair branch committees. Alfred A. Moore was presented a certificate as the branch organizer and Branch 301 shipmates were presented with Plank Owner certificates as charter members.

In order to start a new branch there are several administrative requirements to be considered. A minimum of 25 members is needed to start a branch. In addition, an application for charter must be approved by the National Board of Directors. Institution and installation ceremonies must be completed within three months after approval is granted.

There are several FRA references available, which contain guidelines to form new branches and establish administrative processes. They include FRA's Constitution and Bylaws, Recruiting and Administrative

Manuals. Together these documents provide information for new branches to form working committees, develop outreach activities, and plan events for branch members and their families to foster the spirit of camaraderie as well as togetherness.

There are many benefits of joining FRA. Together we provide one voice for enlisted personnel in the Sea Services and act as a major force for advocating improved pay, benefits, and quality of life programs for active duty, reserves, veterans and retirees. The larger our membership, the louder FRA's voice — your voice — is heard on Capitol Hill on issues that affect all members. Recruiting and retention are our priorities, and forming new branches will assist with this effort.

If you would like more information on forming a new FRA Branch in your community, please contact me at Penny@fra.org or 1-800-FRA-1924, ext. 123.

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



Penny Collins



Members of Branch 301 pose following initiation and installation ceremonies in Greenville, N.C. More than 50 FRA, LA FRA members, spouses and guests attended the event, including (seated l to r) RPEC Joe Palmer, NP Gary Blackburn, Branch President Don McWhorter, NVP Jim Scarbro and PRPEC Jerry Butler.



MULTIPLYING THE FORCE

ONE BY ONE

Since our nation began its [Global War on Terror](#), service members from all branches have answered the call in distant parts of the world, deploying for months at a time to support joint Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO). Many are deployed as part of their ship's crew or with their squadron or unit, but more than 11,000 Navy Sailors are currently deployed separately or in small groups as Individual Augmentees (IAs).

By Lauren Armstrong

ING



WHAT IS AN IA?

IAs are used to address personnel shortages or when an individual with specialized skills is needed for a particular assignment. The IA program isn't new, but since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the use of Navy IAs has ramped up considerably. As of January 2009, more than 45 percent of U.S. Navy forces serving on the ground in Iraq and Afghanistan were IAs.

The total Navy IA force is divided equally between active duty and Reserve personnel, most of whom are forward deployed in the 26-nation Central Command (CENTCOM) region, which includes Iraq, Kuwait, Bahrain and Afghanistan, as well as the Horn of Africa, which is part of African Command (AFRICOM). Navy IAs can be volunteers or can be tapped from the active

duty or Reserve components, and most are assigned to combat support or combat service support roles.

Active duty IAs fall into two categories. Individual Augmentees Manpower Management (IAMMMs) are taken from a parent command during a Sailor's tour of duty to fill a specific billet. IAMMMs make up about 60 percent of all active duty Navy IAs, some of whom are volunteers, some are not, depending on the rate needed. When a Sailor goes to an IAMMM billet, it is considered a temporary-assigned-duty (TAD) assignment. He/She is not replaced in the parent command and returns to his/

her original duty station when the IA tour is complete.

"Obviously when a Sailor is assigned as an IAMMM, it has an impact on those left behind, because the remaining crew has to pick up the workload that Sailor was doing," explains Tom Howard, Fleet Master Chief for U.S. Fleet Forces Command (USFF), the executive agent that handles Individual Augmentees. "The Navy tries very hard to never take an IAMMM if that gap would compromise the mission of the parent command."



Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (MCPON) Rick West holds an all hands call with enlisted Sailors at Commander, Navy Reserve Forces Command. West spoke with Sailors about issues affecting Sailors throughout the Navy Reserves.

The remaining 40 percent of active duty Navy IAs are Global War on Terror Support Assignment (GSA) IAs. All GSAs are volunteers, accepting an IA billet as a follow-on assignment at the end of a more traditional tour. GSAs are assigned through the normal detailing process and administratively assigned to the Expeditionary Combat Readiness Center (ECRC), which acts as the parent command while they are working in an IA mission location. When the IA tour is complete, the GSA will detach from the ECRC and transfer to his/her next permanent-change-of-station (PCS) assignment. GSA assignments are easier on Sailors and their families because they are more predictable and, according to Howard, they are also easier on the parent command because there's no resulting manpower gap. A GSA Sailor rotates out to an IA assignment just as he would if he were transferring to another ship or base, and the vacant billet is filled by another Sailor in-processing to the parent command.

An IA may also be a Reservist who is mobilized individually; not deployed as part of an established Reserve unit. Reservists can volunteer, they may be activated specifically for an IA assignment or they may be tapped while they are already on active duty. More than 55 percent of Reserve IAs are volunteers, but Force Master Chief of the Navy Reserve Ronney Wright is quick to point out this number may be misleading.

"This number doesn't take into account the thousands of Reservists who technically receive 'involuntary' mobilization orders, yet are ready and willing to accept such orders without argument," says Wright. "We are an all-volunteer force. I firmly believe our Reserve Component Sailors are proud of what they bring to the table and willingly carry out the orders given to them."

Regardless of their component, Navy IAs are getting the job done. "Our Sailors are doing what they need to do," says Howard. "It's inspiring."

Reserve and active duty Sailors undergo the same notification, preparation, administrative and training processes. Their

in-theater assignments are also the same, explains Wright. "We don't make a distinction between [active duty and Reserve] Sailors because they are assigned from different components," he says. "Both are assigned to Navy commands being called up to perform a Navy or joint mission. This falls in line with the Navy Total Force concept — one process for all."

TRAINING SAILORS TO BE SOLDIERS

Once selected for IA duty, Sailors must complete the Navy's official Expeditionary Screening Checklist as soon as possible. Once official orders are received, Sailors have 14 days to complete the checklist and any additional prerequisites outlined in his orders.

Satisfactory medical screenings, appropriate security clearances and a variety of other tasks must be complete and up-to-date before Sailors can be mobilized.

A Command IA Coordinator (CIAC, pronounced "kayak") is assigned to the Sailor before he deploys and helps ensure these mandatory requirements are met before he reports to a Navy Mobilization and Processing Site (NMPS), which is the

“ We are an all-volunteer force. I firmly believe our Reserve Component Sailors are proud of what they bring to the table and willingly carry out the orders given to them. ”

first stop on most IA tours. The CIAC will continue to be a point-of-contact for the Sailor and his/her family throughout the deployment.

Sailors usually spend about a week at NMPS, where they are issued all required mission-specific uniform items and completion of their prerequisites and qualifications are verified. Sailors who arrive at NMPS without fulfilling these requirements risk delays and possible disqualification from the assignment.

