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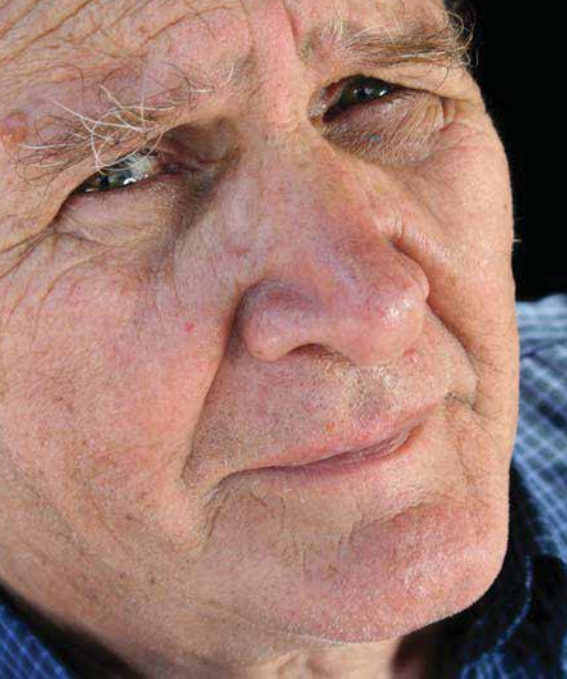
## Honoring our Nation's Heroes

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# Featured

- 18 HONORING OUR NATION'S HEROES**  
Memorial Day brings to mind vivid images of flowers and flags lovingly and respectfully placed near headstones in cemeteries across the nation. And nowhere are these images more profoundly visible than at our national veterans' cemeteries.



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### LOYALTY, PROTECTION AND SERVICE

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### ON THE COVER

Hero stones are left on the headstones of fallen warriors in Arlington National Cemetery. Photo by Sandy Jones.



Lauren Armstrong

## Change and Consistency

**IT'S TRULY A PRIVILEGE** to be writing this column as FRA's new Director of Communications. Our membership magazine has seen many dramatic and positive changes since I was the editor of *Naval Affairs* many years ago and I tip my hat to my predecessor, Eileen Murphy, who so ably steered the course for *FRA Today*. It's not often you get a second chance to do a job you love and it's an honor to retake the publishing reins.

As the adage goes: The more things change, the more they stay the same. FRA's mission to protect and enhance the quality of life for enlisted members of the Sea Services and their families hasn't changed since our birth in 1924, and our work is more important than ever. As Congress wrestles to cut federal spending, benefits and quality-of-life programs for our members are consistently in the budgetary crosshairs. FRA's primary mission is to make sure lawmakers understand the challenges of military service and remember the commitments made to past and present service members.

We invite all shipmates to advance the Association's legislative agenda by communicating their concerns to their elected officials. It's easy with FRA's online Action Center at [www.fra.org](http://www.fra.org), where you can easily send pre-written letters (or you can write your own) about initiatives that affect shipmates.

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FRA congratulates FRA Branch 289 (Imperial Beach, Calif.) as they celebrate their 50th anniversary. Join the celebration on May 20th at the Branch Home, 659 Silver Strand Blvd., Imperial Beach, immediately following ceremonies at the Imperial Beach Veterans Park (approximately at noon). For more information, contact Shipmates Paul Hanson at 619-429-3485, John Quesnel at 619-399-9423 or Bill Weatherford at 619-429-3485.

**Lauren Armstrong** is FRA's Director of Communications and serves as the Managing Editor of *FRA Today*. Please contact her at [lauren@fra.org](mailto:lauren@fra.org).

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## 2014 DoD Budget: Cap Military Raises, Hike Retiree Health Fees

April 11, 2013

by Tom Philpott

*Note from NED Barnes: The Administration's budget proposal for FY 2014 includes a number of provisions that could greatly impact FRA shipmates and their families. Tom Philpott's "Military Update" column (below) offers a concise summary.*

**TRYING ONCE MORE TO** get military compensation costs "under control," the Obama administration has asked Congress to cap annual active duty and reserve component pay raises, and to phase in over four years a complex formula for raising TRICARE fees on retirees of all ages and their families.

The five-year budget plan proposes that annual pay raises be held at one percent from 2014 through 2016 and be raised to 1.5 percent in 2017 and to 2.5 percent in 2018, said Robert Hale, the Department of Defense's under secretary and comptroller.

The first year's pay cap alone, which would trim just eight-tenths of a percentage point off a scheduled 1.8 percent increase to match private sector wage growth, would save \$540 million in 2014 and \$3.5 billion through 2018, officials said.

As in years past, the administration seeks to cut health costs by having retirees and families pay more under all three options of TRICARE.

Here are details of these proposals:

**TRICARE PRIME** — The current family enrollment fee of \$539 for working-age retirees (under age 65) would increase next year to equal 2.95 percent of the individual's gross retired pay. But for 2014 the fee would be subject to an annual minimum, or floor, of \$548 and a ceiling of \$750 (\$900 for flag officers). The fee would be raised to 3.3 percent of gross retired pay in 2015 with a floor of \$558 and ceiling of \$900 (\$1200 for flag); 3.65 percent in

2016 with floor of \$569 and ceiling of \$1050 (\$1500 for flag); and so on until reaching four percent of gross retired pay in 2018 with a floor of \$594 and ceiling of \$1226 (\$1840 for flag).

Fees for single coverage would be half these amounts.

**TRICARE STANDARD/EXTRA** — For the first time, users of these options would face an annual enrollment fee, starting at \$70 for single coverage or \$140 for family, and rising each year until reaching \$125 (individual) and \$250 (family) in 2018. Also, the current annual deductible of \$150 (individual) and \$300 (family) would gradually increase, starting in 2014 and until it reached \$290 (individual) and \$580 (family) in 2018.

**ADJUSTMENTS** — After 2018, all TRICARE enrollment fees, floors and ceilings, and deductibles for retirees would climb yearly by the same percentage increase of cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) for military retired pay to keep pace with inflation.

**TRICARE FOR LIFE** — Beneficiaries 65 and older can use TRICARE for Life as a golden supplement to Medicare. Officials said a comparable individual policy in 2009 would cost \$2100 in the private sector. So, they reason, military elderly should at least pay a small enrollment fee.

The fee would equal one-half of one percentage point of gross retired pay in 2014; one percent in 2015; 1.5 percent in 2016, and two percent in 2017 and in 2018. But the fees would have ceilings: no more than \$150 a year in 2014; no more than \$300 in 2015, \$450 in 2016, \$600 in 2017 and no more than \$618 in 2018. Flag officers would face higher ceilings though not substantial. After 2017, these fees would be adjusted by the percentage of retiree COLAs.



Joe Barnes

**PHARMACY FEES** — The administration wants to follow last year's increases in pharmacy co-pays with additional increases phased in to encourage greater use of mail order and generic drugs.

**CATASTROPHIC CAP** — The current cap on total out-of-pocket TRICARE costs of \$3000 a year would be raised for retirees in two ways: by excluding any TRICARE enrollment fees from counting toward the cap; and by raising the cap annually by the percentage of retiree COLA.

Officials hope tying the size of fees to level of retired pay will soften resistance in Congress. Also, this year's plan would exempt from any fee increases the survivors of members who die on active duty and persons medically retired from service. And the department no longer is asking that TRICARE fees be adjusted annually based on medical inflation.

That concession to use retiree COLAs instead might be less than it appears. The Obama budget proposes, as part of a larger debt-reduction deal, that all federal COLAs, including for Social Security, veteran benefits and retirement plans, switch to a "chained" Consumer Price Index to measure inflation. This CPI would save billions of dollars annually by shaving every COLA by a fraction of a percentage point.

Obama's support for it is conditional; Republicans must agree to close some corporate tax loopholes and to raise taxes on the wealthy. Still, Obama support of chained CPI has drawn fire from some Democrats and liberals in Congress. Sen. Bernie Sanders, an Independent from Vermont who chairs the Veterans Affairs Committee, added language

*continued on page 14*

## Developing Strong Enlisted Leaders

First, I want to say “Bravo Zulu” for [MCPON Stevens’] Zeroing in on Excellence initiative! As a long-ago graduate of the Senior Enlisted Academy (Class 10), I tune in to articles such as these when I see them. This is a significant interview. Much has occurred since I retired in 1989 after 24 years. Being a leader IS a full time job and there is NO room for amateurs. MCPON Stevens lays out in great detail an attainable goal of ensuring only the best are in leadership positions. In today’s Navy manning is short, money is short and obligations are huge, and there is no time available to waste fixing poor leadership mistakes. I especially applaud his inclusion of [junior officers] in this vision. The division officer is possibly a future flag officer, and I certainly want him to look back fondly to relationships with the Chiefs he/she has served with while rising through the ranks. I want to say to all the Chief Messes in today’s fleet: Get on board MCPON’s boat; what he speaks is strait skinny! It is a continuing process and MCPON Stevens lays out a good course for accomplishment.



*Dayle I. Fish*

I just read the article regarding MCPON Mike Stevens’ quest to develop strong enlisted leaders. While I agree that we should always strive for excellence, it strikes me that the stance Stevens is taking carries with it a strong implication that the enlisted leaders of the past were somehow inadequate and fell far short of the expectations that the Navy had of them. If this is his message, nothing could be further from the truth.

The Chiefs that played a strong role in guiding me and providing me with role models upon which I could base my own growth as a Chief Petty Officer, were veterans of WWII and the Korean War. They were veterans who joined the Navy as volunteers at a time when defending our shores was the only choice most young American males could make with a clear conscience. Their technology was considerably behind what we enjoy today, but their leadership qualities cannot be questioned. As with everything, there is always room for improvement, but in my mind, the two most important factors in determining a Chief’s worth are:

1. How well he accomplishes the mission to which he has been assigned, and
2. How well he takes care of his men.

With regard to accomplishing mission, I think our Chiefs, past and present, do an admirable job at accomplishing this first factor.

With regard to taking care of his men, this includes looking out for their welfare and safety, providing guidance to them and helping them to avoid pitfalls that face all young

enlisted. This guidance includes mentoring and getting to know the men and [providing] feedback that will help them improve the areas in which they need strengthening and encouraging them to use [their strengths] to their advantage. Lastly, this mentoring takes the form of providing a positive role model that they can enthusiastically follow.

In recent years, I believe that there has been a lessening of this commitment to subordinates. I believe there has been too much emphasis placed on preparation for the Chief’s own advancement and too little on guiding and mentoring those under the Chief’s charge.

Additionally, the inclusion of insignificant factors such as Bachelor’s and Master’s Degrees in determining eligibility for [advancement] has done these fine Chiefs a disservice. I cannot think of a single Chief Petty Officer duty that requires a college degree to perform successfully. While education for its own sake is admirable, what we are creating is a group of senior enlisted personnel who really have no suitable place in which to exhibit their wares. Having them acquire college degrees doesn’t really qualify them to do anything special.

During the last year, I’ve watched while the Navy released hundreds of extraordinarily qualified young [sailors, separating them] from the Navy at the 13–15 year mark for no apparent reason, other than to satisfy some personnel rate/rating imbalance. They had the rug pulled out from under them and a promising career cut short without the chance to complete their obligation for a career they were promised. It’s a pity that the Navy appears to have had their fingers crossed behind their back when making those promises.

I have gone from an enthusiastic cheerleader promoting a career in the Navy, to a 50-year member of the FRA who can no longer automatically recommend a Navy career to a promising young sailor, because I can no longer state without reservation that the Navy will always do the honorable thing. For shame!

