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FRA *today*



MEMORIAM
DICATION TO
THE UNITED STATES
CONSTRUCTION BATTALIONS
SEABEES
EARLY DAYS OF WORLD WAR II
WAS IN DIRE PERIL
TO BUILD BASES FOR THE
TO DEFEND THOSE BASES
TO PROVIDE OTHER SUPPLIES
EVER KIND REQUIREMENT
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AND HUMANITARIANS.

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CAN DO!

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M E S O T H E L I O M A



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NEW ORLEANS SILVER DOLLARS SAVED FROM DESTRUCTION!



From 1879 to 1904, the United States Mint at New Orleans struck Morgan Silver Dollars, the most famous and collected American coin in the world. Today, "O" Mint Morgans are among the most sought-after in the entire series. Now, the First Federal Coin Corp. is releasing to the public authentic New Orleans silver dollars struck over 100 years ago for only \$49.00.

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THE SEABEES IMPACT IS felt throughout the world — and the feature article this month (page 18) is a tribute to the incredible efforts of these magnanimous individuals. OnWatch (page 13) contains a message from James D. Fairbanks, Force Master Chief Petty Officer of the Seabees to all active duty and Reserve Seabees, providing an overview of the leadership initiatives for 2007. On page 23, Seabees share their fond memories and the impact that being a Seabee had on their lives. A special thank you to UTCF Sam Phillips Branch 142 who shared a picture of himself (page 23) and a classic example of how Marines and Seabees worked together (page 22). Thanks also to Branch 309 President, Shipmate James M. Jackson UTCM (Ret.) and Whit DeLoach Deputy Director, Public Affairs & Communications NAVFACHQ for thier assistance.

There are so many examples of amazing individuals in the Seabees — past and present. One who stands out the most for me is Jack Kinney, who served in WWII. As many Seabees were, he was assigned to Marine battalions as well. “Can do!” was not a motto, but a way of life. Tell Jack something was impossible, and he would reply, “then it will take longer.”

He was proud to serve his country, and incredibly proud to have been a Seabee. He finished any war story he ever told with a comment about how the war would have never been won if it was not for the strength, tenacity and dedication of the enlisted troops and how honored he was to serve with the best and the bravest.

His Seabee attitude was contagious. Every challenge was seen as an opportunity. Even in his 70s, he traveled to remote villages throughout Africa, building wells so children could have safe drinking water. Listening to the need and finding the solution. That’s what the Seabees did in the 1940s, that’s what they do now.

In WWII, the typical Seabee was 34 years old. This led to the expression: “Be nice to a Seabee, he may be your father.” I am filled with pride to say Jack Kinney was mine.

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



JACK KINNEY
Top: Navy photo (1942)
Bottom (right): attached to
1st Marine Division (1943)

UPCOMING FEATURES

APRIL During National Volunteer month, we will take a special look at the Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) program.



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Featured

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March 5 marks the 65th Anniversary of the Seabees. These unsung heroes have earned a special place in the hearts and minds of all services. We take a special look at their past and present — and salute their future.



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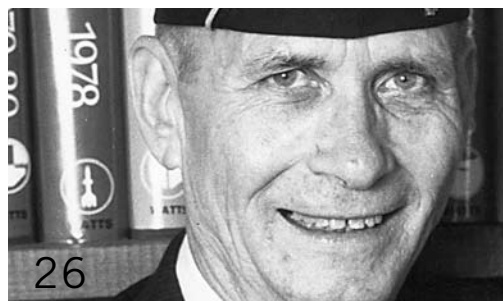
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ON THE COVER

This monument stands outside the gates of Arlington National Cemetery, depicting how Seabees balance construction, fighting and gentle spirit. Page 18 shows the same priorities are in place today.

The wall behind the statue shows scenes of Seabees in many situations, and the slogan "Can Do." This memorial was sculpted by Felix de Weldon, also known for the Iwo Jima monument.



World's Most Valuable Timepiece Disappears

Back in 1933, the single most important watch ever built was engineered for a quiet millionaire collector named Henry Graves. It took over three years and the most advanced horological technique to create the multifunction masterpiece. This one-of-a-kind watch was to become the most coveted piece in the collection of the Museum of Time near Chicago. Recently this ultra-rare innovation was auctioned off for the record price of \$11,030,000 by Sotheby's to a secretive anonymous collector. Now the watch is locked away in a private vault in an unknown location. We believe that a classic like this should be available to true watch aficionados, so Stauer replicated the exact Graves design in the limited edition Graves '33.

The antique enameled face and Bruguet hands are true to the original. But the real beauty of this watch is on the inside. We replicated an extremely complicated automatic movement with 27 jewels and seven hands. There are over 210 individual parts that



27 jewels and 210 hand-assembled parts drive this classic masterpiece.

are assembled entirely by hand and then tested for over 15 days on Swiss calibrators to ensure accuracy. The watches are then reinspected in the United States upon their arrival.

What makes rare watches rare?

Business Week states it best... "It's the complications that can have the biggest impact on price." (*Business Week*, July, 2003). The four interior complications on our Graves™ watch display the month, day, date and the 24 hour clock graphically depicts the sun and the moon. The innovative engine for this timepiece is powered by the movement of the body as the automatic

rotor winds the mainspring. It never needs batteries and never needs to be manually wound. The precision crafted gears are "lubricated" by 27 rubies that give the hands a smooth sweeping movement. And the watch is tough enough to stay water resistant to 5 atmospheres. The movement is covered by a 2-year warranty.

Not only have we emulated this stunning watch of the 1930s but just as surprising, we've been able to build this luxury timepiece for a spectacular

price. Many fine 27-jewel automatics that are on the market today are usually priced well over \$2,000 dollars, but you can enter the rarified world of fine watch collecting for under \$100. You can now wear a millionaire's watch but still keep your millions in your vest pocket. Try the handsome Graves '33 timepiece risk free for 30 days. If you are not thrilled with the quality and rare design, please send it back for a full refund of the purchase price.



The face of the original 1930s Graves timepiece from the Museum of Time.

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USFSPA

At the risk of repeating something you most likely have already thought of, would the Fleet Reserve Association consider underwriting a brief or perhaps writing a brief underwritten by another organization to bring some reform legislation from the Uniformed Former Spouses Protection Act (USFSPA)?

And would the FRA consider presenting this cost sharing with other members of The Military Coalition, organizations not publicly opposed to the USFSPA Litigation Support Group (ULSG)?

FRA members please urge your U.S. Representative and Senators to act on this issue - something essential to enacting legislation authorizing reform of this short sighted and poorly written law.

Bob Boesel

From FRA: Jon Katz, attorney of record representing ULSG in this litigation does not believe it would be helpful for an association that supports substantive reform of USFSPA to file *Amicus curiae* in a case that wants to repeal USFSPA.

FRA is not waiting on the courts and supports introduction and enactment of legislation to eliminate inequities in the USFSPA.

30 Years is Long Enough

Since I retired in 1975, I have contributed money to SBP. I am 73 and my wife is 70 years old. I believe 30 years is plenty long to pay towards SBP. I think October 1, 2005 effective date of paid-up SBP is long enough.

James Shrader USCG (Ret.)

MGIB Shortfall

In the January 2007 edition of *FRA Today*, the article on *Military Benefits of Education* is missing one important bit of information. The VA will only allow a total of 48 months of education benefits from a combination of any programs. Upon discharge from the Navy in 1980, I qualified for and utilized the old GI Bill, a total of 45 months. I enlisted in the Navy Reserve and later the Coast Guard Reserve. When the time came for re-enlistment, the availability of the Montgomery GI Bill was an additional enticement to re-up for 6 more years. The officers at the time assured me I would qualify for this program. I was on track for a graduate degree when the VA cut me off at 3 months. When I called them to inquire why they stated I had completed my 48 months of education benefits. So if you pursue an education benefit for active and reserve personnel, all the bases need to be covered. I still believe I should receive 33 more months of education benefits.

Jeff Marcinkowski



Concurrent receipt concerns

I am another one left out of the government's concurrent receipt program. I was in the navy for 17 years, and obviously going to make a career of it. My career was cut short by an auto accident, spent close to a year in the hospital, and was retired with retired pay, exchange, and medical benefits. For some reason the government feels that I was not career because I didn't have over 20 years in. Granted I draw disabled pay from that VA, but I think I'm owed something for the 17 years given to the Navy.

Don Colling USN (Ret.)

As I read the January issue I noticed the lack of coverage of the VA Disability Tax imposed on the retired military. When ex-Senator Ney goes to prison his retirement will be more than most of those of us who served honorably for two decades or more. The threat of a Presidential veto due to cost while giving billions of dollars in tax breaks to major oil companies should be pointed out in every issue. Yet you remain silent.

Tom Morrison USN (Ret.)

From FRA: FRA remains totally committed to full concurrent receipt for all disabled retirees. In the January issue of *FRA Today*, you can find information regarding concurrent receipt of full military retired pay and veterans' disability compensation for all disabled retirees on pages 7 and 9.

Please also see our coverage of newly proposed legislation on page 7 of this issue. We also urge you to use the FRA Action Center on the www.fra.org to contact your Representative to share your opinions.

SBP — Where's the Benefit?

I am retired from the Navy after being a Pearl Harbor Survivor a World War 2 and Korean War veteran I am now 87 years of age and just lost my wife of 63 years. I have paid on my SBP plan for thirty years and now because of our Congress failing to pass a bill that would have allowed me and many others to stop paying the premiums in 2005 instead of 2008 the only benefit I will receive is to stop paying the premiums on my SBP. This really hurts, as I have been looking forward to my beneficiary receiving the benefits when I am gone. This type of legislation should discourage many young servicemen from signing up for the SBP plan now.

Paul F. Townsend USN (Ret.)