From NMPS, Sailors attend Navy Individual Augmentee Combat Training (CIACT), a program run by the Army to teach Sailors basic combat skills. Although some of the instruction isn't so different from their Navy training, special emphasis is placed on combat first aid, convoy operations, urban combat and anti-IED (improvised explosive device) operations. The courses, which last approximately three weeks, are taught by Army instructors and include a basic introduction to Army culture. Depending on the type of billet they are assigned to fill, some IAs report for more mission-specific training at one of 22 Army installations around the country before deploying to their final assignment destination.

“Since most IAs are serving within the Army infrastructure, they are trained at Army bases,” explains Howard. “Fort Jackson, S.C., for example, is one of the largest training facilities and trains nearly half of all Navy IAs. In almost all cases, a group of IAs will remain together throughout their training and deployment, which helps forge bonds among the IAs.”

Master Chief Pam Harlin, who served as a Navy IA in 2008 and 2009, believes that training as a unit helped facilitate mission success and improved morale. During her assignment to Area Support Group Kuwait,

Army CENTCOM, 3rd Army, she led a military police (MP) unit that provided camp security, manned entry control points, and otherwise ensured force protection.

“Our MP unit consisted of approximately 75 active duty and Reserve personnel from all rates. The majority of the group trained together at Ft. Lewis, Wash., which helped on a number of levels,” says Harlin, who believes the training experience paid off when the group arrived in Kuwait.

“We were all forced out of our creature comforts together and I think our different rates and backgrounds really helped level the playing field,” adds Harlin. “We had a few MAs [Masters at Arms] who were very generous in sharing their skill sets. They helped us get up to speed very quickly and everyone understood how important it was to work together and be able to rely on one another. We really came together as a unit and I think that speaks to the adaptability of our Sailors.”

There is a consistent demand for certain Navy ratings, such as Cargo Handling, Seabees, Maritime Expeditionary Security Groups and Airlift Support, but Sailors in every rating can be mobilized to fill other mission requirements. And while most Navy IAs are working directly or indirectly within their areas of expertise, sometimes they are assigned to duties outside their normal skill set. Harlin, for example, is rated as a yeoman and had virtually no police training prior to her IA assignment, but her responsibilities as a master chief remained constant.

“One of my primary responsibilities as master chief was meshing dozens of active duty and Reserve personnel, who didn't

know one another [before training], into a cohesive unit. Unit cohesion is important in all missions, but it's particularly so in the military police community,” says Harlin.

IN THEATER

While Navy IAs are deployed, they are under the tactical control of the command they are assigned to support. And although they might be supervised by and work with members of other services, they wear Navy uniforms and are proudly identifiable as Sailors. Administrative control is shared between the parent command or U.S. Fleet Forces Command and the supported command in theater. Performance evaluations, for example, are drafted by the Sailor's supported command supervisor and then forwarded to the Sailor's parent command for endorsement.



Information Systems Technician 3rd Class Tiffany L. Pitterman looks for desert combat boots at the Naval Mobilization Processing Site San Diego before deploying as an Individual Augmentee to Combined Joint Task Force Horn of Africa.



(Left) Capt. Ryan O'Connor, assistant logistics officer for 2nd Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment, leaps out of the Humvee Egress Assistance Trainer during the battalion's pre-deployment training. O'Connor was an Individual Ready Reservist who mobilized for a year to deploy to Iraq with the reserve infantry battalion. (Right) Reserve Marines from 2nd Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 8, prepare to board an aircraft at the Camp Korean Village.

Joint operations, by definition, include personnel from other U.S. services, but many CENTCOM assignments include working with service members from other nations.

"The team effort of the Army and other Coalition forces was really a way of life. Working with other services was all very matter-of-fact," says Harlin, who spent approximately 12 months in IA status, which included training, transport and 240 days "boots on the ground." And although working with the other services wasn't difficult, wearing two hats sometimes presented a challenge for Harlin.

"It was a challenge to learn how the Army operates and the service-specific lingo," she adds, "and then switch roles and work Navy issues and support my people. Support continues to improve for mobilized IAs and I got all the help I needed from the Army when a Sailor needed to send or receive an urgent message from home or needed emergency leave."

All Navy IAs go through a Warrior Transition Program (WTP) in Kuwait at the end of their IA assignment. The program is designed to help Sailors transition from a combat environment back to their parent

command or, for Reservists, back to civilian life. Wright believes WTP is an essential part of the reintegration process, but there's still room for improvement.

"It's clear from Navy Reserve accounts that WTP is critical to ensure [a smooth transition]. The services and support are valued by returning Reservists and their families," says Wright. "Coming out of theater, however, most IAs get a degree of information overload at a time when they are more focused on getting back to their families and jobs and maybe taking a brief period of R&R. The WTP provides vital information to returning IAs, so it is essential that we work with them to ensure we keep their focus so they leave with the best possible resources."

Harlin, who now works with Fleet Forces Command, is using her own experiences to help define the IA experience; improve the process of selecting, training, mobilizing and demobilizing IAs; and keep them and their families as informed as possible. The IA concept isn't new, explains Howard, but it's become a more integral part of Navy operations in recent years. "Doing something of this magnitude is a relatively new focus for us and the process is continually

evolving and improving," he says. "We get better every day at communicating with our Sailors and their families."

THE CHALLENGES OF IA DUTY

Like any military assignment, IA duty can be both challenging and rewarding. The traditional deployment model is altered when a Sailor deploys as an IA and, in addition to the usual stress related to military deployments, IAs and their families don't have the traditional support structure associated with a ship or unit deployment.

"Sailors have historically deployed as a unit. If they deploy on a ship, for example, there are hundreds of fellow Sailors who experience that deployment and its episodes, creating an esprit d'corps within the group," explains Howard. "When one or two individuals are taken out of a command to support a single specific mission and then brought back to the parent command, their shipmates don't have that same sense of shared experience or camaraderie."

"It's also a challenge keeping the family members informed. Because active duty IAs are often gone for a year, the family often moves away from the parent command

“The team effort of the Army and other Coalition forces was really a way of life. Working with other services was all very matter-of-fact.”

to be closer to their extended family,” adds Howard. “This makes it more difficult for the CIAC to reach out to them, but this process is also getting better all the time.”

Similarly, Reservists’ families are often geographically distant from the military support structure and there is often a lack of understanding within their civilian community. Because the Navy recognizes the integral part IA families play in Navy mission success, significant work is being done to ensure they are well informed and have access to resources to help them while they are separated from loved ones. In addition to the traditional resources, such as command ombudsmen, family readiness groups (FRGs) and Fleet and Family Support Centers (FFSCs), IA families work closely with their CIAC and can take advantage of online resources such as Military OneSource www.militaryonesource.com and a newly developed IA Web site at www.IA.navy.mil. The site contains a wealth of information, including

details of the IA mobilization process and practical information concerning finances, coping suggestions and other support services. There is also a Facebook community available for IA Sailors and families, which can be accessed at www.facebook.com/navylA.