*Robert E. Lowell*

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**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](mailto: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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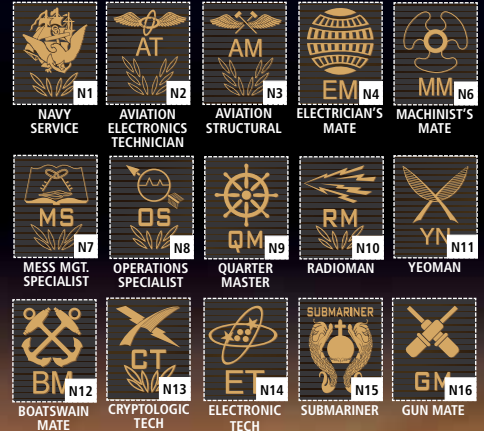


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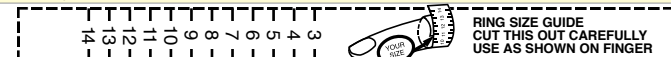
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## FY 2014 Budget Seeks TRICARE Fee Increases, Reduced COLAs, Smaller Military Pay Hikes



John Davis

**THE ADMINISTRATION RELEASED ITS** proposed FY 2014 budget in early April, which includes a variety of proposals that threaten future benefits for military personnel and retirees. The budget proposal includes a complex plan to increase existing TRICARE Prime enrollment fees, implement new fees for TRICARE Standard and future TRICARE-for-Life beneficiaries, and phase-in higher pharmacy co-pays over four years. Active duty personnel, survivors of active duty members who died on active duty, medically retired, and current TRICARE-for-Life beneficiaries are excluded from the proposed health care fee increases. (See NED Perspective on page 5 for more specifics.)

The Administration's budget request proposes using the chained Consumer Price Index (CPI) to calculate future Cost-of-Living-Adjustments (COLA) for military retirees, veterans and Social Security recipients. The chained CPI would be used in lieu of the current CPI and would generally reduce COLA increases by 0.2 to 0.3 percent (compared to the current CPI calculations), based on National Review analysis of data since 2000. The White House claims the chained CPI will reduce the impact on Social Security beneficiaries age 77 and older. FRA is committed to ensuring equitable COLAs for all military and veteran beneficiaries.

The budget also seeks to reduce the percentage increase for active duty pay for FY 2014 and beyond. The plan seeks a one-percent increase for 2014 (versus the 1.8

percent increase necessary to keep pace with civilian pay scales), which would result in an average enlisted pay increase of \$26 (versus \$47) per month. If approved it would be the first time since the 1990s that military pay increases were less than civilian pay hikes. Additionally, the budget reduces funding for bonuses and special pays, and provides for a one-time round of military base realignments and closures (BRAC).

The Administration proposes to increase Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) FY 2014 spending by 10 percent and designates an additional \$1.1 billion (1.9 percent) above FY 2014 levels in advanced appropriations for medical care in FY 2015. Funding the VA's transition to a paperless claims system in all 56 regional offices is a top budget priority.

FY 2014 funding for the U.S. Coast Guard shrinks in the Administration's budget plan. Coast Guard funding would be reduced from \$11.03 billion in FY 2013 to \$9.79 billion in FY 2014.

In related news, the House and Senate each passed spending plans for the next 10 years. For the first time in four years, each chamber presented a plan for the annual appropriations process. Of particular note to FRA shipmates is the Senate-approved provision that would prohibit applying the less-generous chained CPI formula when calculating COLAs for veterans' benefits.

### FY 2013 Funding Becomes Law

Congress and the White House approved a FY 2013 spending bill (H.R. 933) in late March that averted a government shutdown and authorizes appropriations for the Departments of Defense (DoD), Veterans Affairs (VA), Homeland Security (including the U.S. Coast Guard), and other agencies for the remainder of FY 2013. The measure follows a continuing resolution (CR) that expired on March 27, 2013 and, although sequestration cuts are maintained for the remainder of

the fiscal year, the bill provides more money for DoD than the expiring CR and allows greater flexibility on where the mandatory budget cuts are made.

Following the bill's passage, the Pentagon announced that Tuition Assistance funding will be restored for some military students, the number of unpaid furlough days for DoD civilian employees will be reduced from 22 to 14, and these furloughs were delayed for two weeks.



## FRA's Full Month's Retired Pay Bill Introduced

Representative Walter Jones (N.C.) recently introduced legislation (H.R. 1360) authorizing surviving spouses (or other designated survivors) to retain the full month's retired pay for the month in which a military retiree passes away. "The Military Retiree Survivor Comfort Act" was introduced at FRA's request in the 113th Congress and seeks to ensure survivors are not unfairly burdened when overpayments occur.

The problem most often occurs when a military retiree dies late in the month. As survivors mourn and work to sort out the details of their loved one's passing, there is sometimes a delay in reporting the death to the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS). If the death report and other administrative details aren't handled before the next retirement payment is processed, an overpayment occurs for the period between the retiree's death and the end of the month. DFAS has the authority to recoup this overpayment directly from the survivor's bank account with little or no warning, often creating financial and further emotional hardship for the family.

Jones' proposal would allow survivors to retain the full month's retired pay for any month in which the retiree was alive for at least 24 hours. To offset the cost associated with this proposal, a provision of the bill would delay the first Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) annuity payment until the month after the retiree dies.

Congress passed a similar law in 1996 allowing surviving spouses to retain veterans' disability and VA pension payments issued for the month of the veteran's death. FRA believes military retired pay should be no different. Members are urged to use the Action Center ([www.fra.org](http://www.fra.org)) to ask their representative to support this important legislation.

## Senate Bill to Correct Misdiagnosed Veterans' Records

Senator Jon Tester (Mont.), a member of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, introduced legislation (S. 628) that would authorize the Physical Disability Board of Review (PDBR) to evaluate and, when necessary, correct service records for veterans diagnosed by the Department of Defense (DoD) with a Personality Disorder (PD) or Adjustment Disorder (AD) and discharged after active-duty deployment. Because PD and AD are considered pre-existing conditions, DoD is not obligated to award these veterans benefits related to their conditions.

The legislation is a companion bill to the "Servicemembers Mental Health Review Act" (H.R. 975), introduced by Rep. Tim Walz in the House last month. Tester and Walz believe many of these veterans are actually suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress (PTS) and are eligible for benefits they've rightfully earned and need to properly reintegrate into civilian life.

Members are asked to use the FRA Action Center ([www.fra.org](http://www.fra.org)) to ask their legislators to support these proposals.

## House Panel Reviews VA Patient Wait Times

The House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations recently held a hearing on the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) policies on scheduling and measuring patient wait times. A report by the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) identified inconsistencies in patient wait times as reported by the VA, including unreliable information and varying degrees of policy implementation.

The lengthy scheduling process and wait times have been a long-standing problem within the Veterans Health Administration (VHA), with the GAO reporting on the issue for more a decade. Most recently (December 2012), GAO found that reported wait times for outpatient medical appointment were unreliable. In an April 2012 report, the Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General found that VHA does not have a reliable and accurate

## FRA on Fox News Channel

John Davis, FRA's Director of Legislative Programs, shared FRA's concern over the growing backlog of veterans' disability claims during an interview that aired on



the Fox News Channel in early April. This is a top FRA priority and was addressed by FRA National President Mark Kilgore when he testified before a joint hearing of the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees in March.

Davis cited shipmates' concerns about claims processing delays and the Association's continuing interaction with members of Congress and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) officials on this issue. He also spoke about VA efforts to improve training for claims personnel, streamline the claims process, and leverage technology to speed up the adjudication process. He also called for added benefits for "blue water" veterans, who were exposed to Agent Orange while serving off the coast of Vietnam, and expressed the FRA's disappointment with the recent announcement that the VA and Department of Defense (DoD) are abandoning efforts to create a single electronic health record for active duty military personnel and veterans.

To view the interview, visit <http://video.foxnews.com/v/2274712552001/waiting-warriors-va-backlog-affects-thousands-of-vets/>

method for determining whether they are providing patients timely access to mental health care. First-time patients often wait more than 14 days beyond their desired date of care for treatment appointments and it takes an average of 50 days for mental health patients to get a meeting with a behavioral counselor.

## ACTIVE DUTY/RESERVE ISSUES



### Stolen Valor Legislation Advances

The House Judiciary Committee approved the "Stolen Valor Act" (H.R. 258), sponsored by Rep. Joe Heck (Nev.). The FRA-supported measure seeks to protect the integrity of military awards by making it a crime to knowingly benefit from making fraudulent claims about military decorations.

In June of 2012, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *United States v. Alvarez*, a similar law, on the grounds that it infringed on constitutionally protected free speech. FRA supported the earlier legislation and signed on to a Friend of the Court (Amicus) brief when the case was considered by the high court. The current legislation should withstand constitutional scrutiny because it more narrowly focuses on those who seek to *benefit* from misrepresentation of military service — not the lie itself. The legislation now moves to the House floor for further consideration.

Members are urged to use the Action Center ([www.fra.org](http://www.fra.org)) to support this legislation.

### House Panel Discusses Military Suicide

Jacqueline Garrick, Acting Director of the Defense Suicide Prevention Office, told the House Military Personnel Subcommittee recently that there were 291 confirmed military suicides for FY 2012 and that 59 deaths are still pending determination. These numbers are troubling and reflect a significant increase compared to past years (10.3 military suicides per 100,000 in 2001 to 18.3 per 100,000 in 2010).

Garrick also shared statistics for a comparable civilian population and revealed that the civilian suicide rate is higher (21.8 civilian suicides per 100,000 in 2001; 25.1 per 100,000 in 2010), but military suicides are increasing at a significantly faster rate. Civilian suicides went up 15 percent over the nine-year period, while military suicides went up 77 percent over the same period.

She and other witnesses from the Department of Defense (DoD) testified on DoD's suicide prevention programs. Chief of Naval Personnel VADM Scott Van Bustkirk stated that the Navy had 65 suicides in 2012, six more than last year, and there have been 13 Navy suicides so far in 2013. Discussion also centered on access to behavioral health counselors, particularly for Reserve Component personnel. Van Bustkirk cited 55 counselors available for Marine/Navy Reservists, and Garrick noted the expansion of "Partners in Care," a chaplain program in which faith-based organizations provide support to Reserve Component members.

The Marine Corps has developed policies and programs to make all personnel responsible for the health and well-being of their fellow Marines. Brig. Gen Robert Hedelund, director of Marine and Family Programs, told the subcommittee. "Marines are taught to know each other at a personal level — to know their behavior patterns, their likes and dislikes so they can identify even subtle changes," and then aid them in seeking help if suicide warning signs occur.

Suicide prevention is a high priority for FRA and has been addressed in the Association's recent congressional testimony. FRA believes that efforts to limit and prevent suicide should address financial and marital stress.

### Protect Significance of Purple Heart and Bronze Star

FRA supports legislation introduced in the House (HR 833), sponsored by Rep. Duncan Hunter of California, and the Senate (S. 470), sponsored by Montana Senator Jon Tester, to ensure that the Bronze Star and Purple Heart combat medals rank ahead of a new medal honoring service away from the front lines. The bills are in response to a recent Department of Defense (DoD) announcement that the Distinguished Warfare Medal will recognize extraordinary achievement of unmanned aerial vehicle pilots and cyber warriors, and will be authorized for wear above the Bronze Star and Purple Heart, both of which are awarded only for battlefield service.

Recognizing valor in combat has profound and significant meaning within the military community and FRA believes that recognition for non-combat service should not supersede combat-related awards. FRA National President Mark Kilgore and numerous other leaders of military and veteran organizations signed a letter to President Obama asking his personal involvement to lower the new Distinguished Warfare Medal's standing in the military medals' order of precedence.

In response to these concerns, Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel has directed a 30-day study be conducted to review the policy associated with the new medal.

Members are urged to use the Action Center ([www.fra.org](http://www.fra.org)) to ask their legislators to support the above-referenced bills.