New Congressional Leadership Provides New Challenges and New Opportunities

THE FIRST SESSION OF the 110th Congress is providing new opportunities and new challenges for FRA's legislative agenda. Sen. Harry Reid (Nev.), the new Senate Majority Leader, and Rep. Nancy Pelosi (Calif.), the new and first female Speaker of the House have both been past supporters of many of FRA's top legislative issues — full concurrent receipt, Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) reform, Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB) improvements, full funding for Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Department of Defense (DoD) health care, etc. However, the new leadership in Congress has pledged to be “fiscally responsible” and to reinstitute “Pay Go” budgeting which requires expenditures to be accompanied or offset by commensurate increases in revenue and/or reductions elsewhere in the budget. Regrettably, many of FRA's legislative agenda issues, if enacted, will increase costs, and force Congress to reprioritize spending. As proven in past legislative victories, with strong constituent grassroots support FRA's legislative agenda can advance on its own merit despite budgetary constraints and other challenges.

The new leadership has reconvened the joint House Veterans Affairs Committee and Senate Veterans Affairs



JOHN DAVIS
FRA's Director of
Legislative Programs

Committee hearings in the 110th Congress. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid announced that the House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committees will again hold joint hearings during which FRA and other military and veterans organizations will have the opportunity to present their legislative priorities to both oversight panels at one time. The practice of scheduling joint hearings was replaced in 2006 with early separate hearings before both committees.

Only 131 Members of the new 110th Congress have military experience — 102 in the House and 29 in the Senate. This sustains a gradual decline in the number of U.S. Senators and Representatives who have served in the military. Of the previous 109th Congress, 31 Senators served and 109 Representatives had military experience. FRA has sent congratulatory letters welcoming newly elected Senators and Representatives, introducing each to the FRA and offering the Legislative Team's expertise on health care, compensation, benefits and quality of life issues. This is an FRA tradition at the beginning of each new Congress.

John Davis is FRA's Director of Legislative Programs

FRA's Predatory Lending Protections Threatened!

In a letter to Sen. Tim Johnson (S.D.) on 16 November 2006, FRA's National Executive Secretary Joe Barnes challenged the Senator's statement in *American Banker* magazine that it was a priority to “revisit” the provisions in the FY 2007 Defense Authorization Act prohibiting creditors from imposing an interest rate greater than 36 percent for loans to military personnel and their dependents. The Senator is a member of the Senate Banking Committee and claims the legislation “flew through here awful quickly” and may be “not fully thought through.” FRA has been out front on this issue for the entire 109th Congress, and questions the idea that this has moved too quickly. The letter was mentioned in *Navy Times* stories in the 17 November and 4 December issues. In addition, the winter 2006 issue of *Checklist*, the trade magazine for the check cashing and payday loan industry cover story is *Law Capping Interest for Military Causing Concern*. Thomas Leonard, the Executive Director the California Financial Service Providers is quoted as saying, “This whole thing is going to get opened back up because the banks have put so much pressure on it. It will never go into effect as it is.” FRA strongly supported establishing a cap of 36 percent on payday loans for service members and their dependents that takes effect 1 October, 2007, and is working to protect this hard won protection. FRA members can contact their elected officials on this issue through the FRA Action Center at www.fra.org.

ACTIVE DUTY TAX RELIEF INTRODUCED

Senators Gordon Smith (Ore.) and John Kerry (Mass.) have introduced “The Active Duty Military Tax Relief Act of 2007” that would authorized the following:

- Tax credits for small employers (less than 100 employees) with mobilized Reservists and National Guardsmen;
- Survivors to contribute any amount of the gratuity payment into tax favored accounts, such as Roth IRAs, Coverdell Education Savings Accounts and Health Savings Accounts; and
- Increase in the standard deduction (\$5,350) for active duty for 2007 and 2008 by \$1,000.

Concurrent Receipt Reform Bills Introduced

FRA continues its long-standing support for legislation authorizing the immediate payment of concurrent receipt of full military retired pay and veterans' disability compensation for all disabled retirees. Rep. Jim Marshall (Ga.) has introduced "The Disabled Veterans Tax Termination Act" (H.R. 333) that would provide comprehensive concurrent receipt reform that includes:

1. Extending eligibility for Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC) and Concurrent Retirement and Disability payments (CRDP) to Chapter 61 (disability) retirees with fewer than 20 years of service;
2. Eliminating the 10-year phase-in period for retirees with a disability rating of 50% – 90%; and
3. Extending CRDP eligibility to retirees rated less than 50%.

Congressman Gus Bilirakis (Fla.) also introduced FRA supported

legislation entitled the Retired Pay Restoration Act (H.R. 303) that would permit retirees to receive service-connected disability compensation from VA and their full retirement pay or CRSC. Honorary FRA Member and Pinnacle Award Recipient, Rep. Michael Bilirakis, now retired, introduced the identical bill and the same bill number in previous sessions. The bill would eliminate the phase-in period under the current law. On the Senate side, Majority Leader Harry Reid has introduced S. 439, in the Senate which is identical to H.R. 303. Rep. Bilirakis has also introduced legislation (H.R. 89) to extend eligibility for CRSC for those with fewer than 20 years of creditable service. FRA supports expanding CRSC to members who were medically compelled to retire short of 20 years of service solely because of their combat-incurred dis-

abilities. Shipmates are encouraged to use the FRA Action Center located on the FRA website www.fra.org to contact their elected officials to ask for their support of these bills.

The Veterans Disability Benefits Commission (VDBC) held its January hearing in Washington, D.C. with concurrent receipt on the agenda. FRA issued a letter to the Commission and another on behalf of The Military Coalition (TMC). TMC Retirement Committee Co-Chairmen, FRA's John Davis and MOAA's Mike Hayden, and also submitted a written statement. FRA urges Congress to consider those who had their careers cut short solely because they became disabled by combat or combat-related events, and were forced into medical retirement before they could complete their careers. (See page 9 of the January *FRA Today* for more about the VDBC).

Healthcare Fee Battles Resume in 110th Congress

Reps. Chet Edwards (Texas) and Walter Jones (N.C.) reintroduced their FRA supported "Military Retirees Health Care Protection Act" (H.R. 579). The new bill is bipartisan and almost identical to legislation (H.R. 4949) they championed last year which garnered 164 co-sponsors and was related to the drastic Pentagon-proposed TRICARE fee increases for military retirees. The Edwards-Jones bill would prohibit the DoD from increasing TRICARE fees without approval from Congress.

FRA believes that DoD has not sufficiently investigated other options to make TRICARE more cost-efficient as alternatives to shifting costs to retiree beneficiaries under age 65, and these options are being studied by several organizations including the 14-member Task Force on the Future of the Military Healthcare which was created by the FY 2007 National Defense Authorization Act. In addition to creating the Task Force, the Act also prohibits DoD from increasing any TRICARE fees until 30 September, 2007.

FRA staff attended the first public meeting of the Task Force in January at which Dr. David Chu, Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, and Dr. William Winkenwerder, Jr., Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs emphasized their concerns about the future of the military health care system. The Task Force website address is: <http://www.ha.osd.mil/DHB/fmhc/default.cfm>

The passage of "The Military Retirees Health Care Protection Act" is of paramount importance since DoD is already authorized to increase retiree healthcare fees after 30 September 2007. This is a key issue discussed by retired Army Maj. Gen. Robert W. Smith, III, per legislative authority enacted in the mid-1990s but has never been implemented. Smith is former national president of the Reserve Officers Association, and represents beneficiary groups as a member of the Task Force. As detailed in Tom Philpott's 18 January 2007 Military Update column entitled "Plan to Raise

Retiree TRICARE Fees Ready for Relaunch," DoD is taking a more aggressive approach to its drastic fee increase plan which is part of the Administration's FY 2008 Budget that went to Capitol Hill on 5 February. There was scant mention of the strong grassroots opposition to the plan during the Task Force's first hearing, and it's apparent that the panel is expected to endorse higher fees in its interim report due in May. Health care costs are a top concern beyond DoD in the new 110th Congress as indicated in recent front page stories in major national newspapers. Noteworthy is the emphasis placed on this issue by Peter R. Orszag, the new Director of the Congressional Budget Office for the 110th Congress. According to CQ Today, Orszag believes, "Health is the central long-term fiscal issues facing the country." These concerns were also voiced again by Chu and Winkenwerder during the opening session of the 2007 Military Health System (MHS) conference in Washington, D.C. in January.

FRA's Full Final Month's Retired Pay for Surviving Spouse Introduced!

At the request of FRA, Rep. Walter Jones (N.C.) re-introduced legislation entitled "The Military Retiree Survivor Comfort Act" (H.R. 657) authorizing the retention of the full final month's retired pay by the surviving spouse (or other designated survivor) for the month in which the member was alive for at least 24 hours.

This proposal is in response to complaints from surviving spouses who were unaware that the Department of Defense's Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) shall be notified immediately on the death of the military retiree. Those who had joint bank accounts in which retirement payments were made electronically, gave little if any thought that DFAS could swoop down on the joint account and recoup any overpayments of retirement pay. This action could easily clear the account of any funds remaining whether they were retirement payments or money from other sources, particularly for spouses of enlisted retirees.

In conjunction with this effort, Jones' staff requests input from surviving spouses of deceased retirees affected by the current policy of requiring repayments of retired pay for the month of his/her death. Information can be submitted electronically via FRA to john@fra.org



College Students on Military Leave Should be Re-instated at School

Rep. Stephen Lynch (Mass.) has introduced "The Military Educational Parity Act of 2007," (H.R. 530) which allows a college student who is a member of the Reserve component of the Armed Forces, or in a retired status from the military, who is called to active duty, to be granted a military leave of absence from the institution while serving on active duty, and for one year after the conclusion of such service. The student on a military leave shall be entitled, upon release from serving on active duty, to be restored to the educational status such student had attained prior to being ordered to such duty without loss of academic credits earned, scholarships or grants awarded by the institution. Shipmates can use the FRA Action Center to contact their elected officials on this issue (www.fra.org).

One FY Budget at a Time

The 109th Congress adjourned last year with only two of 11 FY 2007 spending bills completed (DoD and Homeland Security). Usually Continuing Resolutions (CRs) extend the previous fiscal year's spending levels, however "flat-lining" at FY 2006 levels would have had a negative impact on many agencies including the Dept. of Veterans Affairs (VA) that had anticipated an increase in healthcare funding in FY 2007. FRA and other groups argued successfully to increase VA healthcare funding by \$3.6 billion and increase the Defense Health Program by \$1.2 billion restoring these important programs to their FY 2007 funding levels. The enhanced spending levels included in the new CR for the remainder of FY 2007 passed the House and will be considered in the Senate as *FRA Today* goes to print.

