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FRA *today*

The magazine of the Fleet Reserve Association

JUNE 2021

THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY: PLAYING THE ODDS

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Cover: Crewmen of the *USS SAN JUAN* (CL-54) at general quarters while the ship was at sea in 1942. View looks aft from the after superstructure. Note the flash-protection clothing worn by the men, 1.1-inch quadruple anti-aircraft machine gun mounted in the left center, 5-inch/38 caliber guns beyond and the depth charges on K-gun throwers by the main deck's edge. Above: Admiral Chester W. Nimitz inspects Midway Atoll after the victorious Battle of Midway in June 1942. He also presented awards to Marine Corps and Navy personnel, June 1942. Photos courtesy of the Naval History and Heritage Command.

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The Battle of Midway: Playing the Odds

Fit for the task of commanding the American Pacific Fleet, Adm. Chester W. Nimitz understood the stark and unsettling differences between his Japanese enemy's military capabilities and those of his own forces.

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The Bedford Boys

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LOYALTY, PROTECTION AND SERVICE

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

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FRAtoday Magazine

The monthly membership publication of the Fleet Reserve Association

Publisher Fleet Reserve Association

National Executive Director Christopher J. Slawinski

Editor-in-Chief William D. Stevenson

Managing Editor Elise M. Howard

Contributing Writer Ann Norvell Gray

Design and Art Direction FRA Staff

Advertising Sales: GLM Communications, 212-929-1300

Sales@glmcommunications.com

FRAtoday (ISSN 1935-7192) is published monthly by the FRA, 125 N. West St., Alexandria, VA, 22314-2754. A member's subscription is covered by the member's annual dues. Periodicals postage paid at Alexandria, Virginia, and additional offices. Publication of nonperiodicals advertising in FRAtoday does not constitute an endorsement by the FRA or its representatives. **Postmaster: Send address changes to Member Services, FRA, 125 N. West St., Alexandria, VA 22314-2754.** FRAtoday is published in the interests of all current and former enlisted personnel of the U.S. Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard. Eligible nonmembers are entitled to subscription rates of \$45. Established Nov. 1, 1923. Title registered with the U.S. Patent Office.

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Volume 100 Number 6



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June Is a Special Month

This month has several days that have significant meaning to sea services veterans and active-duty service members.

The anniversary of D-Day, on June 6, is always revered within the military as well as those who enjoy the freedom that was earned by the Allied forces' sweat and sacrifice on that day.

Flag day, which is recognized this year on June 14, is the day many Americans celebrate by displaying the Red, White and Blue in front of homes and businesses. The day commemorates the adoption of the Stars and Stripes as the official flag of the United States.

Then there is the birthday of the Navy Hospital Corps, which was established on June 17, 1898. When the Navy Hospital Corps was founded, three ratings were created for the unit: hospital steward, hospital apprentice first class and hospital apprentice. This rating system was updated in 1916 to the now-outdated "hospital mate" ranks and again in 1948 to the modern corpsmen nomenclature we know today.

We also recognize the day North Korea invaded South Korea on June 25, 1950. The conflict began when approximately 75,000 soldiers from the Korean People's Army poured across the 38th parallel, the boundary between the Soviet-backed Democratic

People's Republic of Korea to the north and the pro-Western Republic of Korea to the south.

There is also a very special day, June 20, recognized as Father's Day. There has never been much to compare with what being a father means to me. I always thought that once my children reached a certain age, my role as a father would

be done. That is just not the case! Once a parent, always a parent. I must admit, though, experiencing my children at this stage of their lives is even more amazing than watching their first steps, or when they learned to feed themselves or dress themselves.

Watching my children experience their burgeoning careers now that they have succeeded with their educations, sharing their relationships with their girlfriends and spouses, and also being a grandparent have all been so satisfying. I can hardly wait for the next phase in all their lives. I would like to wish all of you a very happy Father's Day — there is nothing that compares. **FRA**

In Loyalty, Protection and Service,

William D. Stevenson, Editor-in-Chief



My family from the mid-1990s.

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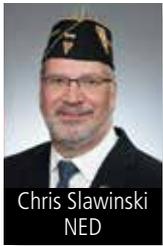
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The Northeast/New England Regional Meeting



Chris Slawinski
NED

I had the pleasure of attending the Northeast/New England Regional Midyear Meeting this past April in Peabody, Massachusetts. The nearly 10-hour drive went a bit more easily, despite the constant rain, because I was driving with National Vice President James Campbell. There were about 30 people who attended the meeting, and several Shipmates joined the event by Zoom. The great news is that a new LA FRA unit was instituted and is aligned with Branch 31, Junior Past National President Donna Jansky's branch.

One of the events that was set up by Jansky was a private tour of the *USS CONSTITUTION*, which is stationed in the Boston Harbor in Charlestown, Massachusetts. The commanding officer, Cmdr. John Benda, and Senior Chief Angie Collins hosted this event for the LA FRA and FRA leadership and members. It was one of the first tours since the COVID-19 lockdown began, and our members enjoyed learning about a sailor's life aboard the *CONSTITUTION*. The ship is the oldest active commissioned vessel of the U.S. Navy and is used for ceremonies and training sailors how to handle rigging, winds and all the nuances of sailing without the aid of an engine. In fact, some of the sailors assigned to the *CONSTITUTION* get their training on the *USCGC EAGLE* before they come aboard and perform turnaround cruises.

Following the tour of "Old Ironsides," NP Mick Fulton, NVP Jim Campbell, RP NE/NEng. Abe Zino, RVP NE/NEng. Neil Ross and I had a chance to sit down and meet with Benda. I hope to see the FRA working with the commander in the near future to help provide his sailors with information about our advocacy and other topics that young, active-duty service members really need to know about, such as housing allowances, health care legislation, pay equality and our ability to help them navigate the



(L to R) Cmdr. John Benda, FRA NP Mick Fulton, LA FRA NP Jackie Scarbro and NVP Jim Campbell. Photo by Abe Zino.



USS CONSTITUTION is tugged out to Fort Independence on Castle Island during Chief Petty Officer Heritage Week. During the CPO selectees' time aboard "Old Ironsides," sailors teach them a variety of time-honored maritime traditions. Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Casey Scoular.

VA. I think that while they are still young, they need to know someone is there to help them.

The association is here to help all Shipmates, and if we can lend them a hand during their time in the service, they are more likely to be drawn to the FRA as a member in the future. Having someone to share their experiences with and receive advice from might be the thing they want and need. **FRA**

In Loyalty, Protection and Service,

Chris Slawinski

Chris is the national executive director of the Fleet Reserve Association and may be reached at: NED@FRA.org.

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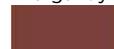


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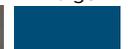
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The Distant Early Warning Radar Line

Because of my Navy service, I read with interest your article on The Distant Early Warning Radar Line.

I was raised in Richland, Washington where my father was employed in the Manhattan Project.

You mentioned that from 1949 to 1954, LASHUP included early warning patrols conducted by Navy radar picket destroyer escorts and PB-1W and PO-1W airborne early warning aircraft. At some point following 1954, these aircraft were superseded by the Lockheed Warning Star WV-2 early warning aircraft that flew a barrier from Midway Island up to when they had the Aleutian Islands on radar at which time they would turn and return to Midway. These flights were approximately 14 hours long, initially flying at 7,000 feet until enough fuel was burned to allow them to climb to 10,000 feet where they remained for the duration of the flight.

I was a radar operator flying the barrier from 1960 through 1962. My squadron was AEWBARRONPAC (Airborne Early Warning Barrier Squadron Pacific) based at Barbers Point Naval Air Station on Oahu. We deployed from Barbers Point to Midway 18 days out of every month and while on Midway flew eight 14-hour barrier flights. There were four aircraft on the barrier 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. A standard crew consisted of 2 CIC (Combat Information Center) officers, 10 radar operators, 2 radiomen, 2 navigators, 2 pilots, 2 flight engineers and a cook. Each crew member worked 7 hours on and 7 hours off. Bunks were available fore and aft for sleeping. The cook prepared two meals in-flight and depending on the time of flight, were breakfast and lunch, lunch and dinner or dinner and breakfast. And, looked forward to by all the crew members, the cook would prepare hamburgers for everyone just after takeoff.

The Navigators depended on celestial navigation

and a Navy Destroyer Escort that was stationed towards the top of the barrier. Life on the Destroyer Escort had to be a little boring so to break the monotony the crew members played chess with members of each aircraft once radio contact was established.

A blip on our radar screen was called a bogey. When a bogey appeared, the radar operator would calculate the course and speed and give it to the radio operator. Using Morse Code, the radio operator would transmit the information to Barbers Point where another radio operator would again, using Morse Code, transmit the information to NORAD (North American Aerospace Defense Command) in Colorado Springs, Colorado. We would continue updating the information every five minutes until eventually we would receive a message from NORAD via Barbers Point that the bogey was, for example, identified as JAL Flight 390 and to cease reporting.

Once a year when at the top of the barrier, we would divert to Adak, Alaska, so the pilots could practice touch and goes for familiarity in case we ever had an emergency that would require diverting to Adak. Following Adak, we flew to Kodiak where the pilots would go through the same familiarity routine. Following Kodiak, we would fly to Elmendorf Air Force Base in Anchorage for a 24-hour R&R. In 1962 while at one of the Elmendorf base clubs, we ran into a group of engineers who were working on the Dew Line construction. They were in the testing phase and told us they could pick up our aircraft when we departed Midway.

There was another airborne early warning barrier squadron based on The Azores for east coast protection.

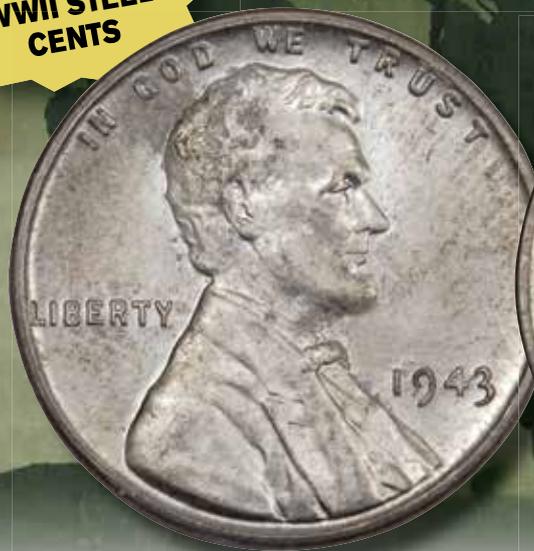
P.S. Past Branch 219 President John Herber was a flight engineer on my AEWBARRONPAC flight crew.