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## ACTIVE DUTY/RESERVE ISSUES

ACTIVE DUTY/RESERVE ISSUES continued from page 10

**Navy Reserve Selects 15th Force Master Chief**

Command Master Chief Clarence "C.J." Mitchell will become the 15th Force Master Chief for the Navy Reserve in October. In his new position, he will be responsible for advising the Chief of Navy Reserve on matters affecting the morale, retention, Sailor development, and general well-being of over 53,000 enlisted Navy Reserve personnel. The Force Master Chief is also charged with ensuring active communications throughout the force, instilling a sense of heritage, and actively promoting Navy core values to all Sailors.

A native of Cincinnati, Ohio, who enlisted in the Navy Reserve in May 1989, Mitchell currently serves as the command master chief for Navy Reserve Forces Command. He will relieve Reserve Force Master Chief Chris Wheeler and is already looking ahead to his new post.

"The office has a legacy of advocacy for Reserve Component Sailors and their families. I'm excited and eager to continue that legacy," said Mitchell. "I plan to focus on continuing our culture of readiness with flexibility, providing the Navy valued capabilities, and caring for our most valuable resource, our Sailors."

**FRA, Consumer Groups Discuss Military Predatory Lending Protections**

FRA, the Consumer Finance Protection Bureau (CFPB) Office of Service Members Affairs, and a number of consumer groups met in March with Department of Defense (DoD) officials to discuss recently enacted improvements to the Military Lending Act (MLA). Provisions of the FY 2013 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA – H.R. 4310/P. L. 112-239) direct DoD to conduct a new study of credit products and practices that harm military borrowers, confer with consumer advocacy groups regarding the study, and promulgate a regulation in 2013 to implement changes in the law. FRA and others in the meeting urged DoD to include more clearly delineated definitions of payday and car title loans in the regulation to address existing loopholes in current protections.

**Senior Enlisted Testify Before MilCon/VA Appropriations Subcommittee**

Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps Micheal Barrett and his Army and Air Force counterparts summarized prepared testimony and ranked their respective quality-of-life concerns in late March before the House Military Construction (MilCon), Veterans Affairs (VA) and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee.

Sergeant Major Barrett emphasized the five pillars of readiness that include:

- Recruiting and retaining high-quality people;
- Maintaining high unit readiness;
- Shaping the force to meet the needs of combat commanders;
- Investing in infrastructure; and
- Equipment modernization that supports our core competencies.

"The quality-of-life needs, ranging from family readiness and schools to improvements in transition assistance and suicide prevention, impact each of these five pillars," said Barrett, who referenced the Corps' 380 Family Readiness Officers who assist with the family readiness mission and the e-Marine program, the secure family readiness website that delivers strategic communications to Marines and their families. Children remain a high priority, with Marine school liaisons in more than 70 school districts providing faculty with information about the needs of Marine Corps families and plans to increase capacity at child development centers in FY 2014. He also explained the new tailored approach to the Marine Transition Assistance Program (TAP) that allows Marines to choose one of four pathways (College, Employment, Vocational, or Entrepreneurship) and the success of the Marine Corps Wounded Warrior Regiment that is "keeping the faith" with the 1016 Marines and families in its ranks.

Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (MCPON) Michael D. Stevens was also scheduled to testify, but was hospitalized and unable to attend the hearing. His written statement was entered into the record and members of the committee were asked to submit written questions to MCPON.

**FRA Co-Sponsors House Guard and Reserve Caucus**

FRA joined 12 other military and veterans' organizations in cosponsoring the 16th annual House Reserve Component Caucus Breakfast on Capitol Hill in mid-March. Reps. Duncan Hunter (Calif.) and Tim Walz (Minn.) cochair the bipartisan caucus and attendees included caucus members, officials from the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Reserve Component senior enlisted leaders and members of key military associations, including FRA.

The keynote speaker was Assistant Secretary of Defense (Reserve Affairs) Paul D. Patrick, who is a former Army Reserve Major General. He discussed the upcoming Quadrennial Defense Review (2014) and its potential impact on the Reserve Component, and predicted constrained budgets for Defense for the foreseeable future, resulting in active duty end-strength reductions. This will require the Reserve Component to remain an integral and important operational reserve force. He suggested that Reservists will likely be required to undertake at least one 12-month deployment during six-year enlistments.



Sgt. Maj. Micheal P. Barrett, the 17th Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, testifies before the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Military Personnel in the U.S. Capitol Complex, Washington D.C., March 22, 2012.

U.S. Marine Corps photo by MC2 Thomas L. Resprin

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*NED PERSPECTIVE continued from page 5*

to the Senate's non-binding budget resolution to oppose it. If the chained CPI is adopted, said Sanders, "veterans who started receiving VA disability benefits at age 30 would have their benefits reduced by \$1,425 [a year by] age 45."

In unveiling the 2014 defense budget request, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel said the smaller pay raises and TRICARE changes would save \$1.4 billion next year and \$12.8 billion over just five years. The TRICARE changes, he said, would "bring the beneficiary's cost-share closer to the levels envisioned when the program was first implemented."

In 1996, officials said, retirees covered 27 percent of total TRICARE costs with enrollment fees, deductibles

### MCPON Stevens Visits FRA NHQ



CMDCM Scott Flemming, FRA NED Joe Barnes, MCPON Mike Stevens, FRA OM Bob Washington and CMDCM Jeff Garrison pose during MCPON's recent visit at FRA National Headquarters.

The FRA Legislative team is Joe Barnes, National Executive Director; John Davis, Director of Legislative Programs; Bob Washington, Health Care Advisor and Outreach Manager; Chris Slawinski, National Veterans Service Officer and Ed Dockery, Assistant Director of Legislative Programs.

or co-payments. Today, their out-of-pocket costs cover only 11 percent.

Asked to recall how hard it was to vote for higher TRICARE fees when he was a senator, Hagel said times are different now. When he left Congress in 2009 the global financial crisis was just beginning. Today, the Department of Defense is struggling with \$41 billion in automatic cuts this year from budget sequestration. It faces \$500 billion in more cuts over the next decade if the administration and Congress can't partner on a solution.

The \$527 billion defense budget for 2014 assumes that a large debt-reduction deal is reached and sequestration ends. The defense share of the deal would be \$150 billion in cuts over the decade versus \$500 billion under

sequestration. If slowing compensation growth isn't apart of that \$150 billion cut, Defense officials said, deeper force cuts are inevitable.

*To comment, write Military Update, P.O. Box 231111, Centreville, VA, or e-mail [milupdate@aol.com](mailto:milupdate@aol.com) or on Twitter: [@TomPhilpott](https://twitter.com/TomPhilpott) @Military\_Update*

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





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## Bolstering Attendance at Branch Meetings

**INTERESTING PROGRAMS AND ENGAGING** activities are very important to attracting shipmates to attend monthly branch meetings. Shipmates who are actively engaged in Association events and business are more likely to retain their membership, and make meetings more fun for everyone! Several branches have reported how they've improved attendance and involvement.

Shipmate Viviano Cruz, Jr., past president of Southern Luzon Branch 171, Philippines, says communicating with shipmates is the key to strong attendance. The branch notifies members at least one week prior to the monthly meeting, indicating when and where the meeting will be held. Several members volunteer to pick up others in carpools and guest speakers often give presentations on specific topics such as TRICARE and other benefits. The branch also takes special care to acknowledge shipmates' membership milestones and recognize those who provide extraordinary service to the branch and/or Association.

A change in meeting location and a very aggressive recruiting campaign helped to increase both meeting attendance and membership for Branch 13, Atlantic City, N.J. The meeting location was changed to a private room in a restaurant on a Saturday morning, which helped to increase meeting attendance from the usual eight to 14 shipmates and included their spouses, who are discussing the possibility of forming an FRA Auxiliary unit. Branch President Bob Campbell says this change and an all-out recruiting effort has paid dividends, increasing branch membership by more than 28 percent in the past year.

According to PRPSC Dave Field, secretary of Branch 162 in New Orleans, La., the best way to communicate with branch members is through

a consistent Call Program. Members who have not attended meetings in a while are called and reminded about the upcoming branch meeting. As a result, attendance has increased by approximately 50 percent. FRA National Headquarters uses a Call Program to effectively retain Members-at-Large and encourages all branch officers to learn more about the program by visiting the "Branch and Regional Officers" page at [www.fra.org](http://www.fra.org). The page provides tips on finding terminated members or those whose membership are about to expire.

Our new membership year began on April 1, 2013 and will end on March 31, 2014. Let's strive to strengthen our recruiting and retention efforts through effective communications and engaging meetings and events.

### Membership Success

There are 34 branches that increased or maintained their membership during the 2012–2013 membership year. These branches will receive the 100% Award Gold Ribbon at the 86th FRA National Convention in October. Congratulations to:

Branch 290—Mayport, Fla.  
Branch 70—Poway, Calif.  
Branch 261—Lemoore, Calif.  
Branch 293—Elizabeth City, N.C.  
Branch 162—New Orleans, La.  
Branch 248—Camden County, Ga.  
Branch 307—Gulfport, Miss.  
Branch 4—Washington, D.C.  
Branch 367—San Miguel, P.I.  
Branch 302—Carson, Calif.  
Branch 174—Sequim, Wash.  
Branch 212—Meade, Md.  
Branch 338—Nashua, N.H.  
Branch 13—Atlantic City, N.J.  
Branch 137—Minden, Nev.  
Branch 215—Savannah, Ga.  
Branch 247—Dagupan City, P.I.  
Branch 83—San Narciso, P.I.  
Branch 111—Batangas, P.I.



Penny Collins

Branch 273—Fargo, N.D.  
Branch 245—Bellingham, Wash.  
Branch 98—Shreveport, La.  
Branch 206—Bowling Green, Ky.  
Branch 310—Silverdale, Wash.  
Branch 145—Lincoln, Nebr.  
Branch 118—Cape Coral, Fla.  
Branch 272—San Luis Obispo, Calif.  
Branch 327—Dayton, Ohio  
Branch 197—Modesto, Calif.  
Branch 254—Myrtle Beach, N.C.  
Branch 260—Golden Valley, Ariz.  
Branch 113—Stockton, Calif.  
Branch 315—Joplin, Mo.  
Branch 283—Elsmere, Ky.

At the end of each membership year, we present membership awards to 10 shipmates randomly selected from the pool of members who recruited others. The winners will receive an extension on their membership or cash equivalent, if they are life members. The winners are:

**First Place:** Richard T. Moriarty, Branch 147 (Sanford, Fla.) — 5-year extension

**Second Place:** Kenneth E. O'Connor, Branch 86 (Millington, Tenn.) — 3-year extension

**Third Place:** Michael S. Huffman, Branch 103 (Yokosuka, Japan) — 2-year cash equivalent

**Fourth through Tenth Place:** Timothy J. Veitch, Branch 91 (Jacksonville, Fla.); William S. Matthews, Branch 197 (Modesto, Calif.); Anderson Wigley, Jr., Branch 62 (San Diego, Calif.); Anthony S. Gallegos, Branch 261 (LeMoore, Calif.); John Patrick Holler, Branch 290 (Mayport, Fla.); Norman J. Bundy, Branch 234 (Anderson, S.C.); Brandon Jordan, Branch 20 (Groton, Conn.) — 1-year extension or cash equivalent

**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](mailto:penny@fra.org).

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# Honoring our Nation's Heroes

More than 118,000 veterans and family members were laid to rest in veterans' cemeteries last year. That's an average of 325 burials per day and projections indicate that number will increase in the coming years. The Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) National Cemetery Administration (NCA) is serving our nation's veterans and their families with dignity, respect and professionalism, and exploring ways to provide even better service to more beneficiaries in the future.

by Lauren Armstrong



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National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, Honolulu, Hawaii. Photo provided by the National Cemetery Administration.

also eligible for burial benefits, even though they were never discharged or became veterans in the more traditional sense. And, of course, veterans who served their two or four years and were discharged under conditions other than dishonorable are also eligible. Reservists and National Guard members with 20 years of service, who are entitled to retired pay, may also be interred in veterans' cemeteries, as are veteran's spouses, minor children and certain eligible parents."