End Strengths to be Increased

FRA welcomes the Administration's call to increase service end strengths by 92,000 (27,000 Marines and 65,000 Army) beginning in FY 2008. FRA voiced concern about the Navy's ambitious end strength reductions and has argued that DoD's resistance to increase end strengths increases stress on the military personnel and their families and contributes to increase reliance on the Guard and Reserves. America is at war and FRA believes the Sea Services should have adequate numbers of personnel to meet the demands of fighting the War on Terror and sustain other operational commitments.

As *FRA Today* goes to print the Administration's FY 2008 Budget is being submitted to Congress, and there appears to be extensive bipartisan support for increasing the size of the Marine Corps and the Army, the two branches of the military that has been called on to do most of the fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan. Noteworthy is that from 1990-2000 the Marine Corps end strength declined from 197,000 to 173,000. Also during this same time period the Navy end strength was reduced by more than 35 percent. The Defense budget spending was reduced from 5.2 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) in 1990 (itself down from 6.2 percent in 1986) to 3 percent (1999-2001). This year, including the forthcoming \$100 billion supplemental for Iraq and Afghanistan, the United States will still spend only 4 percent of its GDP on defense. From 1961-1963, the military consumed 9.1 percent of GDP annually. According to many budget experts the active duty military has been stretched to the limit since 911, and has expanded by only 30,000. FRA welcomes the anticipated increased end strengths in the FY 2008 budget advocating that the current end strength is not adequate to meet the demands of fighting the War on Terror and sustaining other operational commitments.

State of the Military Health System (MHS) Conference

FRA was represented by NES Joe Barnes and Legislative Healthcare Program Advisor Bob Washington at the recent 2007 State of the Military Health System (MHS) Annual Conference in Washington, DC.

The theme of this year's conference was "Transforming Strategy into Action: Partners in Excellence." The goal of this transformation is to continue to provide the joint force with the best operational medicine and force health protection in the world and to deliver high-quality health care to all eligible beneficiaries. The conference sessions and presentations aligned with the goals and objectives associated with the MHS strategic plan and addressed how the system is transforming to meet these needs.

Dr. David Chu, Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, and Dr. William Winkenwerder, Jr., Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs reiterated their belief that working retirees under age 65 need to shoulder more of the burden of TRICARE funding through additional fees. Chu also referenced the Task Force on the Future of Military Healthcare and the need to "Join in urging constructive change" regarding the military health system.

FRA believes that the Defense Department has not sufficiently investigated other options to make TRICARE more cost-efficient and strongly supports the "Military Retirees Health Care Protection Act" (H.R. 579) which was recently introduced by Rep. Chet Edwards (Texas) and Walter Jones (N.C.). Visit the Action Center on www.fra.org to learn more about this bill and encourage your Representatives to be co-sponsors.

Utilization of the "Total Force"

Secretary of Defense Robert Gates issued a memorandum on 19 January addressing DoD policy changes to better utilize members of the Reserve and active component units:

- 1) Involuntary mobilization of Reserve Forces will be for a maximum of one year;
- 2) Mobilization of ground combat, combat support, and combat services support will be managed on a unit basis to allow greater cohesion;
- 3) The planning objective for involuntary mobilization of Guard/Reserve units will remain a one year mobilized to five years demobilized ratio. However, current demands will require a number of units to be remobilized sooner.
- 4) The goal for active duty is one year deployed to two years at home station. Currently active duty units are deployed one year, returning home for one year.

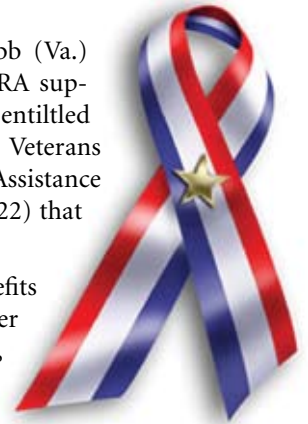
Kent Named 16th Sergeant Major USMC

Marine Corps Commandant General James Conway has named I Marine Expeditionary Force Sergeant Major Carlton Kent as the 16th Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps and will assume the new position in June. Kent represented Sergeant Major of the USMC Estrada in the Senior Enlisted Panel at the 79th FRA National Convention in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin. He has been described by those who know him well as "an advocate for junior Marines," and according to Kent, one of his highest priorities is addressing Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) issues in the Marine Corps, an issue addressed in FRA testimony before the DoD Task Force on Mental Health in December, 2006.

Post-9/11 GI Bill Benefits Proposed

Senator Jim Webb (Va.) introduced an FRA supported a bill entitled "The Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2007" (S. 22) that would authorize:

- A new benefits package to cover costs of tuition, room and board, and a monthly stipend of \$1,000 for service members who have served on active duty since 11 September 2001. For veterans to qualify they must have served at least two years of active duty, with at least some period of active duty time served beginning on or after 11 September 2001;
- Educational benefits for a period of time that is linked to time served in the military. Generally, veterans will not receive assistance for more than a total of 36 months, which equals four academic years;
- Additional payments for tutorial assistance, up to \$100 a month, as well as licensure and certification tests;
- Veterans up to fifteen years (currently 10 years for active duty only) to use their educational assistance. But veterans would be barred from receiving concurrent assistance from this program and the Montgomery G.I. bill program; and
- The Secretary of Veterans Affairs (VA) would administer the program.



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

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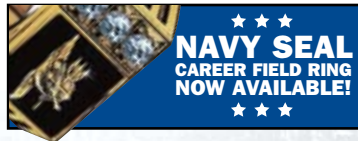
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HEALTHCARE UPDATE

Why You Should Consider Long Term Care Insurance

IF YOU HAVEN'T ALREADY done so, now is an excellent time to consider adding long term care insurance to your retirement plan. Because long term care expenses can pose a significant risk to the assets you've worked a lifetime to accumulate, long term care insurance should be considered as part of a complete financial plan.

The likelihood that you may need long term care is high. An estimated 42 per cent of those who reach 70 will need some form of long term care, says the federal Agency for Health Care Policy and Research (Barron's, 3/22/2004). And while long term care includes a broad range of services, from in-home care to nursing home care, each comes at a cost. Those costs could be substantial, and could have a significant adverse effect on your retirement portfolio.

Why? Most forms of health insurance focus on medical expenses, not the custodial care and non-medical expenses associated with long term care. Generally, Medicare only covers nursing home care after a related three-day inpatient hospital stay and Medicaid doesn't kick in until one has spent down a significant portion of their assets. Long term care insurance can help provide the funds to pay for the care you may need, while simultaneously protecting the assets you've worked a lifetime to accumulate. Long term care insurance may also help preserve financial independence, choice, and dignity, and those can be priceless.



Have you heard the "news" at Westminster Village?

New activities, a new medical clinic, and more... there are lots of new reasons why Westminster Village is an exceptional choice in rental retirement living. Located on the grounds of the former Eaker Air Force Base, Westminster Village offers spacious, reasonably priced duplexes, freedom from maintenance, friendly neighbors, and a great location. Call us today. And watch for more "news" coming soon!

(870)532-6696 or
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MAG/NavAffairs

“MAKING WAVES” IS THE title of FRA’s e-mail news update to members who have used the **Action Center** to garner support for key legislative initiatives on Capitol Hill. Through this update, we can inform members about movement on the issues about which they are most interested. Making waves is also an apt description of another aspect of our Legislative Team’s work on behalf of our membership: providing input to various commissions, task forces and other panels studying key personnel related issues.

Currently, there are several groups working to meet their respective mandates and deadlines for interim and final reports from which legislative proposals and subsequent policy decisions are developed. FRA is “making waves” with these groups – here are a few examples:

The Special Task Force on the Future of Military Health Care was established recently per provisions of the FY 2007 National Defense Authorization Act. This 14-member group has the task of examining “matters relating to the future of military health care.” In addition to attending the panel’s first meeting on 16 January 2007, FRA’s Health Care Advisor (and Director of Membership Development) Bob Washington accompanied me to a special meeting the following day with retired Army MGEN Robert W. Smith III, the beneficiary organization representative on the Task Force. A total of 13 military and veterans organizations attended the meeting with Smith, a former National President of the Reserve Officers Association. A broad range of concerns were discussed – including the importance of the government’s past health care commitment(s) to those who served in the past – and the key distinctions between military service and working in the corporate world.

Another important panel is the **Veterans Disability Benefits Commission**, which is working toward a report submission deadline of 1 October 2007. The Commission was established by provisions in the FY 2004 National Defense Authorization Act and FRA’s National Veterans Service Officer (NVSO) Chris Slawinski attends Commission meetings. Recently, Director of Legislative Programs (DLP) John Davis testified before the panel on behalf of FRA and The Military Coalition’s Retired Affairs Committee, which he co-chairs, regarding the issue of concurrent receipt. This is a long-standing FRA legislative priority, and he expressed support for full concurrent receipt for all disabled retirees and allowing dual-eligible disabled retirees the option of electing to receive either Concurrent Retirement and Disability Pay (CRDP) or Combat Related Special Compensation (CRSC). He also urged expansion of the current tiered approach to those rated 10 through 40 percent and urged the commission to include benefits for Chapter 61 retirees with less than 20

years of service. Additionally, a white paper is being finalized for the Commission on the need to reform the Uniformed Services Former Spouses Protection Act (USFSPA).

The Commission on the Guard and Reserve was established in 2005 and is evaluating both programs and developing recommendations for changes in law and policies to ensure that personnel are adequately organized, trained, equipped, compensated and supported by the Federal Government. In conjunction with their work, NVSO Slawinski has met with staff on key issues and DLP Davis participated in a round table discussion last year and emphasized the increasing demands on Reservists necessitated by multiple missions abroad over longer time periods and the importance of improved compensation and benefits for these personnel.

The Naval Studies Board is under the auspices of The National Academies here in Washington, DC and is evaluating manpower and personnel needs for a transformed naval force. The panel recently invited representatives from FRA, the Military Officers Association of American (MOAA) and the National Military Family Association (NMFA) for a discussion on Navy manpower and personnel issues. Speaking for FRA, I stressed the importance of adequate end strengths, essential resources to sustain and/or enhance compensation, health care, benefits, and ensure family readiness, and a broad perspective on benefits for all categories of beneficiaries to include Reserve, retirees and survivors.