Reservists also face the added challenge of leaving their civilian employment when they deploy, creating additional stress. “We work closely with the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) to increase understanding and support of employers,” explains Wright. “In the past year, we’ve seen a dramatic increase in employers making official statements of support for the Guard and Reserve. This understanding helps reduce the stress placed on Sailors and their family members.”

TANGIBLE AND INTANGIBLE REWARDS

Challenging, yes, but IA assignments also offer unique rewards, which explains why many Sailors volunteer for IA duty. In addition to learning new skills, IAs have

the opportunity to experience something different, says Howard, “something that’s not uniquely Navy.”

“I volunteered for several reasons,” explains Harlin, who has served as a Navy Reservist for approximately two-thirds of her 30-year Navy career, but had never been mobilized until her IA assignment. “The whole idea of the Reserves is to mobilize and augment. I felt I needed to do that before my career was over.”

The Navy offers a variety of incentives for IA duty, including family relocation (if the assignment is 365 days or more), two extra points on advancement exams and, for some, a level of choice for follow-on assignments.

“Following a GSA assignment,” explains Howard, “IAs are offered a choice of coast when they are being considered for their next duty assignment. Of course, a billet has to be available on that coast. IAMM’s don’t necessarily get that choice as they return back to their home command to complete their original assignment.”

Bringing More Marines to the Fight

The Marine Corps is also using IAs to provide trained and qualified Marines to fill individual billets. Both active duty and Reserve Marines serve in this capacity and, according to Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps Carlton Kent, they are critical to mission accomplishment.

“Our individual augmentees play an important role in our deployments,” explains Kent. “Using IAs helps us ensure our units go forward with the proper amount of manpower. If a unit is soon deploying and their manpower isn’t where it should be, we can pull Marines from anywhere throughout the Corps to fill those voids without taking them from another unit that could be preparing to deploy in the future.”

Marine IAs are deployed worldwide, but the majority are supporting Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. All Military Occupational Specialties (MOS) are eligible to serve as IAs, but military police, logistics, administration, intelligence and civil affairs ratings are tapped most frequently. IA selection is also based on availability, grade, professional qualifications and past deployments/dwell time.

“If a Marine has never deployed and can fill a billet for someone

who has deployed numerous times, that’s a great thing,” adds Kent. “[IAs] give some of our Marines with multiple deployments a break from the cycle.”

The demand for Marine IAs is largely dependent on the course the Secretary of Defense and Joint Chiefs of Staff determine for the service. With increasing pressure from DoD to increase tour lengths, the Commandant of the Marine Corps expects average IA boots-on-the-ground assignments to be 270 days, with some exceptions.

The challenges and rewards of a Marine IA assignment are similar to those experienced by Navy IAs, but many Marines view a combat tour a little differently.

“Every Marine joined the Corps knowing they would deploy to combat and the IA program assists in getting them there,” says Kent. “The Commandant has said he wants every Marine to get to the fight. By utilizing IA billets, we are able to deploy Marines from units, bases, or stations that typically wouldn’t be deployable. The value in this is not only giving another Marine a break, but it gives that Marine filling the IA billet the experience of deploying to a combat zone.”

These incentives are valuable to be sure, but there are intangible benefits, too, for individual Sailors and the Navy as a whole. According to Harlin, "IA tours offer a unique experience to Sailors and make our Navy force more diversified. We're fortunate to have these new and improved Sailors in our Navy."

In addition to the new skills she developed during her IA assignment, Harlin felt she also experienced a great deal of personal and professional growth, and learned some valuable lessons about herself along the way.

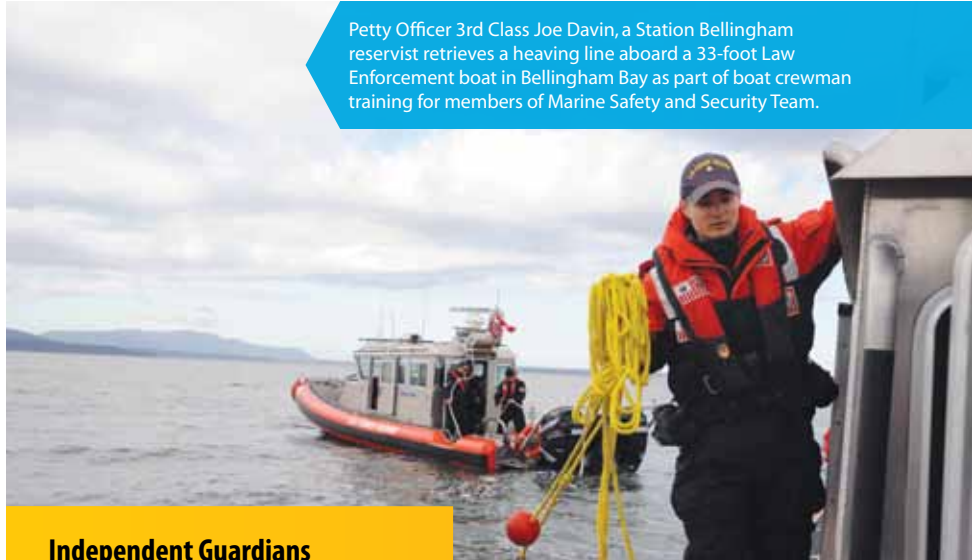
"My biggest take-away was that I found a new appreciation for being a Sailor and our service's adaptability. You come back from an experience like this as a changed person, which isn't necessarily a bad thing. I look at things differently now," she said. "I have a different acceptance level about almost everything now. Working with the third-country nationals who took care of many support functions in the camps, the Army, Brits and other Coalition forces helped me develop a broader scope of understanding about all people and I feel like I'm a better person for it. I have more patience and am less rigid in my thinking as a result of this tour. I hope returning IAs and their home units will embrace these positive changes."

Desert Sailor echoes Harlin's perspective in his October 13, 2009, post on the Fleet Forces Command blog (<http://usfleet-forces.blogspot.com>) [sic]: "I will always look back with fondness, pride and humility at the 13 months 'on loan' as a life altering high point of a 30-year career. Nothing can replace the lessons learned down range."

In his role as Fleet Master Chief for USFF, Howard speaks regularly with current and former IAs and has observed a noticeable trend. "I rarely talk with an IA who is currently deployed or has returned from an IA assignment and not hear them refer to their IA tour as one of the most rewarding events of their career."



Lauren Armstrong is the Contributing Editor and an LA FRA Member at Large. She can be reached at lauren@fra.org.



Petty Officer 3rd Class Joe Davin, a Station Bellingham reservist retrieves a heaving line aboard a 33-foot Law Enforcement boat in Bellingham Bay as part of boat crewman training for members of Marine Safety and Security Team.

Independent Guardians

The Coast Guard has been using individual augmentees (IA) since the service fully integrated Reserve personnel into its active duty structure in 1995. "Most Coast Guard Reservists are IAs," says Jeff Smith, Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard Reserve Force. "It's really become a way of life for our service."