Despite NCA's concerted outreach efforts, many veterans don't realize their spouses are eligible for burial with them in national cemeteries. In fact, the spouse or surviving spouse of an eligible veteran is eligible for interment in a national cemetery, even if that veteran is not buried or memorialized in a national cemetery.

And, according to Muro, there seems to be particular confusion about this when the non-veteran spouse dies *before* the veteran or when the veteran is a female. "It's heartbreaking when we hear, for example, that a veteran buries his wife in a private cemetery due to this lack of awareness."

*For more information about VA burial benefits, visit [www.cem.va.gov](http://www.cem.va.gov) or call 1-800-827-1000.*

## Honor and Respect

Providing burial benefits to fallen veterans is the last earthly tribute our nation can pay to the men and women who've honorably served in uniform. Interment in a national veterans' cemetery ensures they will rest in a place of dignity — a national shrine — befitting their service and sacrifice. Ensuring their loved ones are shown the highest level of courtesy, compassion and respect is also an important component of this tribute.

"We only get one chance to get it right," explains Steve Muro, Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs within the VA. "We expect our staff to handle every burial and every interaction with the families as if it was one of their loved ones. We try to instill this in every employee at every level of our organization, and every member of our staff, from caretakers to directors, receives training in customer service."

Providing burial space for veterans and eligible family members is one of NCA's primary responsibilities and the organization handles a full range of burial options, including in-ground interment of casketed or cremated remains or columbarium placement for veterans whose bodies have been cremated. For those who are interred in a national or state veterans' cemetery, the benefit also includes a gravesite, the opening and closing of the grave, a grave liner and perpetual care of the gravesite. All eligible veterans, even those laid to rest in private cemeteries, can also receive a headstone, marker or medallion; a U.S. flag and a Presidential Memorial Certificate at no cost to the veteran's family.

"One of our biggest challenges is getting the word out and letting veterans and their family members know what benefits have been earned," explains Muro. "Many military retirees or those who had multiple periods of service aren't aware that they're eligible. Service members who die on active duty are

## Commitment to Excellence

This treat-them-like-family perspective is evident in all facets of NCA's work and there's a real sense that "doing right" by the veterans and their families is a top priority. Muro, who began his NCA career 35 years ago, has seen an increasing level of accountability and commitment during his long tenure with the organization.

And he should know. He's held a variety of positions within NCA, starting out as an automotive mechanic at the Los Angeles National Cemetery in 1978 and shouldering increasing responsibility over the ensuing years. He's served as assistant director and director at seven national cemeteries, director of the Memorial Service Network V and now as Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs. He brings a unique historical perspective and broad understanding of the agency's culture and operations to his current post and believes the most important improvement to NCA's work came in 2002, when standards were set for cemeteries to be national shrines.

"We really try to treat every burial as we'd want our family members to be treated," says Muro, "and setting these standards gave us a target to stretch toward and really helped us move to the next level."



To help achieve these standards nationwide, NCA opened a customer service training center in 2004, where cemetery directors go through a one-year, in-residence training program in St. Louis. They learn leadership, management and technical cemetery operations, and have a mentor who helps them through the program and continues to provide support for a year following the training period. The curriculum is revised annually and there's an ongoing process for graduates to provide feedback and share what they feel was missing from their training.

"They learn every facet of cemetery operations, including administration responsibilities and being a cemetery representative," explains Muro. "They visit our national scheduling office and make a cold-weather visit to Fort Snelling (Minn.), where they can observe winter operations. They're trained to understand all the pieces and parts of cemetery operations and customer service."

During his days as the director of the Riverside (Calif.) National Cemetery, Muro learned just how valuable this broad-based training ... and his Seabee "Can Do" attitude ... can be. "At that time, we were performing about 4,000 burials a year at Riverside, and it's still the busiest national cemetery by far, with about 8,000 burials annually. It was and is a very busy operation," he recalls. "There was a flu epidemic that hit our staff particularly hard and left us with only about half our manpower. You can't just tell a family, 'Sorry, we can't do your father's burial today because our staff is out sick,' so we all had to step up and do what needed to be done. We had people doing all sorts of jobs they normally wouldn't. Cemetery reps were answering the phones and assistant directors were mowing grass. Everyone pitched in and I don't think any family member had any idea that we were short-staffed."

In many cases, this kind of flexibility isn't as unusual as it may seem at first blush, according to Muro. "We have directors who started out as caretakers and, as a result, they understand all that's involved with mowing, trimming, digging graves, etc. Some of our directors previously served as cemetery reps, so they understand what it takes to work with the families and funeral homes to make sure the service goes smoothly and is conducted with dignity."

But not all directors are former NCA employees. "Many of our applicants are service members who are separating from active duty or Department of Defense (DoD) employees who are looking for a change," Muro explains. "Last year there were 440 applicants for 15 openings in the director intern program. We can afford to be very selective."



## Effective Results and a Vision for the Future

By all accounts, the process is working well. NCA has an unsurpassed record of customer satisfaction, outscoring 100 other federal agencies and industry leaders like FedEx and Coca-Cola four consecutive times on the independent American Customer Satisfaction Index. Thanks to its commitment and professionalism, the agency also receives consistently high marks in its own annual survey of its customers.

But NCA isn't resting on its laurels. Instead, there are numerous initiatives to provide better service to more veterans and their families. NCA is working to extend the life of its existing cemeteries, and develop new national cemeteries, and is taking steps to improve service to veterans in both urban and rural areas.

"In the past, we built national cemeteries in areas that had 170,000 or more veterans residing within a 75-mile radius; that was our criteria," says Muro. "But, until recently, we weren't authorized to purchase land. We could only use land that was donated or transferred to us and sometimes that land wasn't located near a concentrated veteran population. NCA now has the ability to purchase land, so we can determine where there's a need and work to meet it."

Areas where there were between 25,000 and 80,000 veterans have traditionally been served by state veterans' cemeteries — the state owns the land and agrees to manage it at the VA standards for national shrines. "There are currently six states without national veterans' cemeteries, but state cemeteries allow us to have a presence in each of the 50 states," continues Muro.





Fort Bliss National Cemetery, El Paso County, Texas.  
Photo provided by the National Cemetery Administration.

live in the broader metropolitan area. We won't be increasing the number of veterans and families served in and near New York, Indianapolis, Chicago, San Francisco and Los Angeles, but we will be making it easier for them to visit the cemetery and their loved ones."

## Burial Trends

The agency is also exploring other ways to better serve veterans and their families, and provide them the types of services they are requesting.

For example, 48 percent of all burials in VA cemeteries are cremations. That's up from just 3.3 percent in 1973. To accommodate this growing trend, NCA is adding columbarium facilities to many existing cemeteries and includes columbaria in the design of all new cemeteries. Similarly, because the scattering of ashes is prohibited in some states, NCA is working to construct ossuaries at state and national vet cemeteries. These are sites where cremated remains may be scattered or commingled with other veterans' ashes in an in-ground vault.

"We're also getting more requests from families who want to plant a tree near their loved one's gravesite," explains Muro of another emerging trend, "so we're working to incorporate groves of trees into our new cemeteries. We're only planting about a third of the designed number, with the assumption that the remaining two-thirds will be filled in with individual requests. We're also getting more and more requests for direct burial — burial of remains wrapped in a shroud and without a casket. We're exploring ways to provide this benefit and maintain the sites as sacred shrines."

This may sound like a simple request, but maintaining these direct burial sites present a unique challenge. "Most casket burials continue to sink for about 50 years after interment, which requires continual maintenance to fill in the voids. We prefer concrete or metal graveliners and have started pre-placing crypts. Not only does it reduce the settling and the associated maintenance requirements, it also allows us more effective use of land and other resources," says Muro. "These graves can be dug en masse, saving time and manpower at the time of need, and pre-placing the crypts provides more effective use of the land. Traditional burials allow us to inter 750 and 800 veterans on an acre of land, but with the crypts, we can often accommodate twice that many."

NCA is also doing studies to find out what options families will want in the next 10 to 30 years, including burying veterans in underwater reefs. "NCA cannot provide burials at sea, but there

But what about areas with veteran populations of between 80,000 and 170,000 veterans?

"Three years ago, we changed the criteria for national cemeteries to be built in places where there are 80,000 veterans within a 75-mile radius. We're constructing five new national cemeteries — two in Florida and one each in Nebraska, New York and Colorado — that will serve areas with between 90,000 and 110,000 veterans. As a result, we're able to serve a larger percentage of the veteran population and, by 2015, we hope to offer a burial option to 95 percent of all veterans within state or national cemeteries."

Expanding options in areas where the unserved veteran population is 25,000 or less, as well as in urban areas, will also help NCA reach this goal. The agency's Rural Initiative involves developing partnerships with existing private cemeteries to create special sections designated exclusively for veterans.

"Similar to 'soldier plots' of the past, these three- to five-acre areas will be maintained to meet all VA standards," explains Muro. "NCA will oversee contracts for maintenance, funeral services and other VA-related functions. This initiative will serve areas where there are fewer than 25,000 veterans within 75 miles and is underway in Maine, Wisconsin, North Dakota, Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Utah and Nevada. This new initiative will make VA burial options available to more than 136,000 veterans and eligible dependents."

NCA's Urban Initiative involves building five new columbarium-only facilities at satellite sites around the country, in cities where active national cemeteries already exist, but may not be conveniently located. "Customer feedback tells us that, even though an existing national cemetery is located in their city, it's still too far away for many of the veterans and families who



are initiatives where dome-like reefs are constructed of concrete mixed with the cremated remains and then submerged off the coast. The reef holds a plaque with GPS coordinates so divers and family members can find the location, and a memorial plaque or marker is mounted in a cemetery on land," Muro describes. "There is currently a charge for this service, but we hope to have it be part of veterans' burial benefits in the future. The cremated remains of eight veterans can be mixed into one reef, so we will probably have to accumulate the ashes until we have enough to construct a reef."

### Technology

NCA is also using a variety of technological advancements to improve their processes and preserve the legacy of each veteran for generations to come. The agency has hand-written ledgers and records of interment dating back to the Civil War and all of this data has been manually entered into NCA's digital Burial Operations Support System (BOSS). Digitizing this information is a key element of the VA's Nationwide Grave Locator ([gravelocator.cem.va.gov](http://gravelocator.cem.va.gov)), a website where visitors can search for burial locations of veterans and their family members in VA national and state cemeteries, various other military and Department of Interior cemeteries, and for some veterans buried in private cemeteries when the grave is marked with a government grave marker.



"We took all our burial records digital back in 1994, including burial records for those buried in veterans' cemeteries dating back to the 1800s. If a veteran is buried in a private cemetery, however, our records only go back to 1997. In an effort to ensure all veterans' final resting places are available in our online Grave Locator, we need help from family members," encourages Muro. "If the VA issued a headstone for placement in a private cemetery prior to 1997, the family can send a photo of the stone and address of the cemetery and have the grave's location added to the VA's digital database and locator."

NCA recently partnered with Ancestry.com, a genealogy website, to digitally reproduce and index the old ledgers so they are more accessible to the public. "Cemetery personnel, researchers and family members can now make easy use of these records for free at many public libraries and National Archives facilities, and by subscription to Ancestry.com. This allows more people to learn more about early service

## NCA BY THE NUMBERS

Presidential Memorial Certificates Ordered in  
FY 2012

719,094

131

VA Cemeteries

Acres

20,000

118,160

Interments in FY 2012

88

State and Tribal  
Cemeteries

3.8

Family Members in

Million Veterans,  
Service Members,  
Reservists and

3.2

Million Gravesites

354,573

Million Visitors

7.4

Headstone and Marker  
Applications Processed  
in FY 2012

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Several FRA shipmates from Branch 136 are members of the Fort Snelling Memorial Rifle Squad. Shown (l to r) are Al Moller, Tim Gabrio and Mike Pluta.

members and veterans buried in VA national and other military cemeteries.”