The FY 2006 National Defense Authorization established a 14-member **Department of Defense Task Force on Mental Health** to examine matters relating to mental health and the Armed Forces. On behalf of FRA, DLP Davis spoke to the group on 20 December 2006 and emphasized the importance of adequately funding both the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) and the Defense Health Care Program, and the implementation of sorely needed Post Traumatic Stress (PTSD) awareness and treatment programs.

In addition to these presentations to panels and task forces, FRA offered recommendations to the **Defense Advisory Commission on Military Compensation** during its work in 2005.

Providing input and recommendations to these and other groups is one important part of our overall efforts to communicate our Shipmates’ concerns and advance FRA’s legislative agenda.



JOE BARNES
FRA’s National Executive Secretary

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



A Rare Find

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Your Mission • Your Voice

ONWATCH

Seabee Leadership Initiatives for 2007 and Beyond

A Message From James D. Fairbanks, Force Master Chief Petty Officer of the Seabees



Seabees around the world are an extension of the proud history and positive legacy of U.S. Naval Forces, and I'm proud to say the reputation of the Seabees has never been better. By showing America's compassion and generosity, Seabees are helping people around the world resist the influence of terrorism — winning the hearts and minds of all they meet. What the Seabees are doing is

critical to our national security in places like Iraq, Afghanistan and the Horn of Africa. They are playing key roles in the Theater Security Cooperation Plan and Major Combat Operations Deterrent Force.

I would like to speak directly to everyone who serves as a Seabee: the Navy is recognizing your contributions, and is responding to your needs. Your work has received accolades from Navy and inter-service leadership ranging from AOR Commanders to the CNO and USMC Commandant. Because of your outstanding service, there has been an increase in reenlistment bonuses, signing bonuses, advancement rates and school opportunities. There is also a concerted effort to increase visibility for Seabees as an invaluable part of big picture Navy operational strategy.

THE NAVY CARES ABOUT YOUR QUALITY OF LIFE AND QUALITY OF SERVICE.

The Navy understands the need for more emphasis on the health and welfare of troops and their families affected by high-stress, high-tempo operations.

The CNO and involved Navy leadership are responsible for improving our material condition, such as improved facilities support at Gulfport and Port Hueneme. The end result will honor not only your tremendous work, but also the sacrifices and contributions of our families. We are also pleased with the establishment of the 25th Naval Construction Regiment (NCR) and Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 11, headquartered in Gulfport, Miss.

Keep communicating through your chain of command. Your input is heard and respected and has led to many changes you will see in the future.

Of course, long-term improvements such as base recapitalization, take time, but the work is underway. An increase of \$400 million in funding came at the end of FY 2006, which assists in additional emphasis and resources for equipment including personal protective gear, as well as training and support services. The new equipment list has been approved and is being procured and phased in to assist you in your increasingly demanding duties.

NEW VEHICLES

- Joint Engineer Rapid Response Vehicle (JERRV) AKA "Cougar" for convoy security elements
- Medium Tactical Vehicle Replacement (MTVR) Armor Kits
- New Medium Tactical Vehicle Replacement (MTVR) Trucks
- Heavy Truck Tractors
- High Mobility Multi-Wheeled Vehicles (HMMWV's) with armor and stand-alone armor kits to support vehicles
- Armor for Horizontal Construction Equipment
- New Vertical Construction Equipment
- New Horizontal Construction Equipment

COMMUNICATIONS GEAR

- Convoy Communication Equipment to include Blue Force Tracker and current Electronic Countermeasures Systems

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE GEAR

- Outer Tactical Vests
- Helmet Ballistic Liner and Suspension System (BLSS) Kit,
- Enhanced Small Arms Protective Inserts
- Individual protective equipment list being published by Naval message

Bottom line — Seabees will be furnished with the best PPE gear available and will not have to get it on their own.

CBC GULFPORT

The CBC Gulfport Katrina Recovery base improvements is the largest military construction (MILCON) program currently in the Navy, approximately \$340 million, started in September 2006, and will continue for about 3 years. This will change CBC forever, providing world class facilities for quality of life support, mission support and training.

PORT HUENEME BASE IMPROVEMENTS

Port Hueneme's Mobilization Processing Facility, Bldg. PH267, is being renovated as part of a \$2.8 million project to meet the mobilization mission of the 31st SRG.

TRAINING

The approach to training is now "Train like we build and fight," which obviously means we'll have the very best training available! Seabee training focuses on construction proficiency, project planning, leadership, project management — the Navy is providing great opportunities for you, and we know you are up to all challenges ahead.

Master Chief Fairbanks is designated a Seabee Combat Warfare and Master Training Specialist. His awards include the Bronze Star, Meritorious Service Medal (3), Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal (3), Army Commendation Medal, Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal (2), and various service and unit awards.

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Never set your watch again. The reason this watch is so accurate is because it gets its signal from the official U.S. Atomic Clock in Fort Collins, Colorado. The standard for time-keeping throughout the U.S., the Atomic Clock uses sophisticated technology to measure the vibration of atoms, which is constant. For this reason, it is accurate to within a billionth of a second, and will take approximately 6 million years for it to lose a second! Until now, watches designed to receive the radio signal had to have plastic cases. Now, "America's Timekeeper" has created a high-quality analog watch in stainless steel style. The watch is designed so that it can still receive the signal—so you get traditional elegant styling with modern time-keeping accuracy. Once you've selected the proper time zone, you never have to

touch it again. It automatically adjusts for Daylight Saving Time, 30-day months and leap years. It comes with the E. Howard name and a certificate of authenticity.

Designed for a lifetime of accuracy. This finely crafted watch blends past and future with an elegant, easy-to-read analog display and a handy digital readout, showing Day and Month, Seconds, or U.S. Time Zone at the touch of a button. This good-looking watch is also tough, with a scratch-resistant crystal and polished stainless steel case that's water resistant.

Try it now with our exclusive home trial. No one has sold more Atomic Watches than we have, and this is the one that meets our high standards for looks and performance. We are so sure that you will like it too that we are offering it with our exclusive 90-day home trial. If you are not completely satisfied with the watch for any reason, simply return it within 90 days for a refund of the purchase price, and keep the atomic alarm clock as our gift.

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THE SEABEES' "CAN DO!" attitude is a great approach for membership recruitment and retention. Show prospective members the importance of membership on two levels:

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A free subscription to FRA Today

Stay informed and connected with what is happening on Capitol Hill, with senior enlisted leaders, throughout DoD and Homeland Security as well as with other members of the Association.

Assistance from staff members

Need to cut red tape or to get information? FRA staff stand ready. As an example, recently a member was told his disability pay would not be paid until 2009. He called FRA's Veteran Service Officer, Chris Slawinski, and got the payment within four days.



BOB WASHINGTON
FRA's Director of Membership Development

Eligibility for Scholarships

FRA provides nearly \$100,000 a year in scholarships to members and their families.

2. Legislative Impact

The larger the Association is, the louder our collective voices are heard on Capitol Hill. \$25 per year is a small investment to help make sure elected officials clearly hear the priorities of current and former enlisted personnel.

If you are interested in more examples of FRA membership benefits and impact on the Hill, please join me on March 14 at 1200 EST for a teleconference called "Why FRA Membership Matters." Invite prospective members as well — it is a great way to introduce someone to FRA! To participate, please dial 877-746-9514 and enter the code 1924. This is limited to the first 25 callers. To listen-only, please use code 1400.

Bob Washington is FRA's Director of Membership Development and serves as the Chairman of the National Membership and Retention Committee.

BRAVO ZULU!

If you serve aboard a Navy submarine, chances are you went to the Navy's Sub School in Groton, Conn. This, of course, means you probably met FRA Past National President George Hyland. If so, you heard about and ended up with a great feeling about the Association (and an application!).

More than 10 years ago, the Sub School's Command Master Chief (CMC) Tom Grove asked Hyland to help strengthen the school's Sailor of the Quarter (SOQ) event. He knew of FRA's commitment to honoring outstanding Sailors, Marines and Coast Guard personnel on a national level, and knew Hyland would help locally. Today the event attracts over 100 people — and keeps Branches 237 and 20 quite busy!

One-to-one communication is key to recruiting! Recently, Hyland was working his shift as a conductor on an Amtrak train. Two Sailors came aboard and Hyland had a captive audience. With his disarming charm (and probably a joke or two), he opened the Sailors' eyes to why membership in FRA is an important investment. They happily joined the Association — a \$25 investment in their future was too good of an offer to pass up!

There is never a "hard-sell" from Hyland, but always good humor, a great sales job and the ever handy pocket application. Thank you PNP George, for everything you do for FRA! Now if we can only get you to share your baking recipes in *FRA Today*...

FRA NHQ STAFF

PROFILE: ED DOCKERY



Photo by: Vince Cuthrie

Ed Dockery, USMC (Ret.) is FRA's Legislative Assistant. Ed was in the Corps from 1977–1997 with a wide variety of duties, including serving as the Marine attachment aboard USS Eisenhower (CVN-69) in the Indian Ocean, as Marine Security Forces Instructor in Chesapeake Va. and serving in support of both Sgt. Maj.

USMC Dave Sommers and also Admiral William Crowe during his tenure as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

While owning a small business in Hillsdale County, Mich. was gratifying, Ed wanted to continue his service to service members, veterans and retirees. FRA was a perfect fit, and he moved to Va. two years ago. He's back among Marines now, as he represents FRA monthly at Quantico providing a legislative brief to the senior enlisted personnel.

Ed's wife Laurie is a retired Navy Recruiter. Their son, E.J., is a sophomore in college at Adrian College and an outstanding football player. Their current challenge is selling their Michigan house — anybody interested, e-mail him at ed@fra.org!

As Ed's favorite day is St. Patrick's Day, please tip your hat to him on March 17.