Best regards,

Rich Baker, ACW2, Branch 219

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Advertising

I understand that publications for the fraternal organizations depend on advertising. To that end I would challenge the FRA staff to closely review advertiser's submissions. To the point, on the back cover of the April 2021 *FRAtoday*, there is an advertisement by "Stauer" stating "Sacred Stone of the Southwest is on the Brink of Extinction," and immediately to the right, of that statement the Arizona Turquoise is being advertised for "only \$99." Why would you accept that wording in your publication? If in fact the turquoise is endangered, does it make sense to advertise get yours now before it is gone, or if turquoise isn't endangered, making the sales a non-issue, then the advertiser is essentially lying to your subscribers.

*David Engels, ASCS, USN (Ret.)
Organizational Change and Strategic Planning Specialist*

FRAtoday: *I do think it is a fair point that "on the brink of extinction" is a gross exaggeration intended to make turquoise seem more valuable (It's pretty cheap as far as gemstones go; the International Gem Society calls it "a real gem bargain." The same Smithsonian Magazine article the advertisement quotes also states "Despite the lack of mines in North America, turquoise is readily available on the market, with more than 75 percent coming out of China.") and we could ask Stauer to change their wording, but all readers should take advertiser's material with a grain of salt and investigate their claims.*

Feeding the Navy

I found the Feeding the Navy article in the April 2021 *FRAtoday* interesting and informative. Good writing. I question two of the pictures selected to represent the efforts of those who do the food preparation day in and day out for the fleet.

Beginning with a leading full page showing a LCDR and LT handling stores in what looks like gym clothes. And how nice the LT had gloves on to protect his hands. This scene would not have happened in the Navy I knew. Perhaps this is the modern Navy (my time was 1960-80). I have to ask if this is currently typical, and if so, who is doing the top-level supervision while the mid-grade officers focus on working their place in line.

Showing Weapons and Engineering CPOs doing food prep was a curious choice. I recall on some infrequent occasions a gang or a division (including the

Chief's Quarters on a submarine) would prepare a single simple meal. These were exceptions.

Not shown were large stores working parties of mostly junior sailors loading groceries during a pier side or unrep stores load. Not shown were the rated cooks who perform the modern miracles every day that keep the crew well fed.

These two pictures do not correspond to the text or reality.

*Tom Clark FTTCM (SS) USN (Ret.)
Summerville, S.C., Branch 269*

The DEW Line

I read your article about the DEW Line with much interest. This was a great undertaking to establish a shield to protect us and Canada from Russia. However, I think you need to tell the other half of the story. Whenever there is a story written about Midway Island it is usually about the Battle of Midway during WWII. I think you should write about the importance of Midway and AEWBARRONPAC. (Airborne Early Warning Barrier Squadron Pacific). This was a squadron of radar equipped aircraft that flew a barrier between Midway Island and Kodiak Alaska to hook into the DEW Line and provide a line for warning across the Pacific.

We were in a situation, that in order to provide an effective line of surveillance, we were required to put an aircraft in the air every four hours, 24 hours a day. This was quite an undertaking by the Navy, but the call was answered and the continual task was performed from 1957 until the later 60's. Personally, I was in the squadron from January 1958 until September 1965. I think this would be an article that would be of interest to your readers. I always look forward to your magazine every month and it is always great reading.

Gregory Womeldorff, AECS, USN (Ret.)

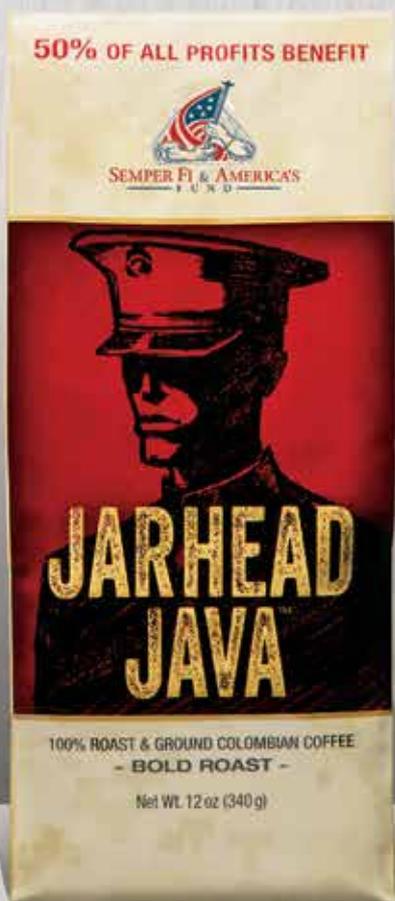
FRAtoday: *Shipmate, thank you for making the time to send a letter. I will do some research on the topic of Midway and AEWBARRONPAC. It sounds like a great topic and we are always looking for input from our readership. If you happen to come up with any other ideas, send me an email: WilliamsS@FRA.org. **FRA***

Letters published in Shipmate Forum reflect the opinions and views of individual FRA members. They do not reflect the position of the FRA. The FRA is not responsible for the accuracy of letter content.

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

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ON & OFF *capitol hill*

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



John Davis
Director, Legislative Programs

Contacting Your Legislators is the Cornerstone of Democracy!

Throughout this session of Congress, FRA members have used the FRA Action Center to contact their legislators on issues of importance to them. This user-friendly website generated almost 77,000 messages to Capitol Hill in the last session of Congress (2019-2020). Shipmates will need to be aware of important legislative activity as the FY2022 defense authorization and other key bills impacting member benefits move through the legislative process.

Many of these legislative proposals could have a significant impact on Shipmates' pocketbooks.

Members are also urged to subscribe to NewsBytes, our weekly electronic legislative newsletter, and check out the FRA Action Center located on the website (www.fra.org) for important issues. Letting your elected officials know you are watching their votes on critical legislation is the cornerstone of a functioning democracy.

Concurrent Receipt Legislation Introduced

FRA-supported legislation to expand concurrent receipt has recently been introduced by Sen. Jon Tester (Mont.). The bill would extend eligibility for Concurrent Retirement and Disability Pay, or CRDP, to retirees with 20 or more years of service and a disability rating of less than 50%. This bill (S.1147) is similar to the Retired Pay Restoration Act (H.R.303), which was introduced by Rep. Gus Bilirakis (Fla.) in January. Rep. Sanford Bishop Jr. (Ga.) has also introduced the Disabled Veterans Tax Termination Act (H.R.333), which is comprehensive concurrent receipt legislation that would also allow the simultaneous receipt of

disability and retirement pay for retirees whose disability ratings are below 50% and Chapter 61 retirees with less than 20 years of service.

In February, Bilirakis and Tester introduced the FRA-supported Major Richard Star Act (H.R.1282, S.344), which would expand concurrent receipt to include Combat Related Special Compensation beneficiaries who are medically retired with less than 20 years of service.

Members are strongly urged to go to the FRA Action Center at www.fra.org to contact their legislators and ask them to support these bills.

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President Releases FY2022 Budget Outline

President Joe Biden released the FY2022 budget outline to Congress. The outline does not have the detail of a full budget request but does give Congress a general understanding of Biden's budget priorities. The president plans to ask for \$715 billion in discretionary spending for the Department of Defense for the next fiscal year, which would be a 1.6% increase over the current fiscal year. Sen. James Inhofe (Okla.), ranking member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, has recommended a 3-5% increase in the FY2022 defense budget. The House Progressive Caucus has demanded that the defense budget be cut by 10%.

The Pentagon has responded to a letter signed by the FRA and other members of The Military Coalition that urged the Pentagon not to include a new TRICARE fee increase in the budget. The DOD response indicated that there will be no TRICARE fee

increase in the Biden administration's request. In addition, the outline indicates that active-duty service members will receive the full scheduled active-duty annual pay increase.

The outline also indicates that spending for the Department of Veterans Affairs will increase 8.2% over the current fiscal year. The outline increases funding for the Electronic Health Record system implementation, suicide prevention (a 75% increase), homelessness assistance and toxic exposure research. The outline allows the VA to hire 334 additional claims processors to review claims for new Agent Orange presumptive conditions and reduce the pandemic-induced disability claims backlog.

A more detailed budget is expected by this month. The FRA will continue to monitor the legislative process to ensure adequate funding for both the DOD and the VA and to make sure there are no cuts to earned benefits.

FRA Discusses Health Care Issues with Capitol Hill Staff

FRA Director of Legislative Programs John Davis participated in two separate off-the-record telephone conference calls on health care issues: one with the House Armed Services Committee's Military Personnel Subcommittee staff and the other with the Senate Armed Services Committee's Personnel Subcommittee staff. Some on Capitol Hill have argued that military retirees are using TRICARE at levels that exceed the original design of the program. Health care costs are increasing constantly, and some have argued that retirees, like their civilian counterparts, must help pay more for the ever-increasing cost of this benefit.

The FRA argues that comparing military and civilian health care fees is an "apples to oranges" comparison. It ignores the great price career military members and their

families pay for the health care coverage they receive in retirement. The health care coverage is the primary offset provided to uniformed service members for enduring a career of unique and extraordinary sacrifices that few Americans are willing to endure for one year, let alone 20 or 30 years. The retiree health care coverage is an unusual and essential compensation package that a grateful nation provides to the small fraction of the population who agree to subordinate their personal and family lives to protecting our national interests for so many years. Health care is one of the most important elements of military compensation and a key to retention and recruitment. Members are strongly urged to weigh in on this issue by using the FRA Action Center at www.fra.org.