One primary example of the Coast Guard's IA capability is its Redeployment Assistance Inspection Detachment (RAID) teams. These small groups of Guardians typically work with the Army inspecting war materials that are coming back to the U.S. from the combat theater. Active duty and Reserve component team members come from different parts of the Coast Guard, train together and then deploy to Central Command (CENTCOM) to perform this specialized type of customs work.

The Coast Guard also taps IAs to fill individual manpower gaps in its own active force. "If an active duty unit has a 'critical fill' billet and nobody to do the job, we'll look for an IA," explains Smith. "We'll look for an active duty volunteer first. If none are available, we'll offer the assignment to a qualified Reservist."

Both active duty and Reserve IAs experience assignments that might not have been available to them otherwise, such as overseas duty, and develop new skills needed for advancement. Reservists also reap an economic benefit from an IA assignment, earning retirement points and becoming eligible for active duty benefits, like health care coverage.

USCG IAs face the same challenges as those serving in the Navy and Marine Corps. Active duty IAs are often concerned about the impact on their parent unit and Reservists have similar concerns about leaving their civilian employer. Family separation and ensuring their loved ones are well informed during their absence is a concern for all who deploy, but deployments for IAs, particularly those from the Reserve Component, create additional family concerns. "Many of the family members left behind are not well-versed on the military structure and are often far from military infrastructure and support networks," says Smith. "We're working hard to continually improve the process." When we talk to people of influence — leaders and lawmakers — it's important they understand that IAs are a slightly different animal than other folks who deploy."

Pending personnel cuts may increase the Coast Guard's need for IAs in the future, but regardless of the numbers or the mission requirements, IAs are meeting the challenges. "I've visited our troops in some really remote areas," says Smith. "Despite the challenges, they are making significant contributions and bringing Coast Guard professionalism to the fight. That speaks volumes about our work force, our ability to crosswalk as needed and be successful. It's a force multiplier that we often don't fully appreciate."

* Since our interview with MCPOCGRF Smith, he has retired. FRA wishes him and his family well in their future endeavors.

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BRANCH 8 VALLEJO, CALIF.

National President Gary Blackburn (far right) and Branch President Lou Pangilinan (far left) recognized the long-standing membership of Shipmates (l to r) Victor Burt (50 years), Leroy Lindbloom (40 years) and Past Branch President Phil Brown (40 years).



BRANCH 298 GRAND RAPIDS, MICH.

Branch Vice President Jan Roy was recently nominated, elected and sworn in on February 27, 2010, as Commander of the United Veterans Council of Kent County. She will lead and direct efforts of over 40 U.S. and Canadian veterans' organizations and represent more than 55,000 Kent County veterans. Shipmate Roy was also a nominee for Kent County Veteran of the Year. Branch 298 is an active and voting member of the Council.



BRANCH 50 CHARLESTON, S.C.

NP Gary Blackburn, NVP James Scarbro, RPSE Gerald T. Brice and our Branch President and JrPNP Don Muckeck spoke at a recent branch meeting about FRA recruiting efforts and future plans.



BRANCH 22 PENSACOLA, FLA.

Branch 1st Vice President John Higgins (center) presents Shipmates Jimmy L. Martin (left) his 30-year membership pin and Branch President Bob Hall (right) his 40-year membership pin.



BRANCH 26 BAKERSFIELD, CALIF.

RVPSW Glenn Holz (left) presents Shipmate Wayne Gant with a certificate recognizing 40 years of continuous FRA membership while Branch Secretary Paul Jones (background) looks on.

**BRANCH 182 BETHESDA, MD.**

President Randy Phillipp (right) recognizes Shipmate Keith Kaider for his outstanding recruiting efforts.

**BRANCH 29 BREMERTON, WASH.**

Father-Daughter Shipmates Bill Hodges and Michelle Hodges are both members of Branch 29.

BRANCH 259 FAYETTEVILLE, N.C.

(l to r) RPEC Joe Palmer, Ellen Hall, Branch President Leonard Galloway and Branch Chaplain Ervin Cain salute Shipmate Jesse Hall (seated) on his 40 years of continuous FRA membership. Hall is 95 years young.

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

**BRANCH 210 MILTON, FLA.**

President Rob Hayes (center) presents awards to (l to r) 12th Grade First Place Winner Katharine Berrian and 9th Grade First Place Winner David Mole. Both are NJROTC Cadets at Milton High School.

**BRANCH 264 MERIDIAN, MISS.**

Branch President Roger Spangler (not shown) presented Americanism Essay Contest awards to (l to r) Sarah Burns (10th Grade Winner), Leah Burns (7th Grade Winner) and Amanda Hamlin (9th Grade Winner). Not pictured is Darius Moore (12th Grade Winner).



2nd Topographic Company USMC

October 15–October 17, 2010, Stafford, VA. Contact James F. Martin, 7 Crockett Drive, Chelmsford, MA 01824, 781-572-7924, Jimtrees@aol.com.

American Association of Navy Hospital Corpsmen (AAoNHC)

September 22–26, 2010, Great Lakes, IL. Contact Paul Denis 315-699-5274.

Aviation Logistics Marines

October 6–10, 2010, Havelock, NC. Contact Don Davis, 100 Catbird Ct. Havelock, NC 28532, 252-444-1777, GreyegL@ec.rr.com.

National Chief Petty Officers Association

October 20–24, 2010, Washington, DC. Contact Marjorie Hays, 361-991-2383, NCPOAHays@aol.com.

Naval Hospital Philadelphia

November 6, 2010, Essington, PA. Contact Terry & Paul Puskar, 610-337-1560, chiefpush@aol.com.

Navy Classifiers

September 22–26, 2010, New Orleans, LA. Contact Pncm Morey Tate, 63 Fendall Ave. Alexandria, VA 22304, 703-370-7270, mchief@comcast.net.

Seabees of CBMU-302 (1967 to 1994)

September 10–12, 2010, Seattle, WA. Contact Dave Schill, 609-410-5969, dwschill@comcast.net.

TD Association

October 11–14, 2010, Las Vegas, NV. Contact Vic Vydra, 619-368-2129, vsquard@cox.net.

US Navy GCA-ATC Association

September 29–October 03, 2010, San Antonio, TX. Contact Kent Fairchild, 796 S. Lemoore Ave., Lemoore, CA 93245, 559-924-4531, chiefkent@lemoorenet.com.

USS Anderson (DD-411)

September 10–12, 2010, Gatlinburg, TN. Contact Jessica Reeves, 478-538-3925.

USS Arnold J. Isbell (DD-869)/USS Rogers (DDR-876)

September 28–October 01, 2010, Seattle, WA. Contact Barry Dahlberg, 596 Grey St., Geneva, IL 60134, 708-203-1445, evba@usa.com.