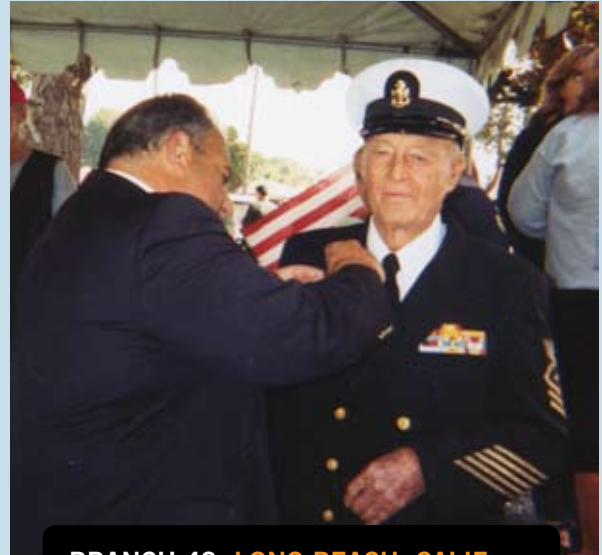
BRANCH 109 SEMINOLE, FLA.

Branch officers (left to right) Thomas Montgomery, Treasurer, Alphone Vacca, President, Ronald Shane, Secretary (standing) and David Soderland, Chaplain attended a Jr.NROTC ceremony at Dunedin High School on Veterans Day.



BRANCH 136 MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.

In honor of the veterans of Bone Lake Township, Wisc., a flag was donated by Shipmate Al Girard (second from the right) and dedicated at a ceremony on Veterans Day. He is pictured with (left to right) Bill and Bob Schilling of American Legion Post 254, and Commander Danny Wheeler, CHC, who was the guest speaker at the dedication.



BRANCH 43 LONG BEACH, CALIF.

Shipmate Clifford Chaffee receives his 65-year continuous membership pin from Long Beach Mayor Bob Foster.



BRANCH 137 MINDEN, NEV.

President Bud Harris presented Sgt. Clint Caldwell, USMC and his wife Sgt. Ashley Caldwell, USMC with memberships at a meeting on 26 January 2007. Sgt. Clint Caldwell completed two tours of duty in Iraq. He spoke of the difference conditions in the country since his first tour. Showers are more plentiful and drinking water is now available in plastic bottles. Sgt. Ashley Caldwell was recently selected as Marine of the Quarter at the Marine Warfare Training Center at Pickel Meadows.

BRANCH 267 ST. LOUIS, MO.

President John Hollowood presents a 50-year-member certificate, card, and pin to Shipmate Robert Nesbit at the annual winter party/banquet held this year in St. Charles, Missouri. Branch 267, Greater St. Louis always attempts to make meaningful public presentations to shipmates who have reached milestone year markers.



BRANCH 186 HERNANDO, FLA.

The Branch and Unit hosted a Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day. Six survivors were in attendance at the event, along with many distinguished guests. Governor Jeb Bush sent a Proclamation, as did the Citrus County Board of Commissioners.

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

A young child with braided hair and white beads is smiling in the foreground. In the background, a construction site is visible with workers and machinery. The text 'SEABEES CAN DO!' is overlaid on the image.

SEABEES CAN DO!

Gonaives, Haiti (10 March 2005) – A young child smiles as U.S. Navy Seabees assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion One (NMCB-1), construct a new school building for her and her classmates in Gonaives, Haiti. After the hurricanes of 2004, floodwaters were more than 12 feet deep at this location. When asked what she thought of the work being done, she said, “Tres bien,” which translates to “very good.” Construction projects included building three schoolhouses, and drilling three potable water wells. *U.S. Navy photo by Photographer’s Mate 2nd Class Roger S. Duncan.*

Navy Seabees take a great deal of pride in their “Can Do!” spirit and rich heritage, and rightfully so. They

claim a 65-year history as a building and fighting force that embodies their mission and philosophy – We Build, We Fight. The Seabees were created during World War II and have played a role in every war since. They have built and fought on every continent, been goodwill ambassadors for the Navy and our nation, and most importantly, they have always left a region better for their efforts. Whether they are repairing battle-damaged runways, constructing housing for deployed service personnel, building a hospital for displaced refugees, or providing disaster relief to areas ravaged by nature’s wrath, the Seabees make things happen.

The Seabees of today face different threats and solve different problems than their predecessors, but their focus and tenacious spirit has remained unchanged over the course of their storied history. They still embody the indomitable spirit depicted on the face of the Seabee Memorial at Arlington National Cemetery: “With willing hearts and skillful hands, the difficult we do at once. The impossible takes a bit longer.”



21st Century Seabees

Today’s Seabees are a key component in our nation’s War on Terror, providing a continuous presence in Iraq and other areas of the Middle East. Eight active duty construction battalions and their reserve counterparts rotate into Iraq on a six-month cycle, helping to rebuild the war-torn areas of the country.

True to their roots, today’s Seabees are constructing and repairing the infrastructure required for the combatant forces to complete their mission, and working to improve the living conditions of their fellow service members. The traditional challenges of building in the desert are compounded by incoming mortar fire, IEDs (improvised explosive devices) and the logistical challenges of getting equipment and supplies to remote areas.

Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (MCPON) Joe Campa is quick to praise the Seabees’ work and the reputation they are strengthening from Kenya to Afghanistan. “Since assuming this position, I’ve seen them in action on every continent I’ve visited and they continue to amaze me with their ingenuity and their courage,” said Campa. “Our Seabee community has a long, rich history of proud, selfless service. Their dedication to defending the ideals this nation was founded upon has never been more important, as their efforts now directly contribute to introducing freedom to people who’ve never experienced it.”

In addition to their work in combat zones, today’s Seabees are also accomplishing phenomenal humanitarian work around the globe. In the wake of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005, Seabees restored property and brought hope to many of the coastal residents. They removed 20,000 tons of debris, cleared more than 700 miles of road, repaired

100 schools and more than 30 public buildings, completed 455 public utilities projects, delivered 237,000 gallons of water and fuel, and distributed meals to 1,600 families per day in the 15 months following the disasters. FRA is particularly grateful for the Seabees’ efforts to secure the Armed Forces Retirement Home in Gulfport, Mississippi. The Gulfport facility is home to more than 400 military residents, many of whom are members of FRA Branch 311. These accomplishments are even more impressive when one considers that many of the Seabees doing the work were victims of the hurricanes themselves.

Our nation’s borders do not restrict the Seabees’ humanitarian efforts. They conducted damage assessments in Indonesia and provided fresh water to Sri Lankan citizens following the 2005 tsunami; built schools, drilled wells and provided medical assistance to hurricane-ravaged Haiti; helped victims of the 2005 earthquake in Pakistan; and more recently provided emergency food and supplies to areas of Kenya and Ethiopia ravaged by massive flooding.

A Proud Tradition is Born

The Seabees began as the brainchild of Rear Admiral Ben Moreell, Chief of the Navy’s Bureau of Yards and Docks, in 1941. He recognized the need for personnel who could defend themselves while performing work on military construction projects. Civilian contractors who were currently employed on such projects were considered “non-combatants” and prohibited under international law from resisting enemy fire.

Shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Moreell requested and received authority to establish Navy construction units

manned by men from the civilian construction trades. He envisioned a Naval Construction Regiment, comprised of three Naval Construction Battalions. These battalions, abbreviated CBs, adopted Moreell's proposed motto – Constuimus, Batuimus – “We Build, We Fight.”

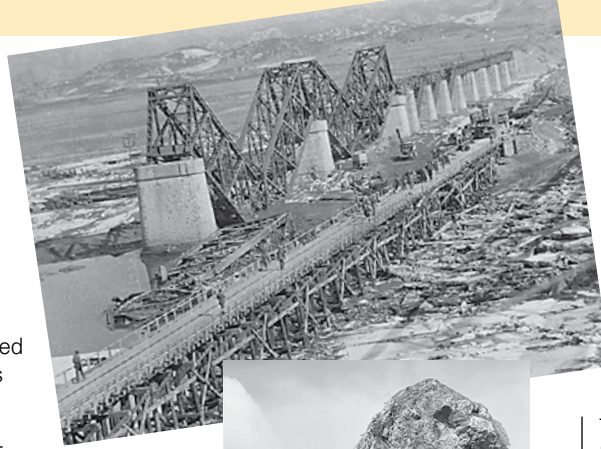
The first Seabees were volunteers, but they were not raw recruits in the traditional sense. Because they were recruited for their construction skill and experience, physical standards were less rigid for Seabee recruits. Volunteers between the ages of 18 and 50 were accepted, though it was later discovered that several 60-year-olds were able to join up – an early demonstration that Seabees are creative problem-solvers. During the early days of World War II, the average age of a Seabee was 37.

During the course of WWII, thousands of men served in the Seabees, building and fighting on six continents and more than 300 islands. The Seabees' began building their “Can Do” reputation early on; playing a critical role in the Atlantic and Pacific theaters, as well as the Panama Canal region that linked the two oceans. Whether assisting General George Patton's troops in their Rhine River crossing or accompanying General Douglas MacArthur as his forces liberated the Philippines, Seabees participated in many of the pivotal battles of WWII.

Seabees Prove Their Worth

The Seabees saw their first Atlantic Theater combat in early November 1942, following American assault forces onto the shores of North Africa. They rapidly constructed military facilities at Oran, Casablanca, Safi and Fedala.

The Seabees' accomplishments in the Atlantic theater were critical to the Allies' success, culminating with their critical role in the D-Day invasion of Normandy. The Seabees were among the first to go ashore, tasked with destroying the steel and concrete barriers the Germans had built to thwart amphibious landings. At daybreak, their positions were exposed and the Germans fired mercilessly, wiping out entire Seabee teams. Those who survived planted and detonated explosive charges, destroying the barriers and breaching the enemy's defenses.



Once the invasion fleet arrived offshore, nearly 10,000 Seabees employed a series of steel pontoons to create causeways for infantrymen to charge ashore. These pontoons were standardized in size and fitted with specialized hardware so they could be quickly assembled into causeways, piers and barges. The Seabee-created causeways allowed Allied troops and tanks to make their way ashore and push the enemy inland.

The Seabees' gallantry was also evident in the Pacific Theater. Control of the Pacific islands would cut enemy supply and communication lines between Australia to Japan, making possession of these islands strategically important to the Allies. The islands were equally important to the enemy, offering airstrips and refueling opportunities to Japanese fighters.