There are several other initiatives on the horizon that will allow NCA to leverage technology for the benefit of veterans’ families. “We hope to get the Grave Locator linked to GPS [global positioning system] and make the site more user-friendly for those accessing it from their cell phones or other mobile device. This will allow cemetery visitors to do an online search and then get directions to the specific gravesite.”

According to Muro, this and related technologies will also help NCA ensure site locations, proper headstone placement and will facilitate management of each cemetery as a whole. “A burial is assigned to a cemetery section in BOSS, but the maps are still managed manually. We are working to redesign the system so that assignments and other steps in the process are updated automatically and displayed graphically on a digital map. A color coding system will let the cemetery director see immediately which graves have been dug and which headstones remain to be placed, for example.”

NCA is also working to get the burial schedule for each national cemetery posted on the Internet. The function, which will hopefully be launched in the next few months, will include the name of the deceased, the time of the funeral service and the name and contact information for the funeral home, so users can get more information if they need it.

## Volunteers Make It Work

Volunteers are critical to cemetery operations and they serve in a variety of ways. Some sit at front desks to welcome visitors, take applications, talk with families and provide directions. Others work with volunteer garden clubs to help plant and maintain the grounds. And still others help organize and participate in Memorial and Veterans Day programs.

“Volunteers are key to our success and our ability to provide the high level of service that we do,” says Muro. “Without volunteers, we wouldn’t get the high scores we do on our customer service surveys.”

One of the more unique volunteer opportunities is involvement with an honor guard or rifle squad that provides military honors at national and state cemeteries. It’s a DoD responsibility to provide at least two service members for a veteran’s funeral, one of whom must be a member of the service in which the deceased served. “This is a nice tribute,” says Muro, “but it’s not the full military honors that some families want.”



To help fill that gap, some veterans’ groups step up to offer the traditional rifle volley and other military honors at veterans’ burial services. They often work in concert with DoD, but sometimes provide honors on their own. “It’s up to the family and we work to accommodate their wishes,” says Shipmate Tim Gabrio, a member of Branch 136 in Twin Cities, Minn., and a member of the Fort Snelling Memorial Rifle Squad.

The Fort Snelling Memorial Rifle Squad is one of the more well-known squads in the country, participating in more than 62,500 funeral services since the squad’s inception in June of 1979. “We’ve never missed a service for any reason in all these years,” says Gabrio with justifiable pride.

There are currently about 125 members in the Fort Snelling Squad, assigned to five groups of 20 to 30 members. Each group performs its duties on a specified day of the week, working from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM, Monday through Friday.

“We get the schedule from St. Louis and the funeral director asks the family if they want military honors,” explains Gabrio, “and most do. Some want colors, but no rifle salute. Others want the salute, but no colors. There’s always a DoD contingent to provide some level of honors — to post the colors, play Taps or fire the rifle volley — but it’s not guaranteed that all these services will be provided. For example, the DoD honor guard may have a recording of Taps, but not a live bugler to perform. It’s just a matter of personal preference and we do our best to supplement what DoD provides or do whatever the family requests.”

Muro, who spent four years as the director at the Fort Snelling National Cemetery, has nothing but high praise for the members of the Memorial Rifle Squad. “They never missed a service. There were days when it was 30 degrees below zero, but they were out there to support the family and pay tribute to the veteran. It’s one of NCA’s strategic objectives to establish a dedicated rifle squad at the 20 busiest national cemeteries by 2015.”

*continued on page 28*

## Preserving Navy Heritage in a Unique Way

**SHIPMATE RAY STUMPF** (Branch 136, Stillwater, Minn.) is playing a significant and very unique role in preserving Navy history at the Minnesota State Veterans Cemetery north of Little Falls, Minn. He is part of a project that will highlight and pay tribute to Naval service for generations to come and it all started when he met artist Charles Kapsner.

Kapsner has been commissioned to paint a series of murals for the cemetery's committal hall that depict the five branches of military service. Each elaborate oil painting is 8-by-10 feet in size and the project, which is funded solely by donations, is expected to take eight years to complete. Kapsner's goal is to pay homage to each branch by including intricate and historically accurate detail. When he was considering adding a diving helmet to the Navy painting, a friend introduced him to Stumpf, a 24-year Navy veteran with considerable military diving experience.

"Ray started by helping with research," explains Kapsner. "He's really providing a wonderful perspective on Navy culture."

But Stumpf is giving more than that. Diagnosed with colon cancer, he's given up the treatments that made him feel worse than the disease, and is making the most of the time he has left. In addition to his volunteer work at the local middle school, he's using some of his precious time to be a part of this lasting tribute to his community and his Navy.

He's donning his Navy dress blues and "Dixie cup" to sit, sometimes for more than two hours at a stretch, as a model for the painting. Stumpf represents the Lone Sailor in the painting, similar to the statue that stands outside the Navy Memorial in Washington, D.C. "I wanted Ray's character to be outside the composition, looking at the life and history of the Navy, but also looking at his own life," Kapsner says of his creative concept.

"During our sessions together, there's a lot of quiet time and I can't help but wonder what's going through Ray's mind," Kapsner ponders. "The other day, he asked if the portrait could be displayed at his wake and, I have to say, it was a very emotional moment for us both."

*continued on page 28*



Photo by David Swantek, director of the Minnesota State Veterans Cemetery



Photo by Steve Kohls, reproduced with the permission of The Brainerd Dispatch, [www.brainerddispatch.com](http://www.brainerddispatch.com).

Painter Charles Kapsner works to capture Ray Stumpf as a lone sailor looking back at the Navy's past and ahead toward its future.

In his 10 years as a member of the Fort Snelling Memorial Rifle Squad, Gabrio has “done colors, done rifles, helped fold the flag ... pretty much all the different roles. Now I often stand up front and explain to the families and mourners what’s happening, asking them to salute or put their hand over their hearts at the appropriate time. When you’re right there with the families, sometimes 15 or 16 times a day, it can get very emotional. It can be difficult to get through sometimes.”

## The Work is its Own Reward

Gabrio and Muro both take pride and pleasure in serving those who’ve served. As a Navy veteran and FRA member at large, Muro understands honoring commitments to his fellow service members.

“I was a seaman aboard the USS Benjamin Stoddert and served as a Seabee in Vietnam. My military experience taught me leadership, flexibility and adaptability — all qualities that have served me well in my career at NCA. It also taught me how critical it is to take care of those who work with and for you. One of the most rewarding parts of my job is



acknowledging employees and volunteers who are motivated to give 100 percent to our veterans and their families.”

“It’s like a brotherhood,” Gabrio echoes. “It’s an honor to do this for our veterans.”



**Lauren Armstrong** is the Contributing Editor and Member of the FRA Auxiliary. She can be reached at [lauren@fra.org](mailto:lauren@fra.org).

*HISTORY & HERITAGE continued from page 27*

The paintings’ purpose is to educate today’s civilian population and students about the sacrifices of the past, says Kapsner. “This has been viewed from the beginning as a historical education project. The goal is to have school groups come in to tour the cemetery, see the paintings, read the documentation that will accompany each one and then participate in activities that will help the students relate elements of the paintings to the historic events they represent. Most people don’t think of paintings as monuments, but these paintings will last for generations and will be an enduring tribute to military service.”

“The more accurate information [Kapsner] has today, the easier it becomes for historians in the future to decipher what we’re all about,” said Stumpf in a recent newspaper interview for the *Star Tribune*.

“Each completed painting will depict the history of significant events for that branch of service, as well as capture the branch’s culture. Anyone looking at these paintings will instantly see the historical perspective. The cultural perspective is more subtle,” says Stumpf. “Someone who served in the Navy will ‘see’ more in the Navy painting than someone who served in a different branch of service.”

In addition to doing research and sitting for the painting, Stumpf has also agreed to write an essay that will

accompany the painting, providing commentary for the detailed image. And although it wasn’t his intent when the project began, the Navy painting will also be a tribute to Stumpf and become part of his legacy.

“When [my family sees] the Navy panel, they’ll know their brother, their father, their husband, their cousin was a part of it,” Stumpf said of the project during an interview with the *Brainerd Dispatch* newspaper.

Stumpf calls his cancer “the oddly wrapped gift,” because if he wasn’t ill he wouldn’t have time to participate in the project. “It’s truly a gift to have the opportunity to document a bit of history I helped create by serving my country. I choose to live with [the cancer], not just sit back and die from it,” he also said during the *Dispatch* interview.

“Ray and I developed a fast and strong friendship and it makes me very sad to know that he’ll be gone too soon. He’s a fine example for our community and for life. Even as he faces the end of his life, he’s taking on another challenge. He’s completely dedicated and he’s going to go out fighting.”

*To learn more about the Veterans Educational Historic Project or make a donation, visit [www.vetsart.org](http://www.vetsart.org).*

**CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL THE** following shipmates who have chosen to become Life Members during the first quarter of 2013. If you'd like to become a Life Member, call 1-800-FRA and speak with one of our Member Services representatives.

## January

Hubert A Landry	162	John L Hazen	093	John D Burlage	334	Paul E Green	MAL
Rex A Parker	101	Donald R Maxwell	MAL	Charity R. Keller	105	Robert L Rosette	172
Frank C Currier	MAL	Rusty Medford	093	Monroe W Parrish	MAL	Joe Black	041
Joseph H Doutre, Jr.	101	Eustaquio Padilla	172	Kenneth R Oberlin	MAL	Charles E Larsen	276
Keith R Suiter, Sr.	269	Albert E Robbins	289	Robert Lynn Comstock	MAL	Frank J Dus	MAL
David Robben	MAL	George E Osgood	MAL	John W Turner, Jr.	MAL	Thomas D Clagett	MAL
Phenny P Paragas	101	Mariano L Gantala	084	Calvin R Shirley	112	Harry L Showalter, Jr.	118
Bradford C Pratt	367	Mark A. Sentimore	024	Floyd L Richards, Jr.	287	Willie W Barnes	MAL
Richard D Nunez	MAL	Robert Coby	024	William C Phillips	055	John W. Kennedy	MAL
Emory E Logan	185	James M Thomas	089	Gary A Acheson	061	Raymond D Kester	181
William H. Hess, Jr.	MAL	Ursula R. Stufflebeam	251	Elbert Collins	055		

## February

Gary A Hagman	MAL	Harry C. Rhizor	307	Frank H Brabant	MAL	Lewis W Johnson	024
John G Scruggs	041	James C Thomasson	267	James W Shoemake	MAL	Kenneth J Hendrickson	MAL
Catalino H Suriben	247	Paul W Husby	276	Robert F Jordan	MAL	Paul C Bower	086
Joseph Toth	115	Arthur Glattli	234	Arthur R Larson, Jr.	MAL	Howard I Throngard, Jr.	127
Harold M MacCall, Jr.	043	Robert Phillips	261	Salvador Adona	084	Dale L Baird	162
Louis M. Wills	103	Samuel B Reyna	212	Marvin G Apte	025	Clayton D Jones	MAL
Mathew A Pfaller	017	William A Sallee	MAL	Delmer J Paxton	MAL	Roy H Allen	MAL
Anthony Jackson	006	James R. Burns	MAL	Wendell E Tornquist	281	Albert W Madigan	024
Michael B Graff	376	Feliciano Fortuna	010	Alonzo D Holley	MAL	John W Colburn	MAL
Norman Weeks	MAL	Benjamin J Stark	MAL	Paul D Ricketson	022	Orin N Gahlau	358
Thomas J Costello	053	Chic Sale	MAL	John W. Hoyt	MAL	Walter L Frierson	044
David S Rapp	MAL	Johnny E Fussell	234	Danny L. Trapp	202	Errol K Jennings	060
George E Clay, Jr.	179	Gene H Lupton	MAL	Christopher C Foshay	MAL	Larry C Schumaker	034
Michael W Reed	097	Robert E Miller	MAL	Ronald E Thompson	161	Jaime Vincoy, Sr.	MAL
Nick Shaw	103	Charles A Booth	MAL	Wilhelm A Zerr	029	George J Kelly	041
Donald H Bambeck	182	James M Vanderheiden	269	Merle V Woodis	061	Henry F Scarborough	166