USS Benjamin Stoddert (DDG-22)

October 13–17, 2010, San Diego, CA. Contact John Dishaw, 3035 Charlotte St Newbury Park, CA 91320, 805-480-4038, jbdishaw@verizon.net.

USS Calvert (APA-32)/USS Harry Lee (APA-10)

September 22–25, 2010, Denver, CO. Contact John L. Cole, 506 Red Wing Ave., Kenyon, MN 55946, 507-789-6344.

USS Canberra (CA-70/CAG-2, all hands, 1943–1970)

October 13–17, 2010, Florence, KY. Contact Ken Minick, P.O. Box 130, Belpre, OH 45714, 740-423-8976, crewservices@usscanberra.com.

USS Constellation (CVA/CV-64) Association

September 26–October 01, 2010, Colorado Springs, CO. Contact Jack Kilcrease, 201 La Jolla Dr, Live Oak, TX 78233, 210-590-9190 or 210-355-2099, jackkilcrease@yahoo.com.

USS Coolbaugh (DE-217)

August 15–20, 2010, Warwick, RI. Contact Harvey Weiss, 217 Rothell Rd., Toccoa, GA 30577, 706-886-2709.

USS Current (ARS-22)

September 9–12, 2010 Branson, MO (Held at the Cobblestone Inn, Branson, MO.) Contact Jerry Spickler at 317-996-2759.

USS Eaton (DD-510)

September 15–19, 2010, Providence, RI. Contact Fred Hinze, 80 Terrys Rd., Sayville, NY 11782, 631-220-9750, catsupman@optonline.net.

USS Edisto (AG-89/AGB-2/WAGB-284)

October 17–20, 2010, Warwick, RI. Contact Glenn Smith P.O. Box 747, Mims, FL 32754-0747, 321-269-5637, gdsmith@cfl.rr.com.

USS Elokomin (AO-55)/U.S. Navy

September 28–October 01, 2010, Boston, MA. Contact Robert F. O'sullivan, 25 Denny St., Dorchester, MA 02125, 617-288-3755, theeloman@verizon.net.

USS Fletcher (DD/DDE-445, DD-992)

October 3–6, 2010, Lake Harmony, PA. Contact Mel Gentry, 309-346-0641, Gentry44@grics.net.

**USS Fulton (AS-11)**

September 22–26, 2010, Newport, RI. Contact Richard Hartman, 401-846-6536, rhnkhs@verizon.net.

USS Kretchmer (DE/DER-329)

October 6–10, 2010, Austin, TX. Contact Jim Strong, 7248 Resinda Dr., Dayton, OH 45459, 937-436-1245.

USS McMorris (DE-1036)

October 14–17, 2010, Washington, DC. Contact Jules Galbreth, 972-219-9674.

USS Mullany (DD-528)

September 8–12, 2010, Branson, MO. Contact Jon Miller, 1911 Inglewood Dr., Washington, IL 61571, 309-444-2408, Webmaster@ussmullany.org.

USS Northampton (CA-26 & CLC/CC-1)

September 16–20, 2010, Oklahoma City, OK. Contact Bob O'malley, 760-536-9149, himselfbob@rr.com.

USS Ranger (CVA/CV-61)

September 22–25, 2010, San Antonio, TX. Contact George Meoli, 1740 Durham Rd Guiford, CT 06437, 203-453-4279, uss.ranger@yahoo.net.

USS Reeves (DLG-24/CG-24) Association

October 7–10, 2010, Chicago, IL. Contact Michael D. Robertson, 8701 Bradgate Road, Alexandria, VA 22308, 703-780-2269, michaelrobertson@cox.net.

USS Sea Cat (SS 399)

September 27–October 01, 2010, Nashville, TN. Contact Ed Hymer, 1114 Elm Ave Norwalk, Ia. 50211, 515-981-3006, ednmeg@mchsi.com.



Kelly Joe Shelton

He was on the USS Concord in Virginia in 1989 and may still be on active duty. He would be 40 or 41 years old. I would like to meet him so he can see his new grandbaby. Please contact Susan Davis, Rt. 1, Box 295, Buffalo, WV 25503.

RMC(SS) Lenon P. Richardson, USN (Ret.)

Last known address was A Mabini Street, Baybay, Leyte 6521, Philippines. Contact QMC Andrew Wright, USN (Ret.), 1008 106th Avenue, Oakland, CA 94603-3810, 510-632-1527 or 510-325-1176.

Shipmates who served with HTCS Robert Cragg

Served on USS Bennington (CVS-20) from December 1963 to August 1967, Long Beach, Calif., DCFA to DC 2. Looking for fellow shipmates or cruise books. Contact Robert Cragg, PO Box 204, Moncks Corner, SC 29461, 843-670-7562.

REUNIONS continued from page 28

USS Suwannee (CVE-27 & Attached Air Groups)

October 14–16, 2010, St. Louis, MO. Contact Norm Jennewein, 314-842-4940, normjennewein@sbcglobal.net.

USS Tolovana (AO-64)

August 4–8, 2010, Washington, DC. Contact Joseph Baer, 508-278-3724, josephabaer@yahoo.com.

USS Warrick (AKA-89)

September 16–18, 2010, Nashville, TN. Contact Loy Smith, 4349 Albury Ave., Lakewood, CA 90713, 562-425-0236.

Anyone stationed at the Naval Communications Transmitting Facility, Capis Tiarac, R.P. between 1974 and 1977

Contact RMC Ron DeYoung (Ret.), 5154 Maple Acres Lane, Hudsonville, MI 49426, 616-669-5092 or rndeyoung@aol.com.

LT. William R. Griffin, MC, OinC, RM1 Kenneth E. Thomas, ETN2 Robert C. Smith

All were stationed at Southpole Station, 1965–1966. Please contact ACC R.C. Pedigo at revdoc89@aol.com or 904-669-5829.

TMC/TMCS/TMCM George Hill and wife Kathy

They were stationed at SUB BASE Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, 1974–1977. Please contact BTCM Jim Lechner, USN (Ret.) at 715-672-5830 or jtlech@nelson-tel.net.

Birch Edgar Hunter

He was a WWI vet and we're trying to learn what he did in the service and/or what ships he may have been on. Please contact Joe Medlin at ellenandjoe@juno.com.

J.S. Kemp

Last known duty station was Attack Carrier Airwing Five aboard USS Midway (CVA-41/CVW-5) during Vietnam War, April 1972–Feb. 1973. Please contact Carlos D. Nicolas at 510-791-0329 or rosy.nicolas@hotmail.com.

VRC-40 RAWHIDES

July 16, 2010, Norfolk, VA. Contact Admin, 757-444-1142, vrc40turns50@gmail.com.

World War II Navy Aviation Repair and Overhaul Units

September 26–29, 2010, Corpus Christi, TX. Contact Margie George, 361-645-3882, msgeorge740@sbcglobal.net.

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.