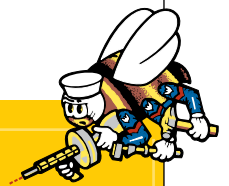
Top: Imjin River, Korea (10 March 1952) – “Freedom Gate Bridge” built by the 84th Engineer Construction Battalion. This bridge temporarily replaces the original structure which was destroyed by bombs.

Bottom: Apra Harbor, Guam (ca. August 1945) – Giant seawall under construction by Seabees of the 76th Construction Battalion. When completed the two mile breakwater will contain 1,760,000 cubic yards of earth and stone. A 30-ton boulder is hauled to dumping spot.

The Japanese had almost completed a landing field on Guadalcanal, and it was imperative that the Allies destroy it. In order to accomplish this feat, the Seabees were instructed to build an airfield on the island of Espiritu Santo, an island close to Guadalcanal. A Seabee detachment miraculously created a 6,000 foot airstrip where, only 20 days earlier, dense jungle had been. A major air attack was launched from the island, destroying the Japanese air base construction that was underway on Guadalcanal.

Seabees followed the Marines ashore when they invaded Guadalcanal, becoming the first Seabees to build under combat conditions. Their immediate task was to repair the airfield that had been an Allied target only days before. The airstrip, now known as Henderson Field, was under continuous attack by the Japanese, so the repair efforts were never-ending.

The role played by Seabees in the Pacific island-hopping campaign is perhaps their greatest contribution to winning the war. Seabee dedication and perseverance was evident on Tarawa Atoll, Saipan, Guam, Tinian, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa — repairing



WHY A SEA BEE?

When the Navy first established its Construction Battalions, Frank J. lafrate was asked to draw a “Disney type” insignia that would identify and represent this new battalion that would not be an offensive force, but could defend itself if necessary. His first thought was to use a beaver to represent these builder-fighters, but further research revealed that beavers will turn tail and run in the face of danger. The industrious bee was chosen because, in lafrate's words, “a bee won't bother you ... unless you bother him, at which point he comes back with a sharp sting.”

Once the idea was established, lafrate spent about three hours animating the bee, giving him a white hat, tools of the construction trades, and a Tommy gun to show his fighting capabilities. On his sleeves, the bee wore the insignia of a machinist's mate, a carpenter's mate and a gunner's mate.

Using the bee to represent the men who would work at sea generated the logical name for this newly-established group, and the “Seabees” were born.

bases and building runways, transportation networks, hospitals, storage dumps, tank farms and Quonset hut villages.

The Seabees' mission was to fight only when defending what they built, but numerous Seabee heroes emerged from WWII. Seabees were awarded 33 Silver Stars and 5 Navy Crosses for their gallantry. Some of these medals were awarded posthumously to the 290 Seabees killed in action and the 500 who died as a result of construction accidents during the war.

After WWII, the Seabee force was downsized considerably, with manpower falling from a peak strength of 250,000 to approximately 20,000. During WWII, the Seabees had been a component of the Naval Reserve. Having proven themselves to be a necessary military asset, the Seabees were added to the regular Navy in 1947. Many WWII veterans wished to continue their military service and became part of the 3,300 Seabees on active duty after the war. The reserve Seabee contingent remained a valuable and ready force for future war fighting.

Korea

When North Korean forces invaded South Korea in June of 1950, that reserve force was called up, increasing the Seabees' active duty manpower to more than 14,000. The Seabees again demonstrated their Can Do spirit, playing a pivotal role in the landing at Inchon. In what has become known as "one of the most brilliant amphibious assaults in history," the Seabees battled 30-foot tides, strong currents and fierce enemy fire to bring troops and equipment ashore. In addition to their amphibious operations, the Seabees continued to create airfields and harbors, clear mined tunnels, repair ships and equipment.

When the Korean Armistice was signed in July of 1953, Seabee troop strength was not drastically reduced as it had been following WWII. Their expertise was used to facilitate a variety of peacetime projects, including an annual deployment to build and expand scien-

Fort Hunter Liggett, Calif. (17 August 2006) – Builder Constructionmen Aaron Stokes stretches barbed wire through a spool of Concertina wire to secure an entry point at the camps Logistics Support Area (LSA). *U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Carmichael Yezep.*



tific bases in Antarctica (Operation Deep Freeze), construction of Cubi Point Naval Air Station in the Philippines, and securing the perimeter of the U.S. Naval Base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, following the Cuban Missile Crisis.

In the years following the Korean War, the Seabees also embarked on a new mission – providing disaster relief to parts of the world affected by natural disasters. As an operationally-ready force, the Seabees became the "Navy's Goodwill Ambassadors" after the devastating Greek earthquake in 1953. Additionally, they built, restored or improved roads, hospitals, orphanages and public utilities in many remote parts of the world, often teaching construction basics to the local populace.

Vietnam

One of the unique projects assigned to the Seabees in 1956, was to conduct a survey of existing and proposed roads in the newly-established Republic of Vietnam. The data collected about the 100 miles of roadway would prove invaluable nearly ten years later when the first full Seabee battalion arrived in Vietnam to build an expeditionary airfield for Marines at Chu Lai.

The Seabees built camps and carried out civic action projects in Vietnam, again training locals in basic construction skills and providing medical assistance.

As the conflict in Vietnam grew, so did the demands on Naval Construction forces. To meet this demand, the Navy again began to recruit older men with construction experience at advanced pay grades. These builder-fighters built roads, bridges, airfields, warehouses, hospitals, storage facilities, bunkers and other facili-

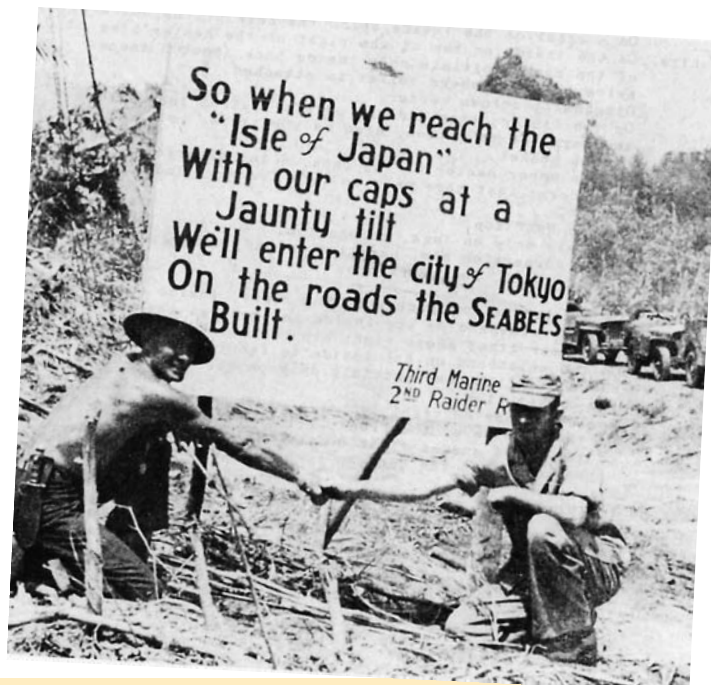
ties critically needed by combat forces.

Seabees are often required to be combatants themselves, even though they are primarily builders and instructors. During the June 1965 battle at Dong Xoai, Viet Cong troops overtook a Special Forces Camp where hundreds of South Vietnamese and Allied forces were assigned. One of the two Seabees killed in this attack, Construction Mechanic 3rd Class Marvin G. Shields, USN, was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for destroying an enemy machine gun emplacement. Shields was killed in the effort and is the first Seabee to earn the nation's highest military honor. He is also the first member of the Navy to earn the Medal of Honor for action in Vietnam.

As American troops began to leave Vietnam and the responsibility for war efforts was passed to the South Vietnamese, the Seabees won the hearts of the Vietnamese people by preparing them for the ultimate withdrawal of U.S. forces. Over the course of the war, the

Bougainville, Papua New Guinea – The Seabees named a road they built "Marine Drive Hi-way" in honor of the Marines. The Marines honored the Seabees with this sign.

DoD photo.



San Fernando, Philippines (17 August 2006) – Hospital Corpsman Samirah Abdullah and Storekeeper Seaman Shane Spuhler both attached to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion One (NMCB-1) pass out goodie bags to the Mabanengbeng Elementary School students after the opening ceremony for their new building in San Fernando, Philippines. The Seabees will construct two classrooms for the school. *U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Ja'lon A. Rhinehart*



Seabees had constructed a new naval base, built roads that provided access to farms and markets, and dug fresh water wells throughout the country. Future generations benefited from the schools, hospitals, enhanced utilities, and roads built by the Seabees. The Seabees taught the Vietnamese people construction skills that would allow them to help themselves, strengthening the Seabees' legacy of compassion for others.

In the ensuing years, the Seabees continued to provide disaster relief to victims of hurricanes, earthquakes, floods and other natural disasters. Their primary peacetime construction project in the 1970s and early 1980s was the creation of a massive military complex on Diego Garcia, an atoll in the Indian Ocean. Seabees spent ten years constructing the complex, which is still used today as a staging area and forward operating location.

Desert Shield/Desert Storm

Only 11 days after Iraqi forces invaded Kuwait on 2 August 1990, the first 210 Seabees arrived in Saudi Arabia as part of the contingent supporting Operation Desert Shield. Temperatures soared to 120 degrees Fahrenheit as they worked to build airfields and parking aprons, base camps to house Marines, and ammunition supply points. Once those jobs were completed, the Seabees' focus shifted to improving living condi-

tions for Marines. In addition to the grueling August heat, the Seabees also had to fight the blowing desert sands. Sand got into everything, taking a toll on equipment and adding to the Seabees' maintenance challenges.

Desert Storm began in January 1991, when Allied military personnel began to expel Iraqi forces from Kuwait. Seabees crossed the Kuwaiti border in the wake of advancing Allied forces, providing immediate battle damage repairs to roads and airfields as they went. Supporting General Norman Schwarzkopf's "End Run" attack strategy was among the many Herculean tasks completed by the Seabees during the Gulf War. More than 200 miles of roads were constructed in two weeks, during Saudi Arabia's wettest weather in years.