Military Retiree Survivor Comfort Act Introduced

At the FRA's request, Rep. John Garamendi (Calif.) has introduced legislation (H.R.2214) similar to the Military Retiree Survivor Comfort Act he sponsored during the last session of Congress. The new bill would allow for the retention of the full final month's retired pay by the surviving spouse (or other designated survivor) of a military retiree for a month in which the member was alive for at least 24 hours.

Surviving spouses who are unaware that Defense Finance and Accounting Services should be notified immediately upon the death of a military retiree are often surprised to learn that

DFAS can recoup any overpayments of retirement pay, even those deposited electronically in a joint bank account. This action could easily clear the account of any funds remaining, whether they were retirement payments or money from other sources. Instead of withdrawing the overpayment all at once, the bill would allow a gradual repayment over 12 months and would give the secretary of defense the option to forgive the overpayment.

Members are strongly urged to use the FRA Action Center at www.fra.org to weigh in on this issue.

Bill Promotes Gender Equality in the Cost of Uniforms

Reps. Julia Brownley (Calif.), Jackie Speier (Calif.) and Elise Stefanik (N.Y.) introduced legislation (H.R.2502) that would direct the Department of Defense to ensure gender equity in the cost of uniforms, which would in turn ensure equal pay for all who serve in our nation's military. The bill would incorporate the four legislative recommendations of a recent Government Accountability Office report (GAO-21-120) on the parity of military uniform costs.

The FY2020 National Defense Authorization Act directed the GAO to analyze gender disparities in out-of-pocket uniform costs for male and female service members. In

February 2021, the GAO released the required report, which found that across all branches of service and ranks, women in the military pay several times more than men in out-of-pocket costs for uniforms, a violation of the DOD's principle of equal pay for equal work. According to the report, in the past 10 years, the services have made 18 changes to uniforms that disproportionately increased out-of-pocket costs for female officers. Because these disparities add up to hundreds or thousands of dollars over time, women are being paid less than men across the military. Members can weigh in on this issue by going to the FRA Action Center at www.fra.org.

Independent Review Commission on Military Sexual Assault

FRA Assistant Director of Veterans Programs Noelle Huffer participated in the Independent Review Commission on Military Sexual Assault video conference call. The 90-day investigation began on March 24. The IRC will focus on four priority areas: accountability, prevention, climate and culture, and victim care and support. The commission is comprised of a total of 12 members, with three members in each of the four priority areas. The commission will focus on evaluating military policies, programs and

processes related to sexual assault. It will also review and assess best practices from industry, academia and other organizations.

Individuals who have personal stories relevant to the IRC's work, such as victims of sexual assault, their family members or their friends, are encouraged to provide feedback to the IRC using the Military Feedback Form on the DOD Safe Helpline website at <https://www.safehelpline.org/military-feedback>.

Defense Commissary Agency Conference Call

FRA Assistant Director of Legislative Programs Theo Lawson, along with members of other organizations, attended a meeting with the Defense Commissary Agency, or DeCA, to discuss a range of issues from front-line efforts to outreach programs concerning commissary benefits. William Moore, director of DeCA, presented the current state and the future of the agency. He also asked for feedback from the audience on improvements and new ideas.

A focus group conducted with junior enlisted service members revealed a lack of knowledge about the benefits of the commissary. Moore also stressed the importance of educating certain groups of veterans about their recent eligibility for commissary benefits, which started in January 2020 as part of the FY2019 NDAA. The agency believes the pandemic hindered the outreach program to inform eligible veterans about these benefits.

The agency plans to implement an education program

about the commissary benefit as early as the completion of boot camp. The Patron Council, which originally provided guidance on the needs and wants of commissary users, was shut down due to the cost of logistics; with the onset of virtual meetings, the agency is looking into reinstating the council.

The commissary, with its tax-free shopping and other perks, grants users about 23.7% in savings compared to the local market; the agency is looking to increase the savings up to 25%. The agency is also planning to expand the availability of their online shopping and curbside pickup options from the current 11 stores to about 200 stores by the end of the year, with a possibility of home delivery.

Veterans can find out how to gain access to their commissary benefits at <https://blogs.va.gov/VAntage/68479/veterans-need-vehicle-for-in-person-commissary-military-exchange-and-mwr-access/>.

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Support TRICARE Coverage for Reserve Component “Gray Area” Retirees

The FRA supports the TRICARE Fairness for National Guard and Reserve Retirees Act (S.829), introduced by Sen. Rob Portman (Ohio), and the House companion bill (H.R.1997), introduced by Rep. Bill Johnson (Ohio), which would ensure that “gray area” National Guard and Reserve retirees who qualify for retirement pay before age 60 are eligible for the TRICARE retiree benefit.

Under current law, gray area retirees who want TRICARE coverage must purchase TRICARE Retired

Reserve, which is an expensive premium-based plan, even if they are receiving retired pay. This legislation addresses this inequity by extending the TRICARE retiree health care benefit to Reserve component retirees who are receiving early retirement pay. Reserve component members who have earned early retirement pay through deployment credits should receive the full retirement package, including health care coverage.

Members can use the FRA Action Center at www.fra.org to weigh in on this issue.



Nomination for First Female Four-star in U.S. Coast Guard

President Joe Biden has nominated Coast Guard Vice Adm. Linda Fagan to the role of vice commandant, which would make her the first woman to achieve a fourth star in the U.S. Coast Guard. Fagan, the commander of the Coast Guard’s Pacific Area of operations, would replace Adm. Charles Ray, who has been the Coast Guard’s No. 2 officer since May 2018. The appointment requires Senate confirmation.

Left: Vice Adm. Linda Fagan during a visit of Pacific Area command staff to the Coast Guard Cutter *POLAR STAR* in dry dock. Photo courtesy of U.S. Coast Guard Pacific Area.

SVAC Chairman and Ranking Member Urge VA to Speed Up Agent Orange Claims Processing

Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee Chairman Jon Tester (Mont.) and Ranking Member Jerry Moran (Kan.) have dispatched a letter to Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Denis McDonough urging him to implement the provisions of the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act (P.L.116-23), which will quickly provide long-overdue benefits and care to veterans suffering from Agent Orange exposure.

The FRA is thankful that the FY2021 National Defense Authorization Act added new presumptive conditions for exposure to Agent Orange herbicide, including bladder cancer, hypothyroidism and Parkinsonism. The FRA is thankful to SVAC Chairman Jon Tester for his leadership on this issue. It has been estimated that this expansion will benefit 34,000 suffering veterans. The association also supports efforts to include hypertension in the list of presumptive ailments.

The Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act

specifically affects veterans who served offshore of Vietnam between Jan. 6, 1962, and May 7, 1975. The act also applies to veterans who served in the Korean Demilitarized Zone, or DMZ, between Jan. 1, 1967, and Aug. 31, 1971. These veterans can apply for disability compensation and other benefits if they have since developed certain conditions that are presumed to be related to exposure to herbicides such as Agent Orange. Such veterans no longer need to prove that they were exposed to herbicides.

The letter was generated after an SVAC hearing on the human consequences of war as they pertain to military toxic exposures. At that hearing, it was testified that a veteran living with three of the qualifying service-connected conditions, including Type 2 diabetes and ischemic heart disease, had to wait 14 months for the VA to take action on his claim. The FRA will continue to monitor the claims backlog at the VA.

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Bipartisan Bill Introduced to Help Military Survivors

Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Jon Tester (Mont.) and Sen. John Boozman (Ark.) have introduced legislation to adjust monthly benefits for family members and survivors of service members who have lost their lives in service to our country.

The Caring for Survivors Act (S.976) seeks to increase payments for Dependency and Indemnity Compensation, or DIC, to be in line with the payments made to surviving spouses of other federal employees (55% of retiree pay). The rate of compensation paid to survivors of service members who die in the line of duty — or veterans who

die from service-related injuries or diseases — has been minimally adjusted since its establishment in 1993. DIC payments, which are currently 43% of retiree benefits, lag behind other programs' payments by 12%.

Under current law, the DIC benefits are restricted for survivors if the veteran was disabled for less than 10 years before his or her death. This legislation would also reduce the time frame during which veterans need to be rated totally disabled from 10 to five years, which would extend eligibility to more survivors. Members can weigh in on this issue by going to the FRA Action Center at www.fra.org.

Legislation Asks for Study of Involuntary Discharges of Women

Rep. Julia Brownley (Calif.) has introduced legislation (H.R.2385) that would require the Government Accountability Office to study the involuntary discharges of women from the armed forces between 1951 and 1976. The study would identify any irregularities in discharges that may have left these women without the veterans' benefits that they earned. The study would also make recommendations for restoring those benefits.

The study is being requested because President Truman in 1951 signed Executive Order 10240, which granted the armed forces the authority to involuntarily discharge a woman if she became pregnant, gave birth to a child, adopted a child or became a stepparent. In response, the armed forces systematically discharged thousands of women

who became pregnant, regardless of whether the pregnancy was planned, unplanned or the result of sexual violence. Further, the federal government did not provide separation benefits, counseling or assistance to these women who were involuntarily discharged. In 1976, the policy was rescinded after it was ruled unconstitutional by a federal court.

This bill would require the GAO to conduct a study of women who were involuntarily discharged from the armed forces due to pregnancy or parenthood from 1951 to 1976 to identify the scope of the policy's impact, including any disproportionate impact on women of certain races and ethnicities. Members can weigh in on this issue by going to the FRA Action Center at www.fra.org.

Support Improving VA Homelessness Programs

The FRA supports the Improving Housing Outcomes for Veterans Act (S.612, H.R.876), sponsored by Sen. Rob Portman (Ohio) and Rep. Anthony Gonzalez (Ohio). The act would provide needed care for veterans who are experiencing homelessness. The bill would implement the May 2020 recommendations of a Government Accountability Office report, which found shortcomings in the VA's programs that support veterans experiencing homelessness in collaboration with local partners and other federal agencies.