Robert Dean Hurst

He was in the Navy Seabees MCB11 in 1966. Last known duty station was San Diego, Calif., in 1986, at which time he held the rank of chief petty officer. Please contact Tim Gibson at 509-895-9775.

RMCM Bobby West

I was stationed with him at the Naval & Marine Corp Reserve Training Center in Chattanooga, Tenn., in the late 1970s. The last I heard, he made his home somewhere in Florida. Please contact Charles Rodgers at scr0638@windstream.net or 423-903-8589.

Shipmates who served with BUCN Chuck Kaneer

Anyone remembering me with frostbitten hands in Dec 1972 with NMCB One on FEX in Rhode Island, please email me at ckaneer@msn.com.

AE1 Louis Hancock and wife Connie

He served in VP11 from 1956 to 1958 and had boxer dogs. Please contact George Harrison at bagpipe67@aol.com or 440-926-2769.

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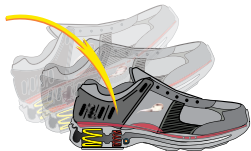
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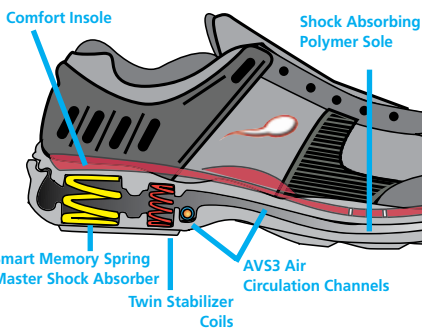
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Bautista, Eduardo Garcia, ADC	126
Beaver, George W., AMC	091
Biando, Lawrence C., SCPO USN	MAL
Blomstedt, Leonard N., GMGC	048
Brackett, John C., ADRC	089
Broderick, William C., QMCS	MAL
Burdick, William C., YNC	046
Carlson, Gerald E., ENC(SS)	MAL
Catalano, Walter T., BMC	001
Christian, Robert, BMC	MAL
Cleveland, Charles E., SCPO	MAL
Coldiron, Gilbert E., AMC	289
Copeland, James, CPO USN	MAL
Crane, William J., BMC	067
Cross, Robert W., AT1	MAL
Crull, Denton E., BTCS	289
Cruz, Cesar R., CPO USN	MAL
Dahlem, Charles D., SK1	048
Dale, Ronald H., MSC	057
Daly, William L., BM1	163
Dedeaux, John D., HMCS	MAL
Derrick, Marlin W., POCS USN	MAL
Disidoro, Joseph S., CPO USN	MAL
Domingo, Dominador G., HMC	084
Drake, Keland L., CDR USN	091
Dunlap, Alfred C., HTC	005
Dupuy, Ramon B., YNC	MAL
Endaya, Augusto Y., SKCS	084
Erdmann, James J., ADRC	303
Essery, Max E., GMC	175
Estep, Fred, LT USN	061
Ferrance, Edwin C., EMCM	042
Fine, Morton B., LCDR USN	MAL
Finstein, Stanford M., HMC	MAL
Forster, H. Ford, PNC	374
Frye, James L., RM1	MAL
Fuller, John A., AMSC	147
Gambill, Vernon M., HM2	MAL
Gange, Clara M., PFC	029
Garner, John W., MSGT	091
Gerhard, Don W., HMC	MAL
Gernhard, James D., ADC	091
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Hammons, John V., MMC	MAL
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Hanks, Billy M., ACCS	011
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Harris, Robert L., HMC	MAL
Harte, Leslie G., SKCS	MAL
Hartrup, Harold W., MMCS	366
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Herbold, Robert C., ENCS	024
Hickok, Alan K., SR USN	108
Higginson, John J., RADM USN	043
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Holland, Andrew S., CWO4 USN	091
Horn, George L., ATC	241
Horne, Hainyard L., Jr., CDR USN	181
Hower, Kenneth Y., UTC	120
Hubble, Leonard J., LCDR USN	038
Hurt, Frank C., Jr., MM1	245
Irvin, Abram, EMC(SS)	MAL
Jackson, Carl J., BM2	MAL
Johnson, David S., ETCM	040
Johnson, Floyd J., CPO USN	141
Johnson, John W., MM1	MAL
Johnson, Kenneth J., CSC	053
Johnson, Robert, RM1	MAL
Joiner, Francis A., LT USN	174
Jones, Jack J., YNC(SS)	MAL
Joseph, Milton C., CSC	009
Juego, Joaquin G., PO1 USN	074
Justus, Marler T., AMC	MAL
Kabel, Richard J., OS1	120
Keepes, Harold Fred, MS1	365
Kerr, Ray E., RDC	061
Kincheloe, William E., AOC	327
Landreth, Thomas C., HMC	077
Leo, Joseph, Jr., MSGT	004
MacLauchlin, Richard B., QM1	MAL
Magro, A. L., ENC	047
Maib, Jack, PNC	MAL
Mann, Russell J., BMCS	MAL
Markoski, Stanley, AQ	183
Mason, Glen H., TMC	316
Mateo, Catalino D., AKC	022
Mayer, Levi A., MMC	104
McDonough, Bernard, CPL	259
McGreehan, Howard J., Jr., FTCM	MAL
Misenhelter, Charles H., AVCM	086
Miszak, Daniel, MACM	MAL
Molnar, Michael S., QMC	338
Morris, Joseph H., LTJG USN	MAL
Myers, Larry E., STCM	117
Nameth, Albert, BMC	175
Nicholas, James V., AE1	MAL
Norman, Edward L., EM1	MAL
Olson, Donald A., QMCM	MAL
Orellana, Sadith E., BM1	MAL
Osborn, Charles A., GYSGT	MAL

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Paulson, Douglas H., AKCM	261
Pawlikowski, Alfred, CWO USN	MAL
Payne, Arlie R., DCCS	MAL
Penland, William D., MMC	089
Penner, Roger T., BMC	009
Percival, Eugene C., AECS	184
Prater, Thomas H., YN1	310
Prunty, Bernard, SKC	MAL
Purvis, Raymon S., RMCS	170
Ray, Clyde M., ICCS	179
Reardon, Morris G., RM1	386
Reeder, James W., FTCM(SS)	MAL
Reilly, John J., SKC	010
Ressler, John H., AZC	061
Richardson, Peter A., LT USN	130
Riviere, George E., GMCM	162
Rosenstine, Frank J., RMCS	269
Ross, Robert, MMC	MAL
Ryan, Harold J., Jr., HMCS	162
Sabatucci, Pete, SKC	011
Saly, Harold A., BMC	091
Schenker, William A., PO1 USN	091
Scott, William, USN RET	MAL
Settlemyer, Charles T., II, LCDR USN	234
Sherrill, Junior G., BM2	163
Singleton, William T., CEC	106
Smith, Glen R., AMC	011
Sousa, Manuel F., BM1	043
Stevens, Phillip D., MMCS	089
Stewart, Dewey L., MGYSGT	091
Streeter, Charles L., EMC	197
Strickland, James H., HMC	386
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Sutton, Mark C., SHC	099
Swager, Leon J., Jr., YNC(SS)	MAL
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Taylor, Marvin C., AOC	MAL
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Thomas, Ronald G., AD1	210
Thornsley, John, CDR USN	MAL
Trutna, Walter J., SGTMAJ	276
Tungala, Modesto L., CPO USN	MAL
Vaughn, Hugh, HTC	089
Wagner, Kenneth C., BM1	319
Wagner, William W., MRCM	253
Walker, Joseph T., HMC	182
Walter, Lawrence, NCCM	279
West, Don E., ENC	104
Westlake, David A., HMC	003
Wiggins, Junius L., POC USN	208
Williams, Henry C., ADCS	126
Williams, William B., MMCM	280
Wilson, John O., Sr., CPO USN	MAL
Wilson, Neal A., SC1	MAL
Wise, Daniel B., PNCS	MAL
Yates, Gerald D., AWC	018
Yetzke, Michael E., LT USN	MAL
Youraine, Jim J., AK1	292
Yuste, Jesus M., DKC	043