Even during war, the Seabees humanitarian efforts continued. During the 1990s,

the Seabees provided disaster relief to Kurdish refugees (Operation Provide Comfort), supported Haitian and Cuban migrants, and assisted those suffering from famine in Somalia. Additionally, they delivered needed supplies and manpower following the 1991 eruption of Mt. Pinatubo in the Philippines and Hurricane Andrew which hit Dade County, Florida, in 1992.

Can Do!

For 65 years, the Seabees have consistently demonstrated their ingenuity and skills as builders and fighters. They have incorporated new technology and techniques, and adapted their efforts to meet unique challenges, but they have never wavered from their purpose: With compassion for others We Build – We Fight for peace with freedom.

Lauren Armstrong serves as the Contributing Editor for *FRA Today*.

Fallujah, Iraq (20 May 2006) – Builder 3rd Class Darin Errington breaks apart asphalt with a jackhammer as other Seabees prepare forms for a concrete pour on a road repair project. Naval Mobile Construction Battalion Four Zero (NMCB-40) is providing support to Multi-National Coalition Forces throughout Iraq. *U.S. Navy photo by Photographer's Mate 3rd Class John P. Curtis*





I've been in the Navy for 28 years and I live and breathe Seabees. I'm honored to be a part of this proud organization and work with people who do what they do for the love of their country.

Command Master Chief Mike Holdcraft, Naval Construction Regiment 30

The thing that I'm the most proud of, especially for the support of the global war on terrorism, is how our Reserve and Active Forces pulled together and really made a solid team, it was absolutely seamless. But I'm extremely proud of all our Seabees.

James D. Fairbanks, Force Master Chief Petty Officer of the Seabees

I helped build a runway, maintenance facilities and housing with Marine Air Group 33 in Korea. The first U.S. jet aircraft to fly into Korea landed on that runway.

EQCM Rex Roark, USN (Ret.), Branch 282

I was in the Marines for four years before I joined the Navy. The Seabees trained like Marines, we had a Marine advisor, and, man, I'm telling you, we could hold our own. We could build anything.

SWC Morgan Coons, USN (Ret.), MAL

I knew I'd be a Seabee when I was sitting on my daddy's knee. I was alive and well during WWII, saw John Wayne in the "Fighting Seabees," and just knew that's what I wanted to do.

EOCS John Stanbrough, USNR (Ret.), MAL

It seems everyone is using the "Can Do" phrase these days, but it definitely impacted my life. Being in the Seabees made me proud that I could take initiative and complete a project.

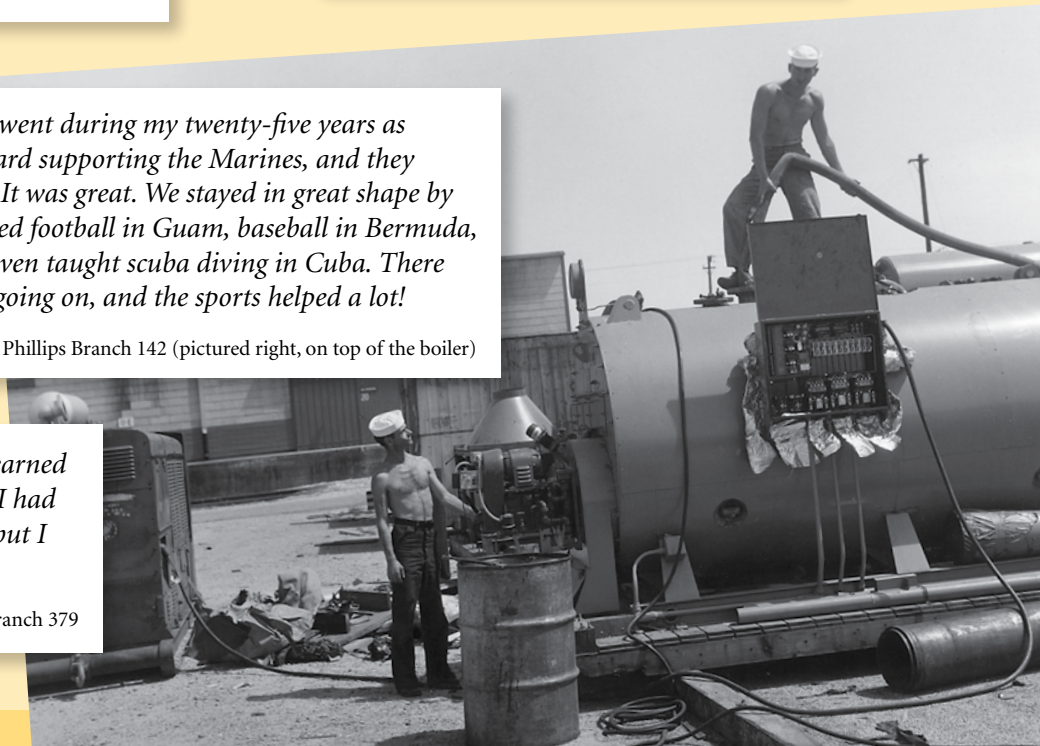
EOC Darryl Manning, USNR (Ret.), Branch 42

I enjoyed everywhere I went during my twenty-five years as a Seabee. We worked hard supporting the Marines, and they certainly supported us. It was great. We stayed in great shape by playing sports. We played football in Guam, baseball in Bermuda, volleyball in Cuba... I even taught scuba diving in Cuba. There was always something going on, and the sports helped a lot!

UTCF Sam Phillips Branch 142 (pictured right, on top of the boiler)

I spent half my life being a Seabee. I learned a lot and would do it all over again if I had the chance. I loved what I was doing, but I enjoyed the camaraderie the most.

CECS Richard Kirshner, USNR (Ret.), Branch 379





HELP FRA SALUTE AND SUPPORT THE NAVY, MARINE CORPS AND COAST GUARD!

Show your pride in your service — and for all those who have served!

FRA is proud to serve current and former Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard personnel.

Through a very special arrangement, we have made it possible for you to show your pride with a high-quality hat — **made in USA** — showing the service of your choice. This hat is **yours FREE** when you donate \$35 or more to FRA.

Your donation goes immediately to supporting FRA's efforts on Capitol Hill, fighting for legislation that affects you, your family and all those who serve and have served as enlisted personnel of the Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard!

You will receive a free hat with each donation of \$35 or more.* Wear the hat with pride or consider giving as thoughtful gifts for friends and family.

Your donation goes a long way for FRA!

76 cents out of every dollar of the FRA budget supports services for our members such as:

- *Naval Affairs & OnWatch*
- phone support for concerns or legislative updates
- e-mail news alerts
- use of the Action Center on www.fra.org
- scholarships for members and their families
- disaster relief grants for Shipmates
- and so much more!

Give today and help FRA on its mission to salute and support current and former members of the Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard!

Logon to www.fra.org/support to make your donation or call 800-FRA-1924 (ask for Member Services) and let us know which made in the USA hat to send you!



**Donations of \$70 or more are eligible for two hats, etc.*

Your *made in the USA* hat is **FREE** with a donation of \$35 or more. Donations of any size are accepted with gratitude.



WWW.FRA.ORG

Please login to www.fra.org to access members-only information and participate in online discussion groups with staff and other Shipmates.

Through the Web site, you can also communicate with your elected officials using FRA's online Action Center, update your personal information, subscribe to *NewsBytes*, FRA's weekly e-mail update, read FRA's *OnWatch*, (quarterly publication for the active duty and Reserve communities), or access the other member benefits listed below.

FRA TODAY

FRA's monthly magazine provides concise articles on legislative developments that affect you and your family.

FRA SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Over \$100,000 in college and graduate school scholarships are awarded to FRA members, their dependants and grandchildren each year.

GEICO CAR INSURANCE

Auto premiums are discounted for FRA members in many states. Call 1-800-MILITARY (1-800-645-4827) and ask for the FRA member benefit discount.

Take advantage of the following benefits and your membership will pay for itself!

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As an FRA member, you are eligible for excellent coverage at affordable group rates by participating in FRA-endorsed insurance programs. Request information by calling 1-800-424-1120, or by following the link on the Membership Benefits page under My FRA on www.fra.org/benefits.

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Show your FRA membership card and mention Lens Crafters Plan #9134727 to receive a 20% discount on frames, lenses, coating and tints, optical accessories, safety frames and lenses, and non-prescription sunglasses at Lens Crafters. Some locations also offer discounts on eye exams and contact lenses. Call 1-800-522-LENS for information.

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FRA members qualify for a special subscription rate of 52 weeks for \$39.00 or 35 weeks for \$26.50. Call 1-800-368-5718 to start or renew your subscription. Use FRA priority member code number 1516N3.

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FRA members are offered FRA's exclusive MasterCard card with no annual fee. Choose a Platinum or Classic card that displays an image from the Navy, Marine Corps, or Coast Guard. Call 1-800-GET-MBNA (1-800-438-6262) for more information.

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FRA is pleased to provide the following financial tools through MBNA for the benefit of our members:

- *GoldPortfolio* — deposit accounts through MBNA America Bank N.A.

- *GoldCertificate CD* — consistently ranked among the best nationwide.
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These accounts are FDIC insured up to \$100,000 per depositor. Call 1-800-GET-MBNA (1-800-438-6262) for more information.

MILITARY CHECKS

Members of FRA can show association pride with high quality, custom designed bank checks, personalized with your name, address, and FRA emblem. Call 1-800-VET-CHEX to order.

AVIS CAR RENTALS

When making reservations through Avis, be sure to use your FRA membership benefit discount: AWD#T867500.

HERTZ CAR RENTALS

When making reservations through Hertz, be sure to use your FRA membership benefit discount: CDP#332104.

ONLINE TRAVEL PORTAL

The online travel portal provides FRA members special government rates for everything from airline tickets, hotels, or cars to last minute travel deals on cruises or golf packages.

FRA'S US BONDS 4U NETWORK

Shop for everyday items, gifts, and even hotel reservations, rental cars, and flights online, and each network merchant gives you a percentage of your purchase back as BondDollars™. Your FRA US Bonds 4U savings account grows with every purchase. Once your account reaches 50 BondDollars™, you can redeem for US Savings Bonds or other valuable benefits.