In 2010, the VA established a goal of eliminating veteran homelessness by 2015. That goal has not

been achieved. The Department of Housing and Urban Development and the VA have a wide range of programs that prevent and end homelessness among veterans, including health care, housing, job training and education solutions. According to a January 2018 VA fact sheet, VA, Department of Labor and HUD programs for homeless veterans have reduced veteran homelessness by nearly 50% since 2010. The FRA wants the VA and other government agencies to invest in efforts to ensure that veteran homelessness is rare, brief and nonrecurring. Members are urged to use the FRA Action Center at www.fra.org to weigh in on this issue.

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New DOD Discharge Appeal Review Board

The Department of Defense recently announced a new discharge characterization upgrade board of appeals for service members with separation dates on or after Dec. 20, 2019. This new board, titled the Discharge Appeal Review Board, will provide a final review of discharge or dismissal characterization upgrade requests when petitioners have exhausted all available administrative remedies through their service branch's discharge review board and board for correction of military or naval records.

Established by Congress through the FY2020 National Defense Authorization Act, the DARB is a document review board with no requirement for personal appearances. If a service member is deceased or incapacitated, a legal representative, surviving spouse or next of kin may apply on his or her behalf. Only

records from the case file of a service branch's board for correction of military or naval records will be reviewed. Any new evidence must first be submitted with a reconsideration request to a service branch's board for correction of military or naval records. Once a decision has been received from that board, the new evidence may be considered by the DARB. The DARB is the final level of administrative review provided by the DOD.

Individuals who believe their discharge or dismissal was unjust, erroneous or deserving of an upgrade are encouraged to apply for review. To learn more about the DARB and how to apply for review, visit the Air Force Review Board Agency Portal located at <https://afrb-portal.cce.af.mil>.

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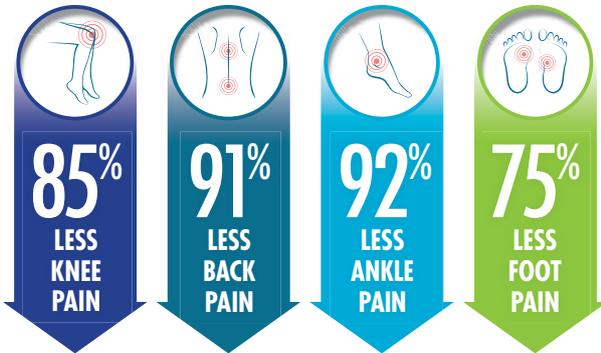


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FEATURE

Scene on board *USS YORKTOWN* (CV-5) shortly after it was hit by three Japanese bombs on June 4, 1942. The dense smoke is from fires in its uptakes, caused by a bomb that punctured them and knocked out its boilers. Photograph by Petty Officer 3rd Class William G. Roy. Photo from the collections of the National Archives.



The Battle of Midway *Playing the Odds*

By Antonya Salucci

Adm. Isoroku Yamamoto, commanding the Imperial Japanese Navy, hypothesized in 1941 that Japan would reign over the Pacific Theater for a span of 6 months if the U.S. were taunted into battle. The stopwatch engaged on Dec. 7, 1941, when he ordered an assault on Pearl Harbor, luring the U.S. into the murk of World War II. With the faith of an emperor behind him and his fleet, Yamamoto imparted suffering and turmoil across the Pacific islands and invoked the fear of a possible invasion of the American West Coast.

Fit for the task of commanding the American Pacific Fleet, Adm. Chester W. Nimitz understood the stark and unsettling differences between his Japanese enemy's military capabilities and those of his own forces. Marked by a steady natural sense of calm leadership, he undoubtedly inspired the men he directed to forge an almost indistinguishable path forward. Yamamoto and Nimitz, both highly

esteemed in their respective navies, would soon bring their strategic and leadership skills to bear as the IJN eyed Midway Atoll as its next target. The Battle of Midway would serve as a catalyst for American vindication and starkly shift the winds of WWII in favor of the U.S.

Finding the Corner Pieces

Designated in 1940, Station Hypo was a subset of the Navy pledged to decrypting enemy telecommunications and trapped the Imperial Japanese Navy in their own code, all from a basement setting in Hawaii's Pearl Harbor Navy Yard. As described in Ian Toll's book "The Pacific Crucible," "the dungeon" served as a command center for receiving intelligence and maintaining extensive records as new phrases and code names trickled in. Navy Cmdr. Joseph Rochefort, who oversaw Station Hypo, feverishly worked along

Battle Of Midway

The U.S. Navy's victory at Midway in June 1942 was the turning point of World War II in the Pacific. Success at Midway set the course for the Allies' defeat of Imperial Japan. This epic naval battle provides many lessons learned about the importance of naval force and intelligence capabilities, and the importance of securing maritime superiority in a conflict - yesterday and today.



- An atoll is a ring-shaped reef or islands formed of coral. The U.S. Navy, Marines, and Army used Midway as an air base. It was also a Navy submarine base.
- Japan wanted to remove an Allied foothold in the Pacific and establish a base for eventual attacks on Hawaii and the U.S. West Coast.

BATTLE

The battle, which lasted more than three days, covered an area in the Pacific Ocean larger than the contiguous United States.



During the battle, many of the ships were 50-150 miles apart--as far as the distance between Washington, D.C., and Philadelphia.

U.S. AND JAPANESE FORCES COMPARED BEFORE THE BATTLE AND LOST

UNITED STATES

15/1
3/1
8/0
0/0
360/150
16/0

IMPERIAL JAPANESE

DESTROYERS 12/1
CARRIERS 4/4
CRUISERS 2/1
BATTLESHIPS 2/0
AIRPLANES 276/248
SUBMARINES 0/0

The United States lost 307 service members in the battle. Japan lost 3,057, most of them crewmembers of lost or damaged ships.



Douglas SBD-2 Dauntless scout bombers, of Scouting Squadron Six (VS-6) composite photograph of 9 planes in flight, with *USS ENTERPRISE* (CV-6) and a plane guard destroyer below. U.S. Navy Photograph, now in the collections of the National Archives.

with his men to reveal informative corner pieces of the Japanese telecommunications puzzle.

By 1942, the informational victories celebrated in recent encounters with the Japanese fleet had shaped a limited but burgeoning sense of the validity of Hypo's reports. Nimitz recognized the value that Hypo granted his fleet and aligned with their judgment after he operated successfully with their guidance during the raids on the Marshall Islands in February of that year. On May 20, 1942, Hypo intercepted the message between Japan's outposts that would catapult the U.S. to the offensive; they would just need to peel back the layers of location references. Rochefort and his men began waving red flags about an upcoming Japanese offensive as clues to a suspected target location described as "AF" were received with increasing frequency.

In a coordinated attempt to validate Hypo's inferences about Japan's encryptions, Rochefort presented Nimitz with an option to lure the Japanese into confirming his suspicions, particularly for which target AF was intended to be. Nimitz ordered an unencrypted broadcast between U.S. entities stating that Midway's water filtration system was out of order, prompting IJN units to chatter their own relay of the information. From this, Rochefort and his men victoriously identified that AF was Midway. Nimitz intended to place his forces in position to intervene should Japan execute their hypothesized attack on the Midway Atoll. They could now lay the foundation for launching a counterstrike from behind the veil of obscurity.

Unfortunately, this opportunity to reshape the layout of the war came at a time of significant



A Dauntless dive bomber from *USS HORNET* (CV-8) was instrumental in sinking the Japanese heavy cruiser *MIKUMA*. It took three sets of attacks on the ship to complete the mission during the early afternoon of June 6, 1942. Photo courtesy of the Naval History and Heritage Command.

leadership transition for the U.S. Navy. Cruiser commander Adm. Raymond A. Spruance took charge of Pacific Task Force 16 in place of Adm. “Bull” Halsey, who was convalescing from a stress-induced skin condition. An odd choice at first glance due to his lack of experience leading carriers, Spruance proved to be a reasonable replacement when considering the tightly coordinated formations of carriers and cruisers. While initially greeted with quiet uncertainty due to the upheaval of familiarity, Spruance led the American task force competently and with a calm, responsive demeanor. Leadership would play a vital role on both the American and Japanese sides: one in the success of its fleet, the other in its failure.

Seeding the Outcome

The outcomes of one battle often plant the seeds of the next. With respect to the Battle of Midway, these seeds were planted a month earlier, in May, at the Battle of the Coral Sea. Vice Adm. Chūichi Nagumo’s Kido Butai, the Pacific IJN carrier fleet, had suffered crippling losses in aircraft and ship

damage. Of Kido Butai, ordinarily a fleet of six carriers, only sister ships *SHOKAKU* and *ZUIKAKU* had been slated for battle. Allied Douglas SBD Dauntless dive bombers had proved a formidable adversary against the *SHOKAKU* and prompted its limp back to port, while the *ZUIKAKU* made its own retreat after parting with half of its air fleet.

The Battle of the Coral Sea’s play of events was not without significant casualties for Allied forces, including the loss of the long-beloved carrier *USS LEXINGTON*. The outcome of Coral Sea would also find the *USS YORKTOWN* in need of months’ worth of repairs, ordered to be accomplished within days. Technicians remained on the ship to continue repairs while en route to foil the Imperial Japanese Navy’s Midway ambush. The *YORKTOWN* would return to battle like a specter, to the disbelief of the Japanese who had mistakenly celebrated its defeat. This oversight by the Japanese fleet would leave them unprepared when facing off against their enemy and chomping at the bit to ensure *YORKTOWN* rested in a watery grave.



A Douglas TBD Devastator from Torpedo Squadron 6 (VT-6), of the *USS ENTERPRISE* (CV-6) in about 1938. The Devastator performed well in early battles but earned notoriety for a catastrophic performance during the Battle of Midway: 41 Devastators recorded zero torpedo hits, with only six surviving to return to their carriers. Photo courtesy of the Naval History and Heritage Command.