## March

Steven D Bell	MAL	John C Bakley	248	Myron M Michael	300	Ronald J Snell	238
Edmund M Squire	226	Gene C Holliday	041	Jon Jerome Eaton	MAL	Elton L Vandervort	MAL
David W Lemburg	307	Gerald E Bellis, Jr.	061	Douglas M Owens	059	John M. Cowart	MAL
Eugene F Jacobs	MAL	Robert C Dennehy	MAL	Clyde Bruce Mackellar	022	Ronald Bowers	216
Ronald B Williams	216	Charles M Parette	280	James Murdoch	MAL	Orville R Stueck	145
Gary K Sorenson	269	Lesley F Mammen	289	Ralph L Dickinson	MAL	Grady L Cauthron	163
John A Bankert	290	Bryan E. Wright	269	Perry Holcomb	MAL	Henry N McCoy	001
John R Wolfe	024	Daniel D. Sheehan	272	Richard E Hunter	029	Charles F Skillman	MAL
William H Sanford	210	Robert G. Burkhard	293	Chester E Cheney	089	Thomas W Springer	136
Gail A Wixson	MAL	Nancy A Burkhard	293	Frederick H. Michaelis, Jr.	024	James J Hutchins	MAL
Bernard C Yeatts	MAL	James A Hermanson	146	William E White	346	Ramey C Felts	110
Terence Dunahugh	MAL	William B Guffey	294	David R Aiken	MAL	Leon C Provencher	264
Jack D Brown	MAL	Harry H Stutsman	MAL	Bruce E Thompson	089	Thomas J Kuhn	161
Charles M Sandidge	292	Earl Gumm	MAL	Richard R Eaton	MAL	Gilbert V Rafalowski	181
Dennis Crawford	MAL	John J Mayo	MAL	Robert W Prater	280	Jon P. White	MAL
James W Janz	238	Boyd E Biggs	201	Ned Moore	223	Kenneth Maggard	089
Robert E O'Brien	091	Robert Z Hester	259	David Colbert	MAL	William P Bone	334
Marcial Lopez	MAL	Timothy W Williams	289	Darrell Robbins	367	Francis D. Therkelson	294
Julian E Payne	MAL	Ralph M Howell	070	Floyd C Hampton	293	Norman C Zimmerschied	MAL
Robert Lebel	MAL	Harold D Hughes	101	Robert H Cleary	MAL	John C Nance	MAL
James W. Quibodeaux	MAL	Mason Johnson, Jr.	MAL	Rosario S Gennaro	MAL	Charles P Butler	MAL
Anthony J Sandoval	113	Richard H Deal	MAL	Gaylord E Mangold	091	Joe N Wilson	MAL

NAME	BRANCH	NAME	BRANCH
Alverson, George T, SKC, USN	124	Hamilton, Bernard O, POC, USN	MAL
Alwine, John F, PNCS, USN	166	<b>Hayes, William D, MMCM, USN</b>	<b>289</b>
Arnould, Alain, HMCS, USN	163	Hayward, Joel E, AMH2, USN	093
Augusto, Eugene A, PO1, USN	049	Helmcamp, Freddie D, ADJ2, USN	MAL
Austin, Robert M, RMCM(SS), USN	024	Hillman, Lester R, LT, USN	170
		Hines, John D, YNCM, USN	057
Bacon, O Harold, RMCS, USN	275	Hoover, Ernest M, PNCM, USN	315
Baldwin, Melvin L, AVCM, USN	174	Horan, Alfred M, FTCS, USN	MAL
Barber, Carl D, HM1, USN	MAL	Humphries, Charles D, YN1, USN	MAL
Barbieri, John D, BMC, USN	MAL	Hyatt, Joseph, CT3, USN	346
Barron, Reynolds, MSGT, USMC	208		
Barva, William T, EM1, USN	MAL	Jacobe, Benjamin D, SHC, USN	046
Beebe, Floyd G, PHC, USN	MAL	Johnson, Marion M, ADRC, USN	126
Bergman, Lawrence T, ABCM, USN	070	Johnson, Gerald Lee, MSCM, USN	053
Blakeney, Diamond W., QMIC, USCG	307	Jones, Kelvin, AT1, USN	091
Bohli, James L, LCDR, USN	020	Jones, Charles E, SSGT, USMC	229
Brickey, Robert, CPL, USMC	068		
Brooks, Gerald L, PO1, USN	049	Karanikas, Nicholas, PH1, USN	067
<b>Buchanan, Frank E, ADJC, USN</b>	<b>172</b>	Kelley, Daniel F, SKCS, USN	172
Butler, Frank T, ADC, USN	268	Kennedy, John S, SKCS, USN	MAL
		Knepper, Mark M, ADC, USN	101
Campbell, Jerry W, BMC(SW), USN	091	Krier, Mary Beth, AKCS, USN	093
Carter, George W, BT1, USN	MAL	Krohn, Edward J, MSGT, USMC	014
Charleton, Basil J, CDR, USN	060	Kwitkoski, Walter J, LCDR, USN	MAL
Clark, David F, HMCS, USN	339		
Coghill, Frank E, MSGT, USMC	038	Lawson, Charles E., AEC, USNR	MAL
		Leach, Irving J, BM2, USN	060
Darius, Paul E, MMCS, USN	MAL	Legg, Paul P, AFCM, USN	099
David, Daniel H, SM1, USN	238	<b>Lynde, Larry C, EMC, USN</b>	<b>018</b>
Davis, W T, GYSGT, USMC	MAL		
Dean, Henry C, ADJC, USN	060	Mankoski, Edward J, BM1, USN	MAL
Dubose, James T, CWO3, USN	021	Martz, George J, ADJC, USN	272
		Marvin, Horace W, CAPT, USMC	MAL
Easdon, Robert, PO2, USN	MAL	Mason, James, BTCS, USN	MAL
Elkins, Roger E, DT1, USN	MAL	Miller, Paul R., QM2/SKC, USN	130
Emanuel, John R, BMCS, USN	324	Minnis, Donald C, MSGT, USMC	MAL
Engler, Wayne G, RMC, USN	MAL	<b>Moffatt, Walter S, LT, USN</b>	<b>MAL</b>
Eriks, John M, EOC, USN	161	Monroe, Charles F, SHCS, USN	203
Ertz, Paul L, GYSGT, USMC	067	Morean, Alvin M, YN1, USN	099
Eskew, Eldon E, ATC, USN	MAL	Mount, Charles J, PO1, USN	060
Farmer, Harold E, AG1, USN	289	Nichols, Walter, BUC, USN	306
Fies, Richard L., MSGT, USMC	115	Norwick, Douglas E, BMC, USN	046
Fontecha, Felix, PO1, USN	MAL		
Friedley, Eldo W, HMC(SS), USN	046	Olf, Harold R, ENCS(SS), USN	063
Fritz, Edward J, EMC, USN	060		
<b>PRPSC, Fuller, Vernon R, PRC, USN</b>	<b>282</b>	Pagan, Alfred L, BMC, USN	280
Fulton, Homer L, 1STSgt, USMC	051	<b>Pearson, Dan C, MMC, USN</b>	<b>037</b>
		Pearson, Harry S, ADJC, USN	038
Garber, James H, GMGC, USN	093	Ponsock, Bert M, MSGT, USMC	208
Gentle, George L, SKC, USN	278	Potts, Paul R, PHC, USN	068
Granger, Thomas L, TMC, USN	024	Prandy, John D, SGT, USMC	289
Griggs, Glenn G, MMCM, USN	101	Puterbaugh, Charles E., ADRC, USN	022
Haley, Patrick J, CUCM, USN	367	Rall, Robert L, RM1(SS), USN	020
<b>Halloran, Richard J, LCDR, USN</b>	<b>307</b>	Rector, Harrison Clay, POC, USN	124
Hambbruch, Harry J, FC1, USN	006	Rehm, Melvin W, YN1, USN	063



NAME	BRANCH
Richards, Charles B, ADC, USN	159
Riggs, Garland M, CPO, USN	147
Roth, Donald R, ADRC, USN	175
Schreiber, Arthur R, GMGC, USN	365
Schwantner, Francis F, OS1, USN	289
Schwark, Harvey, MMCM, USN	192
Scott, Reginald L, EOC, USN	067
<b>Scott, Morgan H, YNC, USN</b>	<b>MAL</b>
Shupe, Thomas E, AFCM, USN	166
Slavonic, Paul J, CPO, USN	296
Smith, Carl L, GMGC, USN	290
Snyder, Gene V, RMC, USN	MAL
<b>Stahlberg, Ernest W, USN</b>	<b>008</b>
Stahnke, Richard E, AK2, USN	141
Stevens, Roland L, BTC, USN	029
Stratton, John F, BMC, USN	MAL
<b>Stuski, Benjamin J, BMCS, USN</b>	<b>166</b>
Swartz, Chester E, HMC, USN	288
Teasley, Asbury, SHC, USN	234
Thomas, August L., CM2, USN	113
Thompson, James W, AOC, USN	089
Toker, Daniel C, ATC, USN	070
Travis, Stephen D, AOC, USN	363
Vinglas, William J, YNCS, USN	001
Warner, Charles D, AMHC, USN	124
Watson, Walter D, ISC, USN	049
Weaver, Jack R, BTCM, USN	117
White, Thomas C, SGTMAJ, USMC	208
Wittman, Jacob P, GMTCS, USN	120
Woelfle, Donald J, YNCS, USN	MAL
Wooten, Lawrence M, ENCS, USN	183
Wytovicz, Robert D, TMCS(SS), USN	117

Names in **red** indicate 50 year continuous members.





#### **Cargo Handling Battalion Six**

September 7–8, 2013, Pocono Manor, PA. Contact CMC Vito Motisi, 197D Rampo Road, Garnerville, NY 10923-1845, 914-629-7622, vbmotisi@yahoo.com.

#### **Guantanamo Bay Association**

October 6–10, 2013, Chattanooga, TN. Contact Mike Warman, 232 Majorca Rd., St Augustine, FL 32080, 904-417-8590, mwarmanfl@gmail.com.

#### **MCB11 & 11th NCB (Seabees)**

October 1–4, 2013, Las Vegas, NV. Contact Larry Hagler, 21012 Boggy Ford Rd., Lago Vista, TX 78645, 512-267-8873, mcb11reunion@earthlink.net.

#### **Mobile Riverine Force Association**

August 28–September 1, 2013, Indianapolis, IN. Contact Michael Kelley at 317-308-0760.

#### **Navy Nurse Corps Reunion**

April 30–May 3, 2014, Nashville, TN. Contact Military Reunion Planners, 800-672-0456.

#### **Photographic Intelligence (PT Rating)**

September 17–19, 2013, Norfolk, VA. Contact Milo Keith Lindley, 641-895-1266, jandklindley@sirisonline.com.

#### **TACAMO Community Veterans Association (VQ-3/VQ-4/VQ-7/SCW-1)**

August 28–September 2, 2013, Seattle, WA. Contact Cheryl Vos, tacamocommunity@gmail.com.

#### **US Navy Opticalman & Instrumentman Association**

September 29–October 3, 2013, Charleston, SC. Contact John Bryan, 1508 Gresham Pk. Rd., Lincolnton, GA 30817, 706-339-5905, webmaster@im-om.com.

#### **USCGC Duane Association**

September 11–14, 2013, Portland, ME. Contact Stan Barnes, Pres., 381 Stage Road, Sanbornton, NH 03269, 603-286-7720, sbarnes@metrocast.net.