Names in **red** indicate 50 year continuous members.
 ⚡ indicate a Past National Officer.



Navy AD-3 dive bomber pulls out of dive after dropping a 2000 lb. bomb on Korean side of a bridge crossing the Yalu River at Sinuiju, into Manchuria. Note: anti-aircraft gun emplacement on both sides of the river. November 15, 1950. (Photo by U.S. Navy)



The Rockets Red Glare — U.S. Marines launch a 4.5 rocket barrage against the Chinese Communists in the Korean fighting. Ca. 1951. (Photo by U.S. Marine Corps)



A U.S. Marine tank follows a line of prisoners of war down a village street. September 26, 1950. (Photo by S. Sgt. John Babyak, Jr., U.S. Marine Corps)

Remembering the Forgotten War

THIS MONTH MARKS THE 60th anniversary of North Korea's unprovoked attack on South Korea. On June 25, 1950, North Korean troops crossed the 38th Parallel, launching what has come to be known as the Korean War. Although never officially declared a war by Congress, the United States and 15 other members of the United Nations (UN) came to South Korea's aid with combat support and another five nations offered medical support during the conflict. Of the nearly 58,000 lives sacrificed by supporting nations, more than 52,000 of them were Americans, and more than 103,000 U.S. troops were wounded in the fight for South Korea's freedom.

The first conflict in which troops fought under the United Nations' flag, the struggle is also considered to be the first significant armed conflict of the Cold War. The action pitted South Korea, the U.S. and her United Nations allies against the People's Republic of China and the Soviet Union, the two superpowers that supported North Korea in the fray.

After early victories by the North, General Douglas MacArthur led UN forces as they mounted an attack at Inchon on September 15, 1950, forcing North Korean troops back to the 38th Parallel and beyond to the Yalu



F4U's (Corsairs) returning from a combat mission over North Korea circle the USS Boxer as they wait for planes in the next strike to be launched from her flight deck — a helicopter hovers above the ship. September 4, 1951. (Photo by U.S. Navy)

River. When Chinese forces joined the fight in late October of that year, aided with supplies and financial backing from the Soviet Union, the fighting intensified and the UN troops were pushed south of the 38th Parallel.

The Chinese onslaught was brutal and, with UN troops widely disbursed throughout the country, it was difficult for units to support one another. In November of 1950, the Chinese surrounded UN troops that were positioned near the Chosin Reservoir in North Korea. Enduring extreme cold and the worst weather conditions in 50 years, UN troops were forced to begin a fighting retreat toward the coast. From November 26 to December 11, 1950, the Battle of Chosin Reservoir raged, with U.S. Marines and other UN forces defending their position against unbeatable odds. Despite being surrounded and significantly outnumbered, the UN troops inflicted crippling losses on the Chinese and the “Chosin Few,” as they came to be called, were able to break out of their surrounded position. It is considered a turning point in the conflict and, though not a victory in the traditional sense, the withdrawal from the Chosin Reservoir is revered in Marine Corps history.

By March of 1951, Seoul had been liberated, but the fighting continued in a virtual stalemate. Neither side gained much territory over the ensuing years and a cease-fire agreement was finally reached on June 27, 1953. The armistice restored the divide between North and South Korea at the 38th Parallel and a demilitarized zone was established. This 2.5-mile wide buffer is patrolled by troops representing both nations.

Tensions still exist between the two nations. North Korea withdrew from the armistice on May 27, 2009, test-firing two short-range missiles and threatening to attack South Korea if it took part in U.S. efforts to check vessels suspected of carrying weapons of mass destruction. South Korea fears its northern neighbor’s nuclear capability and has voiced concerns about suspected efforts to sink one of her warships and alleged plots to assassinate South Korea leaders.

Although sometimes referred to as “The Forgotten War,” FRA salutes veterans of the Korean Conflict. The sacrifices they made in the name of democracy will never be forgotten.

Share your thoughts on the Korean Conflict at www.fra.org/history.



Invasion of Ichon, Korea. Four LST's unload men and equipment on beach. Three of the LST's shown are LST-611, LST-745, and LST-715. September 15, 1950. (Photo by C.K. Rose, U.S. Navy)



U.S. Marines wounded at Kari San Mountain are evacuated via helicopter and flown to hospital in near areas for treatment. Navy Corpsmen prepare three wounded Marines for evacuation. May 23, 1951. (Photo by N.H. McMasters, U.S. Navy)



Astonished Marines of the 5th and 7th Regiments, who hurled back a surprise onslaught by three Chinese communist divisions, hear that they are to withdraw! December 1950. (Photo by Sgt. Frank C. Kerr, U.S. Marine Corps)

Choose Life Grow Young with HGH

From the landmark book *Grow Young with HGH* comes the most powerful, over-the-counter health supplement in the history of man. Human growth hormone was first discovered in 1920 and has long been thought by the medical community to be necessary only to stimulate the body to full adult size and therefore unnecessary past the age of 20. Recent studies, however, have overturned this notion completely, discovering instead that the natural decline of Human Growth Hormone (HGH), from ages 21 to 61 (the average age at which there is only a trace left in the body) and is the main reason why the the body ages and fails to regenerate itself to its 25 year-old biological age.

Like a picked flower cut from the source, we gradually wilt physically and mentally and become vulnerable to a host of degenerative diseases, that we simply weren't susceptible to in our early adult years.

Modern medical science now regards aging as a disease that is treatable and preventable and that "aging", the disease, is actually a compilation of various diseases and pathologies, from everything, like a rise in blood glucose and pressure to diabetes, skin wrinkling and so on. All of these aging symptoms can be stopped and rolled back by maintaining Growth Hormone levels in

the blood at the same levels HGH existed in the blood when we were 25 years old.