The Unraveling of an Ambush

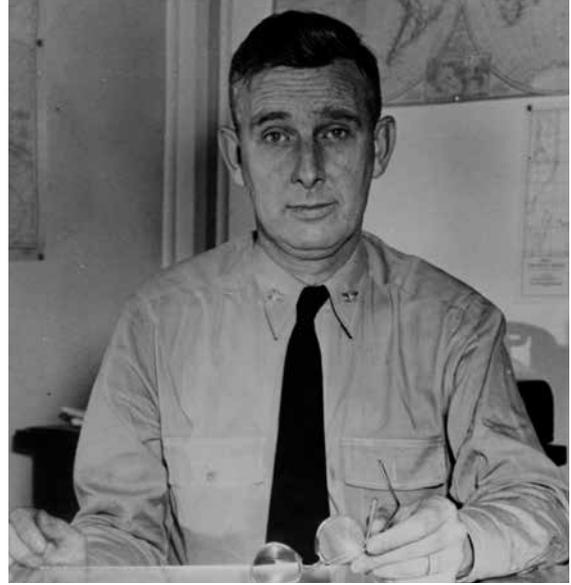
On May 27, 1942, IJN carriers *SORYU*, *HIRYU*, *AKAGI* and *KAGA* headed out from port in Tokyo to weaken the Allies' grip on the Pacific with their base at Midway Atoll. First on the docket of inhibiting factors were poor weather conditions and the inability to make use of scout planes to confirm the presence of Allied forces at rendezvous points. With no ability to scout over Pearl Harbor to ensure that American carriers were still in port and not a threat to Yamamoto's orders against Midway, Nagumo and his fleet trudged on with growing unease.

Japan's hopes lifted when the weather improved in the early hours of the morning as the fleet prepared to attack Midway. Their presence was detected a little before 6 a.m., with just enough time for the U.S. to ensure their jets were airborne for battle. The discrepancy between the two adversaries' aircraft was significant, with Japan boasting 108 Mitsubishi A-6M "Zeros" and Midway's base sporting a fleet comprised primarily of underpowered Brewster Buffaloes and four Grumman F-4F Wildcats.

Satisfied with what little remained of the American air fleet, the Japanese fleet focused their attention on destroying structures and armaments to cripple their target. This endeavor was only partway successful; the runways remaining intact would serve opposing purposes in being serviceable for Japan after their intended takeover, but also giving the Allies the ability to launch a counterstrike with reinforcements should plans go awry. It would be their last attempt, as Nagumo would vacillate between arming his planes with bombs for another deluge on the island or with torpedoes to attack enemy carriers.

Following the initial battle, a scrambling of scout planes would reveal each side's carrier locations. However, luck was not in favor of the IJN's forces as the singular scout plane that spotted the U.S. fleet was unable to communicate its findings due to a technological failure. Thus, Nagumo and his men were blindly awaiting the aggravated U.S. onslaught.

To the bewilderment of the Japanese Navy, a group of American Douglas TBD Devastator pilots,



(L to R) Lt. Cmdr. John Smith Thach, inventor of the “Thach Weave” maneuver, and Capt. Joseph John Rochefort, who oversaw the Navy’s Station Hypo intelligence operations. Photos courtesy of the Naval History and Heritage Command.

vulnerable while separated from their Wildcat fighter cover, committed to an unanticipated suicide mission. Despite the pilots’ heroism in remaining unprotected in enemy territory to deliver their payloads, their torpedoes were defective and failed to explode upon impact with their targets.

Struggling with their own fighter cover, the Japanese fleet was unable to launch their aircraft as they frantically engaged in defensive maneuvers. Douglas SBD Dauntless dive bombers made quick work of decimating the three exposed carriers with their planes and munitions on full display on the flight decks.

As the *HIRYU* emerged from a rainsquall, Rear Adm. Tamon Yamaguchi and his crew watched the rising plumes of flames and smoke and heard the cacophony of explosions that rendered the other three carriers incapacitated. The *HIRYU* responded by dispatching its own planes to pursue the Americans. Once led back to the American carriers, they inflicted extensive damage upon the *YORKTOWN*, which would be dealt its final blows by Japanese submarine I-158 the next day.

In the spirit of innovative piloting strategy, U.S. naval aviator John “Jimmy” Smith Thach pioneered a maneuver that would later be recognized as the “Thach Weave.” Thach endeavored to equalize the technological differences between the Japanese Zeros and the U.S.’s Wildcats. The Zero’s designers

had sacrificed armor for speed and maneuverability, leaving the aircraft vulnerable to the Wildcat’s superior firepower. Despite the Wildcat’s poor turning radius, the craft’s armor and skilled pilots leveled the playing field.

From an altitude greater than 15,000 feet, Capt. Jack “Dusty” Kleiss and his fellow Douglas SBD dive bomber pilots prepared to commit to a near-vertical plunge down to 1,500 feet above sea level to lay waste to enemy targets. The *HIRYU*, in a mid-defensive turn to dodge Allied bombs, was unable to escape Kleiss’ recalculation to follow his evading target. Landing the final blows and decimating the flight deck, Kleiss condemned Japan’s final carrier to the depths below, bringing an end to the battle and setting the course for the rest of the war.

A New Angle Affirmed

The outcome of the Battle of Midway had lasting and enormous impacts, both for the course of World War II and our approach to modern conflicts. The U.S.’s eventual reliance on decrypting intercepted communications paved the way for our current National Foreign Intelligence Board. At the core of this incorporation of new military strategy still lie the old-fashioned strengths of American adaptability in the face of rapid change and perseverance in the face of seemingly insurmountable challenges. **FRA**



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BEDFORD



MEMBERS

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JACK G POWERS
D-Day
June 6, 1944

BEDFORD



TAYLOR M FELLERS
D-Day
June 6, 1944

Main Street in Bedford, Virginia, featuring lamp-post banners of each of the Bedford Boys. Photo courtesy of the National D-Day Memorial Foundation.

The Bedford Boys

National D-Day Memorial Honors One Small Town's Extraordinary Sacrifice

By Ann Norvell Gray

Bedford, Virginia, is a lovely small town nestled below the Peaks of Otter in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. For the past 20 years, its population has hovered around 6,500 souls. On the face of it, this country town off the beaten track would seem to be an odd choice for the location of the National D-Day Memorial — until you know the story behind the reason for its placement there.

The Bedford Boys

In the spring of 1944, Bedford's population was half of what it is now. For almost two years before the launch of Operation Overlord, about 30 young National Guard members from the town had been assigned to active duty in Company A of the 116th Infantry Regiment in the 29th Division. They trained for several months up and down the East Coast, and then shipped out to England to be prepared for amphibious landings in Normandy, France. On the morning of June 6, 1944, Company A was at the forefront of the D-Day landing on Omaha Beach. Within the first hours of the assault, 19 of those young soldiers from Bedford were

dead. Four more would die before the Normandy campaign ended. The peaceful little Virginia farm town lost a greater proportion of its young men than any other American town would lose in all of World War II.

Twenty-one months before that dreadful day, the newly minted “Bedford Boys” sailed for Britain aboard the *RMS QUEEN MARY*. The elegant liner had been stripped of its carpets and art deco fittings and transformed into the equivalent of an underground dungeon, with no bathing facilities for the enlisted men. It was not a luxurious experience. A big ship full of American soldiers was a prime target for the U-boats, and it has been reported that Hitler declared a bounty equaling about \$250,000 to the submarine captain who sank it.¹ But the *QUEEN MARY* was escorted, it zigzagged and it was faster than its predators.

The young Bedford Boys had never been out of the country before; many had never been out of Virginia when their deployment began. They were not trained for the sea services, and many of them were miserably seasick. During their crossing, they were expected to attend preparatory lectures and

were issued an Army pamphlet covering cultural differences between Virginia and England.² Most of them were scared and did their best to distract themselves during the long days at sea.

Roy and Ray Stevens were twins, two of 14 children descended from generations of Bedford farmers. They were good boys and exceptionally close. Four of their siblings had died in childhood. In 1938 they were 18, and they joined the Bedford guard, partly for the extra dollar they earned on their active weekends, partly for the sense of belonging and partly for the effect on the girls. They took great pride in their uniforms, which were far smarter than what their Depression-era wardrobes could manage.³ However, like many of their fellow guard members, they didn't expect to actually have to go to war. Still, they were part of a proud rural culture, and the stories of the Civil War and World War I were family stories to them. When it became clear that they would be called up and sent to Europe, all of the Bedford Boys tried their best to take it in stride and be honorable soldiers.

Clyde Powers, his younger brother Jack and the Stevens twins were headed to Omaha Beach on the morning of June 6, pitching and rolling through the rough seas aboard a wave of assault landing craft, or LCAs. Clyde Powers and Roy Stevens, both separated from their brothers, were aboard LCA 911 when water began rushing in, the bow disappeared into the swells and the craft went down. For hours, while the German machine guns tore apart the landing forces on the beach, Roy and Clyde struggled to jettison the heavy gear that was pulling the survivors under and clung to anything afloat. They were rescued when a British coxswain maneuvered his empty Higgins boat back toward them and hauled them out of the water. As they headed back toward Plymouth, England, the two felt both immense relief and terrible remorse for leaving their brothers somewhere amid the carnage ashore.⁴

Less than a week after June 6, both Roy Stevens and Clyde Powers returned to Normandy to rejoin the surviving forces as the invasion continued past the beaches, hoping to be reunited with their brothers. Above the cliff, among rows of hastily erected crosses in an improvised cemetery, they found them. Numb with grief, they walked the rows until they accounted for all but four of the Bedford Boys. Among them



One of the American units at the forefront of the D-Day invasion was a National Guard infantry unit based out of the small town of Bedford, Virginia. Photo courtesy of Citizen-Soldier Magazine.

were the graves of Raymond and Bedford Hoback, another pair of brothers, both of whom died that morning on the beach. The family of Earl and Joe Parker also lost both of their sons in the campaign. Roy Stevens was one of the few who would come home to Bedford.

Waiting for News at Home

Meanwhile, news that the invasion had begun started coming in. Across Bedford, everyone was glued to their radios, both hoping for and fearing news of their sons, their brothers and their husbands, who were surely in harm's way. The wait was excruciating. Weeks went by. Ever since the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, telegrams had been arriving about once a week reporting the wounding, deaths or disappearances of servicemen among the 4,000 on active duty from Bedford County. On July 17, 1944, the wires from Western Union lit up with the first news of Bedford Boys. The town was in shock.