#### **USS Beale (DD-471/DDE-471)**

October 6, 2013, Evansville, IN. Contact John Davis, 812-264-2958, psalm51johndavis@yahoo.com.

#### **USS Boston (CA-69, CAG-1, and SSN-703)**

July 11–14, 2013, Albuquerque, NM. Contact Arthur L. Hebert, Secretary, USS Boston Shipmates, Inc., Arthur L. Hebert, Secretary, 2047 Milesville Road, Elon, NC 27244-8929, 603-672-8772.

#### **USS Caloosahatchee (AO-98/AOJ-98)**

October 10–13, 2013, Fredericksburg, VA. Contact Paul Sears, 69 Liberty St., Plymouth, MA 02360, 508-747-1106.

#### **USS Constant (MSO-427)**

October 4–6, 2013, Eau Claire, WI. Contact Dan Perkins, 335 McKinley Ave., Eau Claire, WI 54701-4814, 715-832-2377, perkindj@uwec.edu.

#### **USS Dale/USS Dewey**

August 5–9, 2013, Portland, ME. Contact Dennis W. Smith at 113 Poplar St., Dingmans Ferry, PA 18328 or 570-337-8025.

#### **USS Edisto (AGB-89/AGB-2/WAGB-284)**

September 18–22, 2013, Nashville, TN. Contact Glenn Smith, P.O. Box 747, Mims, FL 32754-0747, 321-269-5637, gdsmith@cfl.rr.com.

#### **USS Forrestal (CVA/CV/AVT-59) Association**

September 25–28, 2013, Oak Brook, IL. Contact Leslie "Jim" Stewart, Forrestal.CVA59@verizon.net.

#### **USS Grand Canyon (AD/AR-28)**

October 16–20, 2013, Virginia Beach, VA. Contact Robert Dunn, 317-881-8866, roberttdunn4217@sbcglobal.net.

#### **USS Harry E Yarnell (DLG/CLG-17)**

November 8–10, 2013, Virginia Beach, VA. Contact Glenn Hunsberger, 212 Webb Street, Hertford, NC 27944, 252-264-4882, glenn\_hunsberger@yahoo.com.

#### **USS Hollister (DD-788) Reunion Association/U.S. Navy**

September 25–28, 2013, Albany, NY. Contact Ed Gundersen, 2176 County Highway 107, Amsterdam, NY 12010, 518-842-7126, gunder788@verizon.net.

#### **USS John F. Kennedy (CVA/CV-67)**

July 25–28, 2013, Boston, MA. Contact Bob Haner, 312 Wymore Rd, Apt. 103, Altamonte Springs, FL 32714, 407-682-2613, bobnghaner@yahoo.com.

#### **USS Kitty Hawk (CVA/CV-63)**

October 14–17, 2013, Wilmington, NC. Contact James Melka, 2712 280th Street, Winthrop, IA 50682, 319-934-4416, jfmelka@netins.net.

#### **USS Laffey (DD-724)**

September 8–11, 2013, New Orleans, LA. Contact Jill Michel, 856-423-4263, Jill.Michel@comcast.net.

#### **USS Navarro (APA-215)**

October 7–10, 2013, New Orleans, LA. Contact John Majors, P.O. Box 209, Jarreau, LA 70749, 225-638-5002, jmajors@qualitytransport.net.

#### **USS Philippine Sea (CV/CVA/CVS-47) Association**

October 24–29, 2013, Jacksonville, FL. Contact Chuck Davis, USS Philippine Sea Association, P.O. Box 496412, Port Charlotte, FL 33949-6412, 941-743-5460, Philsea@embarqmail.com.

#### **USS Richard L. Page (DEG/FFG-5)**

September 26–29, 2013, Albany, NY. Contact Carl Slack, PO Box 83, Jackson, NH 03846-0083, 603-986-4661, pagedegffg5@yahoo.com.

#### **USS Robert H. McCard (DD-822)**

October 2–6, 2013, Jacksonville, FL. Contact Dennis Replogle, 2104 Creek Side Dr. Lake Wales, FL 33859, 863-589-5054, dreplogle\_McCard@yahoo.com.

#### **USS Rupertus (DD-851)**

September 5–7, 2013, Nashville, TN. Contact Pete Spoonhower, 54512 Seeley Lane, Center, MO 63436, 573-267-3510, pspoonhower@gmail.com.

#### **USS San Jose (AFS-7)**

September 11–15, 2013, Seattle, WA. Contact Joe Ostronic at joeostronic@sbcglobal.net.

#### **USS Sennet (SS-408) All Hands**

September 30–October 3, 2013, Mt. Pleasant, SC. Contact Ralph Luther, PO Box 864, Summerville, SC 29484-0864, 843-851-7064, rluther107@gmail.com.

#### **USS Solace (AH-5) – WWII**

September 3–5, 2013, Milwaukee, WI. Contact Jim Underwood at 262-473-5416.

**CS2 Tim Woods**

We served together aboard USS Bausell (DD-845) from 1971–1974. I believe he retired from the US Navy. He worked in the ship's galley and had a brother who lived in Oregon. Please contact Craig D. Horton, at cdhorton@aol.com or 541-772-4180.

**LTJG Jerry Shaw**

He was the supply officer aboard USS Dyess (DD-880) in the late 1950s. Please contact Roman Kiefer at 812-367-0680.

**USN Hospital Annex, Napa, Calif.**

Looking for anyone who served at the Navy Hospital Annex in Napa, Calif. (Imola) in 1944 and 1945. Please contact Jerry Atwood at 127 Clipper Bay, Brunswick, GA 31523 or 912-280-9776.

**Pat Garcia**

We were shipmates at NAS Atsugi, Japan, in 1956–1958. I was a YN3 and Pat was an SK3. We crossed paths again in 1972 or 1973 in Pearl Harbor, when Pat was (I believe) a YNCS. Please contact Arnold Nixon at 5400 Meeker Drive, Unit 32, Kalama, WA 98625.

**MMC(SS) Duane Carpenter (and wife, Betty)**

His last known duty stationed was aboard USS Redfish. Please contact Forrest Dawson at F.M.dawson@verizon.net.

**Company 131, Navy Boot Camp, 1962**

I'm trying to locate anyone from 1962 Navy boot camp, Company 131, formed in February 1962 in San Diego, Calif. Contact Ed Huggins at edhuggins@aol.com.

**SK2 Brian MacDonald, USS Persistent (MSO-491); ET1 Dwayne Wong, USS Reclaimer (ARS-42); RM1 Bob McPaul, USS Reclaimer (ARS-42)**

Please contact Nelson Arroyo at 714-524-1747 or neloyo@aol.com.

**U.S. Navy Salvage Divers Class #53**

January 1, 1954 to April 30, 1954 at Bayonne, N.J. Please contact Wardell E. Stephens at PO Box 721, Eloy, AZ 85131 or w-george071@live.com.

**CPO C.O. Jones**

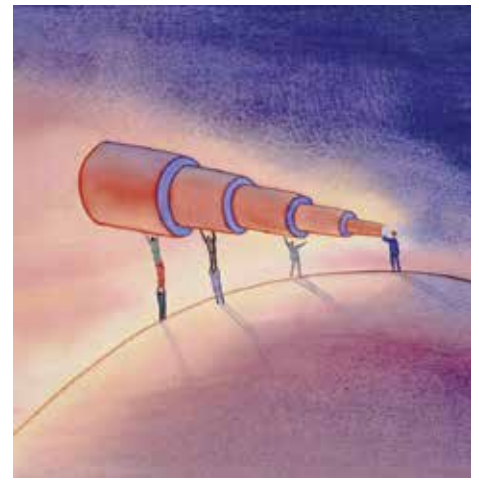
He was stationed at Cam Ranh Bay from April 1968 to May 1969. I am in possession of a Zippo lighter that was found in England belonging to CPO Jones and would like to return it to him or his family. Please contact me at ksnamvet@sbcglobal.net.

**TMCS (or TMCM) William "Soup" Campbell; RMCS Roy Harris**

They served on the USS Trumpetfish (SS-425) in the early 1960s. Please contact Thomas Conroy at 660 Willow Valley Sq., Apt. M310, Lancaster, PA 17602-4874.

**AGCM Eugene Cleary (or possibly Clary)**

He came to inspect the weather office at Technical Training Command in Millington, Tenn., in 1975, where I was working as a civilian. My last contact with him was at Technical Training Command in Lakehurst, N.J., also in 1975. Please contact Frank Chihocky, PO Box 254, Amsterdam, OH 43903.

**Lt. Melanie White**

She was my division officer at NSGA Charleston from 1982–1983. Please contact RMC(SS) Jack Harden (Ret.) at 7860 Elderberry Circle, North Charleston, S.C. 29418, 843-209-0453 or jackrmcss@gmail.com.

**HTCM Harold D. Brazzel****HTCM Charles Johann****HTC James E. Killingsworth**

Please contact HTCM Johnny O. Simpson (Ret.) at 870-405-8712.

These notices are published on a space available basis. Notices must be submitted in writing.

E-mail [fratoday@fra.org](mailto:fratoday@fra.org) or mail your request to: FRA, *Looking for...*, 125 N. West St., Alexandria, VA, 22314.

REUNIONS continued from page 31

**USS Sphinx (ARL-24) All Crews**

September 16–19, 2013, Branson, MO. Contact Frank Ironi, 954 Lilac Dr., Sauk Centre, MN 56378-1643, 320-352-3271, fironi@mainstreetcom.com.

**USS Taconic (AGC-17)**

August 28–September 10, 2013, Branson, MO. Contact Dave Asselin, 321-631-6928, sunshineasselins@yahoo.com.

**USS Valcour (AVP-55/AGF-1)**

September 26–29, 2013, Virginia Beach, VA. Contact Bill Jourdan, 147 S. 10th Street Noblesville, IN 46060, 317-776-9463, beerplumber@gmail.com.

**USS Wainwright (DLG/CG-28)**

July 16–20, 2014, Nashville, TN. Contact Harry Chaffin, PO Box 1212, Snellville, GA 30078, 770-979-3457, wainwrightnews@comcast.net.

**USS Waller (DD/DDE-466)**

September 18–21, 2013, Lexington, KY. Contact Keith Lemons at 606-365-2902 or hawkeyefarm1@searnet.com.

**USS Wiltzie (DD-716)**

September 25–29, 2013, Milwaukee, WI. Contact John Anderson, 1311 Quince St. Olympia, WA 98506, 360-357-6135, anderjrm@reachone.com.

**USS Wright Association**

September 12–16, 2012, Nashville, TN. Contact Ray Sheridan, 2518 Smoldering Wood Drive, Arlington, TX 76016, 817-457-1767, Ray.Sheridan@juno.com.

**VA-176 Thunderbolts**

September 20–23, 2013, Virginia Beach, VA. Contact John Sutton, 3221 Club House Road, Virginia Beach, VA 23452, 757-340-1611, sutton1@cox.net.

Members can post reunions online at [www.fra.org](http://www.fra.org), submit to [reunions@fra.org](mailto:reunions@fra.org) or mail to: FRA Reunions, 125 N. West St., Alexandria, VA 22314.

Now New & Improved

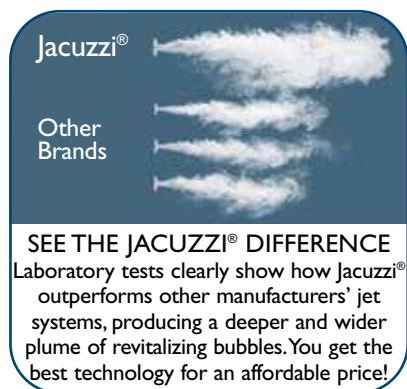
# The Jacuzzi® Walk-In Hot Tub... your own personal fountain of youth.