There is a receptor site in almost every cell in the human body for HGH, so its regenerative and healing effects are very comprehensive.

Growth Hormone first synthesized in 1985 under the Reagan Orphan drug act, to treat dwarfism, was quickly recognized to stop aging in its tracks and reverse it to a remarkable degree. Since then, only the lucky and the rich have had access to it at the cost of \$10,000 US per year.

The next big breakthrough was to come in 1997 when a group of doctors and scientists, developed an all-natural source product which would cause your own natural HGH to be released again and do all the remarkable things it did for you in your 20's. Now available to every adult for about the price of a coffee and donut a day.



GHR now available in America, just in time for the aging Baby Boomers and everyone else from age 30 to 90 who doesn't want to age rapidly but would rather stay young, beautiful and healthy all of the time.

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GHR is a natural releaser, has no known side effects, unlike the synthetic version and has no known drug interactions. Progressive doctors admit that this is the direction medicine is seeking to go, to get the body to heal itself instead of employing drugs. GHR is truly a revolutionary paradigm shift in medicine and, like any modern leap frog advance, many others will be left in the dust holding their limited, or useless drugs and remedies.

It is now thought that HGH is so comprehensive in its healing and regenerative powers that it is today, where the computer industry was twenty years ago, that it will displace so many prescription and non-prescription drugs and health remedies that it is staggering to think of.

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Message from the South Central Regional President

IN THE SOUTH CENTRAL Region we have a husband and wife team. Leo Vance is Regional President South Central and is my spouse, as he visits with the branches; I visit with the members of the units. It is heartbreaking to see units turning in their charter because of declining membership.

What a privilege to attend Lone Star Unit 11's Christmas Party. These members really have it going. It was really great that the members of Unit 96 Dallas, Texas were there to merge with Unit 11. I am sure they will work well together.

The five units I have visited so far (Lone Star Unit 11, Slidell Unit 222, New Orleans Unit 92, Corpus Christi Unit 94, Alamo City Unit 203) all are doing wonderful things for their communities. Some are small units but they do what they can, as the saying goes, "we might be small but we are mighty." Wheelchair lap robes are made for nursing homes, Easter eggs are dyed, hidden and baskets made for a homeless shelter. One unit helps an unwed mother facility and church in their area. Other units donate books and magazines to their local VA hospitals.

Our trip to Arkansas, Ozark Unit 227 was an adventure. Once there we found the meeting had been canceled due to snow. We had to walk a quarter of a mile for food and it was not the best. The hotel staff was snowed in and the restaurant was closed due to remodeling. Onward and upward more units to visit, may the weather be kind to us; after all, spring is here.

Our prayers are with Nita De Lesdernier's family. She was a wonderful person, a great National President and will be greatly missed as all of our members who have passed from this life to the next.

Saturday April 24th, the LA FRA held their annual Pilgrimage. What an awe inspiring experience. Upon arrival at the cemetery when you look out the bus window you see all the graves and head stones lined up for as long as the eye can see, makes the heart ache. We gathered at the Mast of the Maine where National President Cindy Rodham-Tuck placed a wreath. We then proceeded to the Tomb of the Unknowns where we watched the changing of the guard; this is done with much reverence and dedication. A second wreath was placed here by the National President. There were many WWII veterans visiting when we were there which heightened the emotions. If you get a chance to see or participate in the Pilgrimage, it will touch you for the rest of your life. I will carry these emotions with me always.

I look forward to the next leg of my journey. Have a blessed day and keep safe.



STONEY VANCE
South Central Regional President

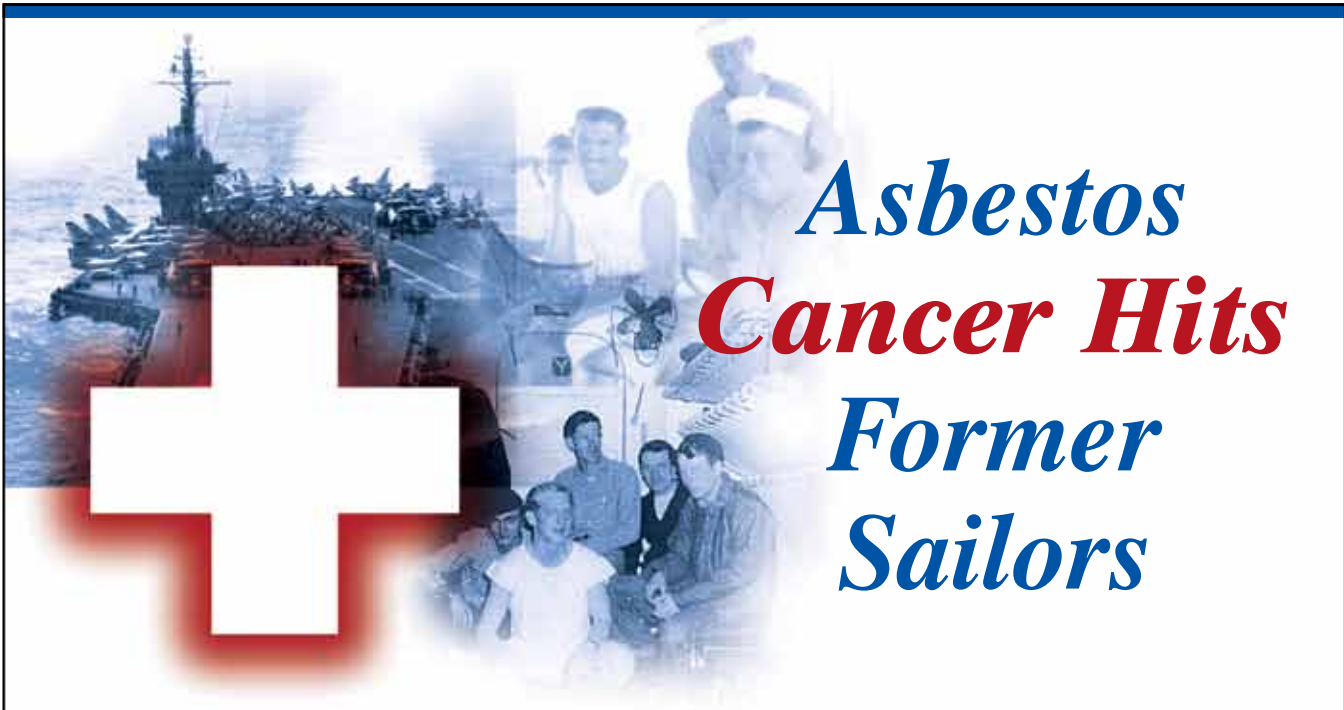
Fran Hoadley is the editor of *LA FRA News* and the *FRA Today* Liaison.



Pilgrimage April 24, 2010

Wreath presentation by LA FRA NP Cindy Rodham Tuck at the Mast of the Maine. Pictures by FRA PRPEC Paul Gunther





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