Clyde's brother Jack was not officially reclassified from missing in action to killed in action until the beginning of August, by which time Clyde had been wounded and evacuated to England. While he awaited passage back home, Clyde wrote this letter to his parents in Bedford:

"Dear Mom & Dad,

Am still in England, and have been trying to get a sun tan, but haven't had much luck so far. ...

I visited Jack's grave before leaving France, he is buried on top of a hill, overlooking the English Channel alongside the rest of the boys he had served with. It is a very pretty place, and the French people have planted flowers there, just be glad Mom that he is not missing, for at least you know where he is now, and that is a lot



“Homage” is a sculpture by Jim Brothers that portrays a grieving soldier paying tribute to a fallen comrade, buried in a temporary grave, marked by his rifle and helmet. Photo courtesy of the National D-Day Memorial Foundation.



Above: Portions of The National D-Day Memorial in Bedford, Virginia, that depicts the horror of that day. Right: The statue "Homage."
Photos courtesy of the National D-Day Memorial Foundation.

*better. He was killed instantly and there was no suffering on his part. ... Will tell you more about it, when the war is over. ... Love, Clyde.*⁵

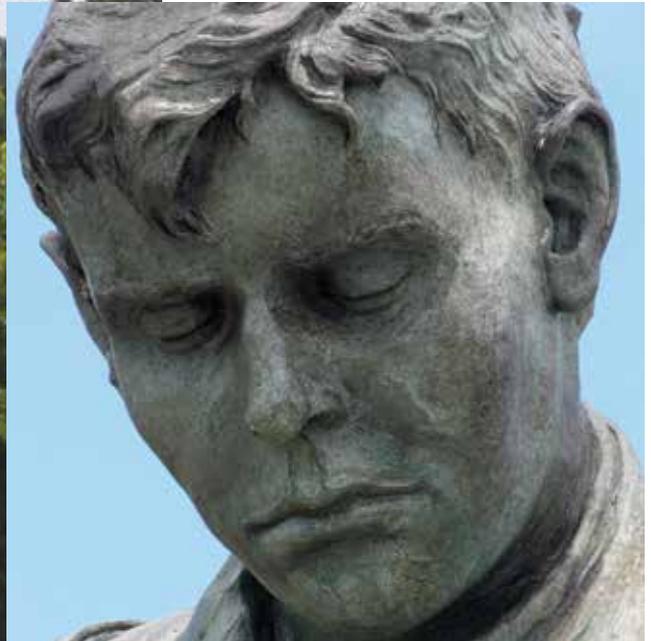
By the end of the summer, the loss of 19 boys in the first hours on the beach and four more later in the invasion had been confirmed. "In a matter of minutes," Alex Kershaw wrote in his book "The Bedford Boys," "a couple of German machine gunners had broken the town's heart."⁶

The Memorial

Driving west out of Bedford through the beautiful, peaceful foothills of the Virginia Blue Ridge Mountains to the 50-plus-acre park where the National D-Day Memorial stands makes the chaos and terror of the landing on Omaha Beach seem too remote to imagine. The memorial itself is a sequence of three plazas arranged in chronological order, from preparation for the invasion through the D-Day landings to the Overlord Arch and the flag garden, which celebrate the ultimate victory. The center section is anchored by the circular invasion pool. There is a simplified profile of a Higgins boat with beach obstacles and a fallen soldier in the water. Two more soldiers advance across the beach under fire, and another group struggles to scale the cliff.

The design is elegant and reductive, inviting quiet contemplation. Visitors may walk around and through the spacious sculptural invasion pool along walkways that allow the elements to be seen from all angles. The faces of the emblematic bronze soldiers tell the affecting personal story of that terrible day. The Overlord Arch represents the intense focus on the goal of turning the tide of the war in Europe, leading to the neutralization of the fascist threat to the free world.

The planning for a memorial in this place began in 1988, but the enabling support didn't begin to materialize until the 50th anniversary of the invasion in 1994, when the town of Bedford donated an 11-acre parcel of land. Three years later, a \$1 million grant kicked



The National D-Day Memorial

3 Overlord Circle
 Bedford, VA 24523
 540-587-3619
<https://www.dday.org/>

Hours:

Daily: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
 Closed Mondays December through February.

Bedford Boys Tribute Center

102 North Bridge St.
 Bedford, Virginia 24523
 540-425-5598
<https://bedfordboystributecenter.com/>

Hours:

Monday through Friday: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
 Sundays: Noon to 5 p.m.

Ken Parker points toward the photos of 19 men, known as the “Bedford Boys” who were killed in action during the invasion of Normandy. The photos take up one wall of the Bedford Boys Tribute Center, which Parker and his wife, Linda, opened in downtown Bedford, Virginia. Photo courtesy of the Bedford Boys Tribute Center.



off the fundraising campaign. The National D-Day Memorial Foundation bought surrounding acreage to establish the park. Completion took seven years and \$25 million. Congress warranted the establishment of the National D-Day Memorial, and in 2001, President George W. Bush dedicated the completed project, saying: “Fifty-seven years ago, America and the nations of Europe formed a bond that has never been broken. And all of us incurred a debt that can never be repaid. Today, as America dedicates our D-Day Memorial, we pray that our country will always be worthy of the courage that delivered us from evil and saved the free world.

The Tribute Center

In the center of town, there is a much smaller but far more intimate center dedicated solely to the stories of the Bedford Boys. In the old Green’s Drugstore, where everyone in town used to gather, Kenneth and Linda Parker (unrelated to Earl and Joe Parker) have made extensive renovations, filling the new spaces with photographs and personal belongings on loan from the families of the lost boys. They opened it to the public in 2018 as the Bedford Boys Tribute Center.

People who have been to Bedford often recommend beginning with an hour or so at this center. They say that witnessing the depth of the town’s unimaginable

sacrifice makes the D-Day memorial so much more compelling. The Parkers understand the principles of duty, country and family that led so many American men and women of the Greatest Generation to give of themselves for the greater good.

“On the battlefields, the soldiers told themselves that one step closer to Berlin was one step closer to home,” said Kenneth Parker. “Bedford’s only collective defense system against overwhelming grief was to bury it in the back of their minds and move forward.”

With these stories, the Parkers remind visitors every day of the year that freedom is not free. **FRA**

Author’s note: I am indebted to two people in particular for the content of this story. They are Alex Kershaw, who wrote the definitive account in his 2003 book “The Bedford Boys,” and Kenneth Parker, developer and curator of the Bedford Boys Tribute Center, who with his wife, Linda, are the experts on the experience and its aftermath in this quiet Virginia town.

ENDNOTES:

1. Kershaw, Alex, “The Bedford Boys” (Cambridge, MA: Perseus Book Group, 2003), p. 42.
2. Kershaw, Alex, “The Bedford Boys,” p. 44.
3. Kershaw, Alex, “The Bedford Boys,” p. 7.
4. Kershaw, Alex, “The Bedford Boys,” p. 145.
5. Kershaw, Alex, “The Bedford Boys,” photo reproduction of letter.
6. Kershaw, Alex, “The Bedford Boys,” p. 208.

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What Is Your Story?



Christina
Hitchcock

One of the themes we most often hear about from Shipmates is why they joined the United States Navy, Marine Corps or Coast Guard. Today, there are more than 5 million active-duty personnel and veterans of the sea services, and just as many stories about why each joined and what they hoped to gain from their experiences.

Some craved adventure. Others were simply seeking a way out of their small towns — a chance to travel and see the world. Eventually, they found their place and, in many cases, their careers. What's common across almost all of these stories is Shipmates' sense of having a nobility of purpose in serving their country.

We at national headquarters think the richness of these stories could be an important tool in connecting with the younger generations of potential members. While everyone will not have the same story, there will be plenty of common elements across the generations. Maybe you are from the same place. Maybe it's a family legacy. Maybe you were the same wide-eyed kid that we now see embarking on a mission for the very first time.

We are a culture of storytellers. We share our relatives' histories and the legends of our ancestors to benefit from the lessons of their experiences. The accumulated wisdom that comes from those millions of stories, those countless missions and adventures, that is what we want to capture and preserve for future generations.

Your Story in the Magazine

We are launching a new initiative for *FRAtoday*. We are inviting Shipmates to think about their stories and write them down. If you have more than one story you would like to share, so much the better — we might make a series out of it. We would like to hear your “why”: why did you enlist, why did you stay in, or why do you encourage your children and grandchildren to

think about their own places as citizens of this country?

There are no wrong stories, so we want to preserve your insights and provide you with an outlet for making your voice heard. We want all these contributions to become part of the FRA legend, to help elevate us in the hearts and minds of the younger generation, which is disproportionately absent in our membership. Shipmates, your stories are essential for the FRA to complete this mission, and we will gladly work with you to get them in the magazine.

If you are uncomfortable sharing personal details, we can change names to protect your identity. If your story is about a mistake that led to a hard lesson learned, we can help you with the wording to convey the meaning you intend. If your story happens to be one you heard from or about someone else, we can give them their due credit in whatever form you wish. With those most solemn stories, the ones about those who have reported to the Supreme Commander, we will of course afford them every respect and courtesy they are due.

Please spend some time and give some thought to your story. Talk to your friends and family members; ask them what stories they remember you telling in the past. Look through your photo albums and letters and try to recall what was most important to you during the different points in your life and career. These stories are valuable, not only because they can inspire and encourage younger service members, but also because they are meaningful to you. That, more than anything else, is the spirit we want to capture.

Thank you in advance for all of your efforts, and as always, for your loyalty, protection and service. **FRA**

Christina Hitchcock

Christina is the FRA's director of membership. She can be reached at ChristinaH@fra.org or 703-683-1400, ext. 123.

1. SOUTHEAST MIDYEAR MEETING

(L to R) NVP Jim Campbell, JrPNP Donna Jansky and NED Chris Slawinski visited the *USS ALABAMA* at Battleship Memorial Park in Mobile, Alabama, during the Southeast Regional Midyear Meeting that was held in Jacksonville, Florida, in February.