*The world's leader in hydrotherapy and relaxation  
makes bathing safe, comfortable and affordable.*

Remember the feeling you had the first time you got into a hot tub? The warm water, the energizing bubbles and the gentle hydrotherapy of the jets left you feeling relaxed and rejuvenated. Aches and pains seemed to fade away, and the bubbling sound of the water helped put you in a carefree and contented mood. The first time I ever got in a hot tub at a resort, I said to myself "One of these days I'm going to have one of these in my home— so I can experience this whenever I want." Now that I'm older, I'd still like to have the pain relief and relaxation, but I have to be careful about slipping and falling in the bathroom. That's why I was thrilled to find out that Jacuzzi, Inc. had combined the safety of a walk-in bath with the benefits of a hot tub. Now that I have one in my home I can have that luxurious resort experience... whenever I want.

The moment you step into your New Jacuzzi® Walk-In Hot Tub you'll see the superior design and the quality of the craftsmanship. The new entry step is low, so it is easy and safe to get in and out. The new double-sealing door is 100%

guaranteed not to leak. The high 17" seat enables you to sit comfortably while you bathe and to access the easy-to-reach controls. Best of all, your tub comes with the patented Jacuzzi® PointPro® jet system with a new jet pattern— which gives you a perfectly balanced water-to-air ratio to massage you thoroughly but gently. These high-volume, low-pressure pumps are arranged in a pattern that creates



swirls and spirals that provide both a total body massage and targeted treatment of specific pressure points. There is even an in-line heater to maintain the water temperature. The tub features a high gloss

## Why Jacuzzi is the Best

- ✓ **Maximum Pain Relief** - Therapeutic water AND air jets to help you feel your best.
- ✓ **Personalized Massage** - New adjustable jet placement for pinpoint control.
- ✓ **Easy and Safe Entry** - Low entry, double-sealing leakproof door that is easy to open and close.
- ✓ **Comfortable Seating** - Convenient 17 inch raised seat.
- ✓ **Durable and Easy to Clean** - State of the art acrylic surface.
- ✓ **Worry Free Enjoyment** - Thanks to Jacuzzi's Limited Lifetime Warranty.
- ✓ **No Hassle Installation** - Designed to fit in your existing tub space.

acrylic coating which is more durable, scratch resistant and easier to clean than traditional gel-coat surfaces. It's American made with full metal frame construction and comes with a limited lifetime warranty on both the tub and the operating system.

Isn't it time you rediscovered the comfort and luxury of a soothing therapeutic hot tub experience again? Call now and knowledgeable product experts will answer any questions and you can have one in your home next week. Don't wait, call now.

**New & Improved** Jacuzzi®

## Walk-In Hot Tub

For information call:

**1-877-475-5830**

Call now Toll-Free and mention your special promotion code 50099.

Third-party financing available with approved credit. Aging in the Home Remodelers Inc. is neither a broker nor a lender. Not Available in Hawaii and Alaska

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**BRANCH 63 LEWISTON, IDAHO**

Shipmates take the oath of office at the branch installation ceremony. Shown (l to r) are President Phil Kenshisnik, Membership Chairman Rick Kramer, Chaplain Rodney Hoyt, Health and Welfare Chairman Kay Kalbfleisch, Secretary Chuck Whitman, Treasurer Johnie Brown and Master at Arms Jerry Tinnel.



**BRANCH 175 ORANGE COUNTY, CALIF.**

Shipmates (l to r) Andrew Benjock, Winnie Hamerlinck and Roger Hamerlinck set up a recruiting table at a Santa Ana job fair. They were joined by Shipmate Gordon Olson (not shown).

**BRANCH 10 SAN LEANDRO, CALIF.**

Shipmate Paul Steelhammer looks across the Golden Gate Bridge after visiting the Lone Sailor Memorial in Sausalito. He says wearing his FRA jacket is a great way to start conversations with Sailors and veterans he meets as he travels around the San Francisco area.



**BRANCH 244 GRAND JUNCTION, COLO.**

Branch 2nd Vice President Jim Stafford, new FRA member SK2 Rebekah Jackson, USCGR, and Branch President Jim Tarr (l to r) pose at the Grand Junction Air Show, where Shipmate Jackson joined our ranks. Photo by Branch Sec/Treas Chuck Watkins.



**BRANCH 234 ANDERSON, S.C.**

Shipmate Aubrey Franklin Owens Sr. (l) receives his letter, certificate, Life membership card and pin for his 50 years of continuous FRA membership and service from Branch Secretary William "Bill" McGregor.

**BRANCH 13 ATLANTIC CITY, N.J.**

FRA played a key role in the recent Sailor of the Quarter Awards program at USCG Training Center in Cape May, N.J. Shown (l to r) are Capt. W. G. Kelly, Commanding Officer; First Class Petty Officer Eric Kuhn, Sailor of the Quarter; Shipmates Robert J. Campbell, President, and Robert M. Burness, Secretary of Branch 13, Atlantic City, N.J. Shipmates Campbell and Burness are working to establish a branch in the Cape May area.

**BRANCH 238 PLOVER, WISC.**

In a 20-year tradition, shipmates and members of the Wisconsin Rapids VFW Post joined together to pay tribute to service members who lost their lives at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on December 7, 1941. The flag raising, taps, rifle salute and two-bell ceremony were all intended to remind the public that freedom is not free.

**BRANCH 269 GOOSE CREEK, S.C.**

During his visit to the branch, FRA National President Mark Kilgore gave an informative presentation on important veteran issues affecting FRA members. Shown (l to r) are National President Kilgore, Branch President and PRPSE Fred Bolz, and Past National President Don Mucheck.

**To submit** a photo for *News From the Branches*, please e-mail a photo as an attachment in jpeg format to [FRAToday@fra.org](mailto: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 260  
GOLDEN VALLEY, ARIZ.**

Secretary Mike Reed recognizes the branch's first president, Steve Towner, for his 35 years of continuous FRA membership.

**BRANCH 112 BIRMINGHAM, ALA.**

Branch President Bob Findley (right) had the honor of recognizing Shipmate Arnold Roberts (seated) for his 50 years of continuous FRA membership. Roberts' wife, Tokie, and Master Sergeant Robert Oden, USA (Ret.) were also on hand for the event.

## A Message from the East Coast Regional President

**UNITING UNDER THE DECLARATION** of Independence, 13 colonies banded together to form a new union; the Continental Congress passed the first American Flag Act on June 14, 1777, to have a banner for this new nation. Through the years the flag has had 27 different changes and executive orders modifying it to its present design. Since 1960, the American flag has nine rows of stars staggered horizontally and 11 rows of stars staggered vertically with one point of each star pointed toward the sky. The stars represent each of the 50 States, while the 13 stripes in alternating red and white represent those original 13 colonies. The colors were chosen with care; red to represent the valor of those who fight for this great nation. It is oftentimes stated that the red also represents the hardiness of the American people to overcome adversaries. The white represents innocence and purity, while the blue field in which the stars rest represents justice, vigilance and perseverance.

The Auxiliary members of the East Coast Region and all Auxiliary members display the qualities represented by our national banner each time they band together to protect those less fortunate in our communities; assisting the innocence of children who are too young to take care of their own needs. Unit members collect and distribute school supplies, clothing, food and gifts for holiday assistance. Members are vigilant and persevere through trying times using their knowledge and skills to ensure not only justice for the new members of the military community, but that the aging veterans and their families receive visits at the hospital or in their homes. Members visit and provide goodies to patients at their local veterans' hospitals, nursing and rehabilitation centers, hospice and cancer care, Wounded Warrior programs, Meals on Wheels and local soup kitchens. They collaborate or volunteer with other organizations such as the Fisher House, Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society, USO, Operation Homefront, Homeless Veteran Prevention Projects, American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars to name a few.

Members of the East Coast Region contact congressmen, senators, mayors, governors and the President to voice their opinions and advance the FRA legislative agenda. Members of the Auxiliary know what it means to do more with less and that there is no problem that cannot be tackled when we band together.

Now, more than ever, the Auxiliary needs all members to display their hardiness, reach out and recruit a new member. The opportunity might present itself in the grocery store, at the doctor's office, waiting at the pharmacy, or while sitting in an audience. Also, reach out to those members whose dues lapsed.

A very special "Thank You" goes out to those members who renew their dues every year and especially to those with 50+ years of Auxiliary membership. Unit 24 recently celebrated their 50th Birthday with five charter members present. You are my inspiration!

It is a pleasure and an honor to serve as your Regional President. The East Coast Regional Convention is July 25-28th at the Westin Tysons Corner, Falls Church, VA. Reservations can still be made by calling 703-893-1340; make sure to mention FRA for the special rate of \$94 plus tax per night.

Remember Flag Day, June 14, 2013! Exercise your American freedom and fly your flag today!!



**CHRISTINA MURRAY**  
East Coast Regional President

### LA FRA Correction

The caption of NP Diane Hoover and others at a Wreaths Across America event incorrectly identified members' branch and unit numbers. The group represented Branches and Units 274 and 137 at the Northern Nevada Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Fernley, Nev.



Unit 24 has seven members who are celebrating 50 years of continued membership in the LAFRA during 2013. They are Marge Anderson, Josephine Bottom, Edna Carroll, Doris Grollman, Bessie Peret, Lois Sowell, Virginia Wheat. Five of them are pictured with Unit President Katherine Bearden, National President Diane Hoover and East Coast Regional Vice President Toni O'Neill.

**ATTENTION:  
U.S. NAVY VETERANS  
MESOTHELIOMA  
COMPENSATION CLAIMS  
FILING DEADLINE**

U.S. Navy veterans have been exposed to asbestos onboard ships and many have developed mesothelioma lung cancer as a result. Millions of dollars in compensation are available for those who have been diagnosed with mesothelioma lung cancer and their loved ones. Thousands of US Navy veterans have already received compensation. Strict time deadlines may bar late claims. If you or a loved one has been diagnosed with mesothelioma then you need to ***call now*** for a free consultation and *Claims Information & Evaluation Package*.

**CALL NOW TOLL FREE!**  
**1-888-310-2138**  
**NAVY VETERANS MESOTHELIOMA CLAIMS HOTLINE**

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Sponsored by Quinn Law Firm. Nationwide representation of US NAVY Veterans and their families in mesothelioma claims. In home appointments are available nationwide by appointment only. Fees, costs, and expenses are charged only against any recovery that is made. No recovery – no fee. We do not sue the U.S. or Navy. Principal office Fort Worth, TX

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FRA  
125 N. WEST STREET  
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314-2754



# MESOTHELIOMA ASBESTOS LUNG CANCER AND RETIRED SAILORS

Many sailors were exposed to asbestos onboard ships in the U.S. Navy. This asbestos exposure often causes lung cancer much later in life. Mesothelioma is a particular form of lung cancer that is only caused by exposure to asbestos.

### FREE INITIAL LEGAL CONSULTATION

If you or a loved one has been diagnosed with MESOTHELIOMA OR ASBESTOS LUNG CANCER, please call us immediately to find out about the compensation you may be entitled to recover. We provide retired sailors and their families with a free no obligation initial legal consultation with an experienced lawyer. **We represent clients from all 50 states.**

### NO RISK TO CLIENTS

Our clients are never at risk of paying any fees, costs or expenses out of pocket. All legal fees, court costs and other expenses are paid by the client only out of any judgment or settlement in the case.


### DON'T LOSE YOUR RIGHTS!

Your legal claims must be filed within the time period allowed by law or you and your family members will lose all of your rights to recover against the corporations that are responsible for your injuries. **CALL NOW!**

*"These guys sure helped me out after I got diagnosed"*

**LeRoy Riddell**  
1935 - 2008  
U.S. Navy Retired  
Member VFW, DAV, American Legion  
and the Fleet Reserve

Former National President of the Retired Enlisted Association and client of The Johnson Law Firm.



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*\* Past successes cannot be an assurance of future successes since each case is decided on its own merits.*