2. BRANCH 29, BREMERTON, WASH.

(L to R) Branch President Kenny Barrett, 50-year member Gerry McDonald, 50-year member Jimmie Burts, 40-year member Gerry Drumm and Branch Vice President Gary Reed all attended a luncheon to recognize McDonald, Burts and Drumm and present them with their awards and pins.



3. BRANCH 294, CROSSVILLE, TENN.

That Star-Spangled Banner yet waved symbolically as branch and unit members met with Shipmate Doug Spangler to celebrate his 85th birthday by hoisting a new flag on his recently installed flagpole. Spangler said, "This has been my dream, to always have a flagpole." The national anthem played as Spangler slowly and methodically raised the flag and when it was two-blocked snapped a sharp salute. (L to R) Alex Alenitsch, Russell Cope, Linda and Doug Spangler, Karl Mellert, Julie and Jack Fogel.



4. BRANCH 245, BELLINGHAM, WASH.

Seventh grader Mary Payton Crosby received her award for first place at the branch level in the 2020-2021 Americanism Essay Contest from Branch President Michael B. Cole. Crosby also won second place at the Northwest regional level.



5. BRANCH 208, JACKSONVILLE, N.C.

Branch President Raymond Applewhite (L) presents Chaplain Alexander J. "Gunner" Nevglowski Sr. (R) a Life Member Certificate during the monthly meeting on April 13. The certificate recognizes Nevglowski as a Life Member of the oldest, largest and most effective military association, devoted to the sea services community.



6. BRANCH 94, CORPUS CHRISTI, TEXAS

Corpus Christi Branch President Ricardo Hankerson (L) and Shipmate Troy Lane (R) attach their recently awarded first place streamer to their branch colors. The streamers recognize their Hospital Welfare and Rehabilitation Committee work.



3



4

**7. BRANCH 130, INDIANAPOLIS, IND.**

The USS Indianapolis Memorial Branch attended the *USS INDIANAPOLIS* (LCS-17) launch late in 2019. It is the fourth ship to bear the name with the most noteworthy being the Cruiser *USS INDIANAPOLIS* (CA-35), which was lost at sea after transporting the atomic bomb components to end of the second World War. (L to R) James F. Hayes, Charles Cleveland and Hank Jacoby.

8. BRANCH 201, AUSTIN, TEXAS

South Central Region President C. Ursula Gruetzner (L) with Cadet Makayla Capuchin (R) on April 22, after the Uvalde High School NJROTC presentation at which Capuchin received an FRA award.

9. BRANCH 126, JACKSONVILLE, FLA.

The West Jacksonville Branch held their Flag Retirement Ceremony on April 10. There were 17 Shipmates and five auxiliary members in attendance.

10. BRANCH 31, PEABODY, MASS.

National President Mick Fulton (R) presented Shipmate David Sharp (L) with the 2019-2020 PRPNC Rosemary Posekany Memorial Award for Veterans Service in recognition of his dedicated service to the FRA and his positive contributions to the veterans service programs.

11. BRANCH 89, ATLANTA, GA.

Newly joined Shipmate Austin Haynie (L) and Shipmate Wayne Barron (R) worked together to hang a banner after Branch 89 participated in sponsoring the Little League in Canton, Georgia.

12. BRANCH, 258, ERIE, PA.

Commodore Perry Branch 258 Vice President George Greenawalt (L) and Branch Secretary John Harriger (R) presented a 30-year continuous membership pin and certificate to Shipmate Terry Burch of Meadville, Pennsylvania.

9



12



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

In Memoriam

Name	Rating	Branch						
Armstrong, Melvin E.	SKCM, USN	166	Gumbert, William D.	PH2, USN	MAL	O'Rourke, James P.	HTCM, USN	72
Arnold, Alvin	SK2, USN	94	PRPEC, Gurtoski,			Olzinski, Joseph	LCDR, USNR	14
Ashley, Arlie V.	BTCM, USN	MAL	Benjamin S.,	DPC, USN	93	Oubre, Richard A.	ATCS, USN	MAL
Atkinson, Philip F.	PNCM, USN	53				Palmquist, Richard	CPL	MAL
Ball, J.D.	GSCM, USN	MAL	Hamby, William R.	AMS1, USN	MAL	Papillon, Roy	HM1, USN	MAL
Banovski, Andrew J.	BMCS, USN	290	Harris, James R.	ENC, USN	MAL	Phipps, Robert	ETC, USN	MAL
Barnes, Kenton C.	YNC, USN	MAL	Henderson, George A.	AZCS(AW), USN	40	Pinkelton, Marcus	CMC, USN	44
Barrs, Eddie	SKCM, USN	08	Hooten, Billy	USN	293	Plessner, Joseph E.	CM1, USN	MAL
Beck, Doyle D.	AMHC, USN	MAL	Hope, Gordon B.	SM1, USN	269	Prince, Wallace L.	ABEC, USN	161
Berberick, Dennis	USN	124	Jenkins, David W.	HMCS(SS), USN	08	Pyland, John S.	USN	210
Bernard, Larry N.	AMS1, USN	MAL	Jerome, John	SA/CDR, USN	24	Rathey, Charles H.	ETC, USN	MAL
Bewall, Douglas A.	RMCM, USN	MAL	Johnson, David L.	AMCS, USN	MAL	Reese, Teri E.	MACS(DV)	MAL
Brueggeman, James E.	CWO4, USN	MAL	Johnson, Jimmy H.	HMCM, USN	221	Schommer, Richard D.	MNCM, USN	269
PRPEC Butler,			Johnson, Jr., Mason	HMC, USN	MAL	Smith, Alger M.	RMC, USN	MAL
W. G. "Jerry"	1STSG, USMC	MAL	Kammeron, Robert A.	ICC, USN	MAL	Sposato, Leon A.	SCPO, USN	57
Cart, Harold E.	LCDR, USN	261	Klingler, Bobby D.	GMG2, USN	293	Startin, Duane E.	RM1, USN	MAL
Centari, Frank	EO1, USN	276	Lansing, Donald W.	AEC/TAR, USNR	89	Steed, Charles W.	STCM(SS), USN	MAL
Chaffee, Craig	CTOC, USN,	346	Laue, Roland E.	RM1, USN	MAL	Sukup, John P.	AOC, USN	238
Cooperider, John E.	YNC, USN	MAL	Mahoney, Richard P.	CAPT, USN	24	Swan, Chris L.	HMC(SW), USN	MAL
Crothers, Richard G.	CTRCS, USN	24	Mangold, Gaylord E.	PO1, USN	91	Thomas, Robert L.	CDR, USN	MAL
Davis, Weldon D.	GMC, USN	MAL	May, Charles E.	PO1, USN,	MAL	Trancheff, Mathew T.	BMC, USN	MAL
Dorson, Ray H.	OSCS(SW), USN	263	McCarty, Daniel P.	GYSGT, USMC	161	Troglin, Roy	HMC, USN	14
Ebenhoch, John B.	CPO, USNR	214	McClellan, William J.	RMCS, USN,	136	Turner, Ben O.	ABHC, USN	MAL
Edmonds, Robert L.	BMCS, USN	269	McClintock, Theodore L.	HMCS, USN	210	Tyrrell, Charles J.	AK1, USN	126
Etter, Donald A.	OSC, USN	201	McDaniel, Harold E.	MGYSGT, USMC	86	Ward, Thomas E.	EMCS, USN	70
Fell, David M.	AT1, USN	MAL	McGrew, Russell A.	OSC, USN	47	Watkins, Harvey E.	SM1, USN	MAL
Ferguson, Audry E.	BT1, USN	47	McKay, Conlon G.	CWO3, USN	MAL	Watts, Henderson L.	AFCM, USN	289
Fidler, Duane	HTC, USN	MAL	McKinley, Michael E.	RMC, USN	MAL	Wilkerson, Jimmy R.	MMC, USNR	316
Finlay, Kenneth B.	GMC, USN	MAL	Melder, James M.	EQCM, USN	98	Williams, Joseph L.	POC, USN	MAL
Foster, J.L.	MMCM, USN	MAL	Merrell, Ronald E.	ISCS, USN	40	Wince, Wardell L.	SSGT, USMC	264
Frost, Donald D.	ENC, USN	268	Morey, Gary B.	JO1/CAPT, USN	24	Wolf, Waldon	PSC, USCG	MAL
Fusco, Edmund E.	CWO4, USN	57	Morris, Richard	SKCM, USN	161	Wright, Tommy D.	ICC(SS), USN	295
Gammon, Kenneth	LT, USN	MAL	Myers, Wallace K.	STCM, USN	166			
Gilson, Richard E.	CPO, USN	MAL	Newcomer, Larry F.	YNC, USN	MAL			
Gresty, James D.	ATCS, USN	86	Norleen, Robert D.	PO1, USNR	MAL			
			Noyes, Larry	PRCM, USN	MAL			

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

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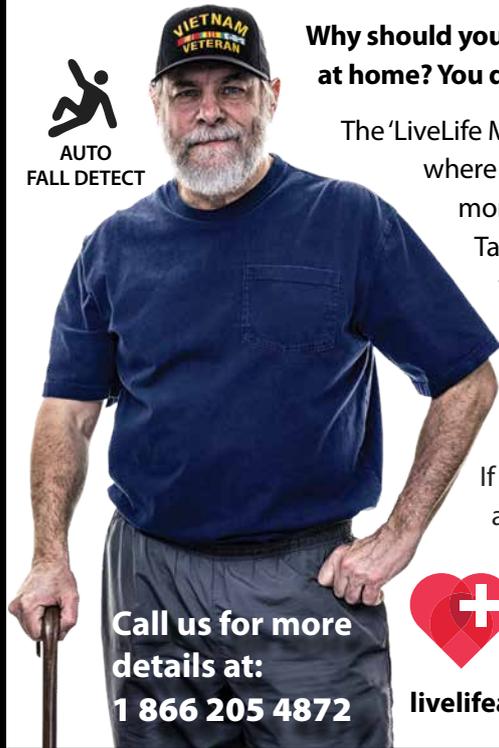
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REUNIONS

USS FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT (CVB/CVA/CV-42) AND SQUADRONS

7/28/2021 - 7/31/2021

Jacksonville, Fla.

Contact: Bill Solt

Telephone: 321-362-5806

Email: sisdill@aol.com

USS JAMES MONROE (SSBN-622)

8/16/2021 - 8/20/2021

Branson, Mo.

Contact: Larry Hook

Telephone: 610-554-7801

Email: hook622@yahoo.com

USS BILLFISH (SSN-676)

8/23/2021 - 8/27/2021

Branson, Mo.

Contact: John Martin

Telephone: 301-697-2803

Email: jmmartin622@yahoo.com

GEARING GROUP

9/8/2021 - 9/12/2021

Indianapolis, Ind.

Contact: Art Jacobson

Telephone: 480-625-5050

Email: artjacobson@yahoo.com

USS RANDOLPH (CV/CVA/CVS-15)

9/12/2021 - 9/19/2021

North Myrtle Beach, S.C.

Contact: June Rizza

Telephone: 321-613-3898

Email: sjrizcv15@aol.com

USS MARS (AFS-1)

9/15/2021 - 9/19/2021

Norfolk, Va.

Contact: Marilou (Stith) Briglin

Telephone: 757-286-3149

Email: marilou.briglin@cox.net

USS STERETT (DD-27, DD-407, DLG/CG-31, DDG-104)

9/16/2021 - 9/19/2021

San Antonio, Texas

Contact: Chuck Bond

Telephone: 360-720-4401

Email: acts.9.15.saul@gmail.com

USS YELLOWSTONE (AD-27)

9/20/2021 - 9/24/2021

Branson, Mo.

Contact: Karen A. Bowen

Telephone: 603-948-2821

Email: pkbowen@atlanticbb.net

USS LA SALLE (LPD/AGF-3)

9/20/2021 - 9/25/2021

Natchez, Miss.

Contact: Arnet Hagen

Telephone: 360-387-7710

Email: einer2@juno.com

USS GOODRICH (DD/DDR-831)

9/21/2021 - 9/24/2021

Indianapolis, Ind.

Contact: Mike Gill

Telephone: 317-445-1639

Email: mgillca35@gmail.com

USS TOWERS (DDG-9)

9/21/2021 - 9/26/2021

Louisville, Ky.

Contact: Raymond Wong

Telephone: 415-601-6285

Email: usstowersddg9@pacbell.net

USS GLACIER (AGB-4)

9/22/2021 - 9/26/2021

Colorado Springs, Colo.

Contact: Chuck White

Telephone: 802-466-3113

Email: wxmanret43@fairpoint.net

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

A Message from the National President



At the recent Northeast/New England Midyear Meeting, North Shore Branch President Robert Dunne certified the branch's sponsorship of Unit 31, which is located in Peabody, Massachusetts. The unit is part of the Northeast/New England Region. Also in attendance were FRA NP Mick Fulton, NVP Jim Campbell, NED Chris Slawinski, and PNP William Starkey. FRA JrPNP Donna Jansky, FRA RPNE/NEng. Abe Zino, and LA FRA RPNE/NEng.

Cindy Rodham-Tuck served as the instituting officer and coordinated the institution, initiation, and installation ceremonies. I was the installing officer for the ceremonies. Unit 31 President Beverley Griffin-Dunne, Unit 31 Secretary Laura Parsons and Unit 31 Chaplain Nicholas Luz were installed and 23 members were initiated. LA FRA NVP Pat Suckow, National Financial Secretary Brenda Horton, National Treasurer Nadine Fulton, PNP Georgia Gallagher and PRP WC Kathy Goheen all assisted with the ceremonies.

Command Senior Chief Angela Collins, who is assigned to the *USS CONSTITUTION*, was invited as the guest speaker for the 2021 FRA and LA FRA Northeast/New England Regional Midyear Meeting, which took place April 16-17, 2021. Collins shared the history of "Old Ironsides," followed by a special tour of the *CONSTITUTION* made available for the meeting attendees.

The hospitality, friendship and special care that were extended to our leadership while attending the Northeast/New England Region meeting were exceptional and sincerely appreciated. I enjoyed meeting the FRA Shipmates and auxiliary members. We all enjoyed experiencing the clam chowder and lobster rolls, visiting the witches museum, the casino, and of course, the tour of the *USS CONSTITUTION*. Thank you to the members of the Northeast/New England Region and



(L to R) LA FRA NP Jackie Scarbro, LA FRA National Treasurer Nadine Fulton and FRA National President Mick Fulton toured the *USS CONSTITUTION*.

Regional Presidents Cindy and Abe for a wonderful experience and a time to remember.

Southeast Mid-year Meeting

I had the opportunity to attend the Southeast Midyear Meeting that was hosted by Branch and Unit 290 on Feb. 20. I wish to thank LA FRA Southeast Regional President Gail Nathan and the members of her region for their hospitality, friendship and fun! I enjoyed the meeting and the time we spent together that evening — fun with the girls.

FRA PNP Mark Kilgore Memorial

I attended the impressive memorial service held to honor FRA PNP Mark Kilgore on Feb. 22. It was conducted at the Barrancas National Cemetery located in Pensacola, Florida, and was followed by the celebration of life that was held with family and friends at the home of Branch 22, which was recently renamed the Mark A. Kilgore Branch 22. PNP Mark will be sorely missed.



The newly formed Unit 31 gathered during the Midyear meeting. Back Row (L to R): Margaret Horvath of Unit 290, PRPSE Gail Bolz of Unit 269, Janet Pierotti of Unit 91, PNP Sandy Robbins of Unit 91, Tracy Farthing of Unit 290, Shannon O'Neil Unit of 290, Kristy Martineau of Unit 290 and Linda Moore of Unit 91. Front Row (L to R): PRPSE Ronalee Klase, PNP Jean Smith, RPSE Gale Nathan, NVP Pat Suckow, NP Jackie Scarbro, National Executive Secretary Vera Thomas, PNP Carolyn Whitaker and PRPSE Jean Gibson of Unit 290.

Necessity Is the Mother of Invention

Due to the restrictions of COVID-19, the inability to hold meetings and the continuing loss of membership, it was necessary to create methods of utilizing and expanding our established communication procedures to publicize outstanding auxiliary accomplishments and curtail the loss of members. The Communication and Publicity Committee was appointed to work with the LA FRA national president, national vice president, national executive secretary and national financial secretary. Utilizing monthly reports and obtaining regional input, no-cost methods were developed to fulfil the needs of the organization. The regional presidents continued their duties and encouraged unit presidents to continually stay in touch with members during the pandemic.

The committee will be utilizing the emails addresses available in our membership database to facilitate and increased the distribution of auxiliary information and bulletins as well as our newsletter, *The Triangle*. Due to these revisions, the distribution of information and communication with the membership continues to improve. Members are urged to forward their email addresses to the NFS at lafransfbrenda@gmail.com to receive *The Triangle* (at no cost) and other auxiliary news.

To bring back members who are no longer active, a letter from the national president, is sent through the email database to acknowledge the members previous support of the auxiliary and also to extend an invitation to return. The emails have been successful and have resulted in members returning to the auxiliary.

Members and guests are invited to become familiar with the newly revised Auxiliary of the Fleet Reserve Association website at www.la-fra.org. On the website, you may obtain information about the national officers, constitution and bylaws, standing rules, unit instructions and rituals, and scholarships. You can also view and print regional, national and administrative forms (all are fillable); convention news and minutes; membership applications; and recent issues of *The Triangle*, which is published each month. The FRA Action Center (www.fra.org/FRA/Web/Content/VotervoiceFullInfo.aspx) is now available through a link on the auxiliary website for interaction and to keep members up to date on FRA legislative issues and responses. The Action Center allows you to convey your concerns directly to your elected officials. **FRA**

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Jackie Scarbro

Jackie is the LA FRA national president.

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Career Change Checklist: Are You Prepared?



Carl M. Trevisan, CFP®



Stephen M. Bearce

If you're considering a job or career change, it's important to do some homework before you make the leap. Many benefits from your current position could be tied to specific dates and time frames. Gathering the right information can help you strategically time your exit and set yourself up for greater success. Consider these steps before you resign:

1. Decide if You'd Prefer to Quit Now or Wait Until You Have an Offer.

This decision requires you to factor in how unhappy you are in your current position and whether or not you're able to live off your savings for a while. If you're in a traditional industry, such as sales, it might be better to find a new opportunity while you're employed. But if you're in high-tech, biotech, private equity, or a similar industry, there may be less risk in taking some time off.

2. Check Your Employment Contract and Noncompete Agreement.

Have a labor attorney review any legal documents you signed when you were hired to evaluate their terms and enforceability. Some contracts may require you to pay back relocation money, education grants or bonuses if you don't stay for a certain period of time. Others include "golden handcuffs" that mean you will lose unvested options, restricted stock, deferred compensation and other benefits upon resignation. Still others may require



Photo from Deposit Photo.

waiting for a specified length of time before taking a job with a competitor.

3. Review Your Retirement Benefits.

Check the vesting schedule for your employer's 401(k) contributions and profit-sharing contributions to see how long you have to work to claim your portion of the money. Many plans require you be employed on the last day of the plan year to get employer contributions for that year. You may want to wait until after the plan year ends before you terminate employment so you don't lose those contributions.

4. Check the Terms of Stock Options, Restricted Stock or Other Forms of Non-salary Compensation.

You may want to delay your departure if a valuable number of options will vest in the

near future. If you're already vested, find out if you're still subject to the same trading windows and how much time you have to exercise your vested options once you resign. In many cases,

Decide if you'd prefer to quit now or wait until you have an offer.

options expire if they aren't exercised within a certain time frame — typically 90 days after your departure.

5. Spend Your FSA Accounts.

If you put pretax money into a flexible spending account, or FSA, try to spend down the account before you resign. FSAs typically operate on a use-it-or-lose-it basis (though you may be able to extend under the Consolidated

Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act). In contrast, if you have money in a health savings account, or HSA, that money is yours to keep.

6. Consult a Financial Advisor.

Whether you're planning to take some time off or go right into to a new job, an advisor can provide valuable financial guidance through the transition.

FRA

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

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