ETC WILLIAM G. MC CARLEY, U.S. NAVY RETIRED

1927–2007

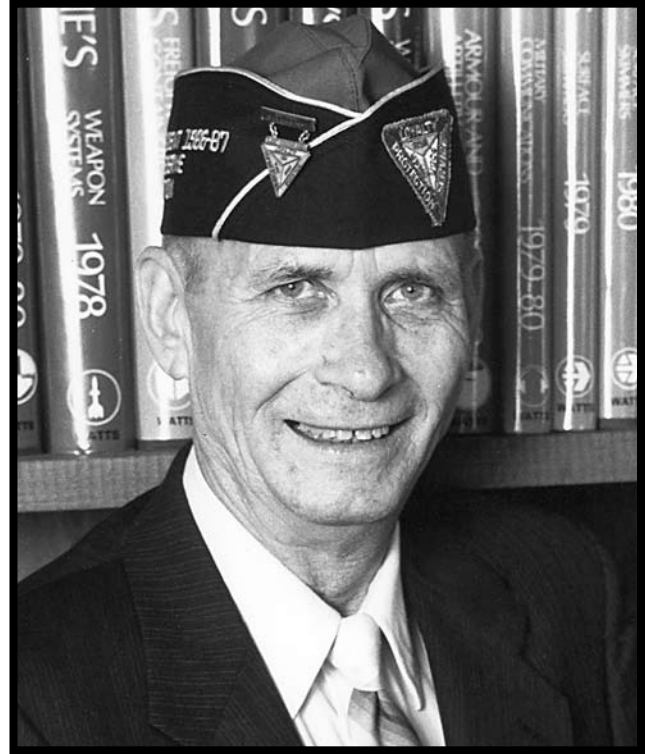
Past National President

Shipmate McCarley was born in Gadsden, Alabama, on 5 September 1927. He attended various public schools in Alabama in his formative years. At age 15, he falsified proof of his age and enlisted in the U.S. Navy on 16 March 1943 in Macon, Georgia, and received his “boot” training at the Naval Training Center, Bainbridge, Maryland. Upon completion of recruit training he reported to Newport, R.I., for Class “A” Signalman School advancing to Chief Quartermaster on 16 December 1952.

Shipmate McCarley’s first sea assignment was on board USS *Lovelace* (DE 198), which he helped commission in November 1943 at Norfolk, Virginia. After a shakedown cruise to Bermuda, *Lovelace* headed for the South Pacific. “Mac” participated in three invasions in New Guinea and in October 1944, the reoccupation of the Philippine Islands, as well as a huge month-long anti-shipping sweep through the Bismarck Archipelago for which he received a Letter of Commendation for outstanding performance of duty. Other assignments during his career included tours on USS *General A.E. Anderson* (APA 111), USS PCE 902, USS *Presque Isle* (APB 44) (Operation Crossroads), USS *Olmstead* (APA 188), USS *Karin* (AF 31), Recruit Training Center Great Lakes (Company Commander where he had one “Hall of Fame Company”), USS *Hamner* (DD 718) and USS *Fiske* (DDR 842).

In the mid-1950’s, the Navy was critically short of Electronics Technicians. The Navy initiated a training program to convert qualified personnel in the over-manned ratings to be Electronics Technicians. Shipmate “Mac” not only successfully completed the conversion to Chief Electronics Technician, he was assigned to instructor duty at the Electronics Training School at Great Lakes. He returned to destroyer duty serving in the USS *Vesole*.

On 8 June 1962, Shipmate McCarley was transferred to the Fleet Reserve component of the Navy. Following his retirement from the Navy, he moved his family to Prattville, Alabama, and made his mark in the community by serving on the first Board of Management, Prattville YMCA as Men’s Section Leader, he raised \$171,000 in a three week fund drive. He was elected to the Alabama Senate in November 1966 and served as a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee for three years. One of Governor Wallace’s top campaign aides in the 1968 presidential race he devised a system that was used to gain bal-



lot position in states requiring petitions. McCarley continued to be active in local politics and was elected to four four-year terms on the County Democratic Executive Committee.

Shipmate McCarley was always interested in youth affairs and this interest led him to serve for 10 years as a member of the Board of Trustees for the Alabama Sheriffs’ Boys and Girls Ranch. In 1977, the Sheriffs’ Association of Maryland contacted the Alabama Sheriffs’ Association to learn of its Boys and Girls Ranches. Shipmate “Mac” agreed to start a program in Cumberland, Maryland. While in Cumberland, “Mac” organized Branch 369 and served as the Branch Secretary.

Tragedy struck the McCarley household when at age 53 “Mac” was diagnosed as having stomach cancer and in December 1980, he underwent surgery to his stomach and his esophagus and was given approximately three months to live. He moved back to Prattville to get his “house in order.” Shipmate “Mac” was determined not to allow the cancer to rule his life. He created a cancer walk-a-thon to raise money for cancer research. His idea was to walk every mile of the U.S. highways which criss-crossed Alabama, 3,723 miles in total. He sought donations of at least a penny for every mile he covered, so that everybody, even school children, could donate. It was a most ambitious endeavor but “Mac” was determined to do it. The Mayor of Prattville wrote to some 400 mayors over Alabama requesting their cooperation. The response was outstanding and “Mac” commenced his journey on 1 February 1982 and finished in December 1982. The bottom line was that “Mac” walked the 3,723 miles and raised over \$100,000 for cancer research.

Shipmate McCarley joined the FRA in April 1963 as a member of Alabama Capitol City Branch 286, Montgomery, Alabama, and was a continuous member of that Branch from that date. He became active at the Branch level, serving as a member of the BOD, treasurer, secretary, vice president and as Branch president for a two year term. His customary willingness to work made him popular with Shipmates of the Southeast Region and in 1972 he was elected Regional Vice President. The next year he was elected to the Region's highest office — Regional President. At the 1985 National Convention Shipmate "Mac" was elected National Vice President. The following year in Boston, Massachusetts, he was elected National President by acclamation.

National President McCarley's administration provided the Association with dynamic, progressive leadership. His personal experience in the Alabama State Legislature had given him an appreciation of the art of legislation and he truly understood and supported the FRA's primary reason for its existence – to represent enlisted personnel of the sea services in legislative matters. As an energetic progressive leader, he ran the risk of moving too fast for some of the rank and file members, but Shipmate "Mac" never backed down on his beliefs or actions taken and when questioned "Why?", "Mac" would respond "Why Not?".

At the Boston Post Convention meeting of the NBOD, the Board agreed to raise funds for the Navy Memorial's construction. At the time, FRA was the only military association that permitted the Foundation to use its membership list for direct mail solicitations. Mailings to recruit enrollees in the Memorial's Log succeeded in bringing in \$240,000. The National Board approved a motion to accept a pledge of support and allow the Memorial Foundation to solicit FRA membership another time. There were no restrictions placed on the "draft proposal" of FRA support, which recommended support for the striking looking statue "The Homecoming" vice "The Lone Sailor." It was agreed that "The Homecoming" best expressed the Navy family and would best represent the FRA — both agreed. The one million dollar FRA pledge of support to the Navy Memorial became a reality. The February 1987 *Naval Affairs* announced the fund drive and published an illustration of a lighthouse that reflected the progress of total donations each month. At the 27 April 1987 mid-year meeting of the Committee on Finance in Orlando, Florida, National President McCarley presented the first check in the sum of \$200,000 to the Navy Memorial Foundation. By June 1987, FRA had raised over one-third of its goal.

In the spring of 1987 the FRA's Disaster Relief Fund became the focal point of a controversy that overshadowed "The Homecoming" pledge. The FRA had established the "fund" to aid Shipmates and their families immediately in the aftermath of a disaster even before relief agencies could act. S.R. 13 governed the fund which subsisted solely on personal donations from the Branches and Shipmates. When a disaster struck, the Chairman of the National Committee on Hospital, Welfare

and Rehabilitation (HWR) and the National President were authorized to give a grant of up to \$1,000 per victim.

In May of the same year, the USS *Stark*, a Navy frigate on station in the Persian Gulf, was hit by a missile in hostile action. The ship was severely damaged and 37 crew members were killed — three of them were members of FRA Branch 290 in Atlantic Beach Florida. Three grants were requested from the fund. HWR Chairman Seekamp conferred with National President McCarley on the question of restricting the FRA grants to only FRA members. SR 13 had no such restriction and the Preamble of the Constitution of the FRA does not exclude non-members when it states, "our interest in the welfare of those who served and are now serving, and our devotion to our Shipmates in good fortune or distress..." Chairman Seekamp and NP McCarley determined that the maximum grant allowed, \$1,000, be granted to each USS *Stark* widow and a grant of \$500 to the next of kin of the unmarried deceased Shipmates. The FRA grants totaled \$29,000 and the checks were forwarded to the families within 48 hours. No formal FRA press release was issued as the grants were not motivated by the desire for publicity but news of McCarley's action traveled rapidly within the Association. There was opposition to the action taken by NP McCarley on the grounds that the USS *Stark* tragedy "was not a national disaster," and Disaster Relief Grants were meant for FRA members only. Despite the controversy, McCarley believed he made the right decision and he adamantly stood his ground.

The Disaster Relief Grants were not the only assistance FRA provided to the victims of the USS *Stark* tragedy. RADM Kalleres, COMCRUDESIV 12 – the *Stark's* division requested assistance arranging food and lodging in Washington for the *Stark's* dependents who would be attending burial services at Arlington National Cemetery. Contact was made with the Marriott Hotel chain and the management provided food and lodging at no cost. RADM Kalleres responded to NP McCarley that "The FRA, under your leadership, was quick to come to the support of those in need. The very generous financial support provided to both FRA members and non members' families exemplified the kindred spirit for which the FRA is so well known." CNO ADM Carl Trost wrote to NP "Mac," "Once again the FRA, under your leadership, has demonstrated its irreplaceable brand of support for the U.S. Navy and for your Shipmates by your immediate and generous financial contributions to assist the USS *Stark* families in their time of need. The compassion the members of the FRA have extended to the families of their lost Shipmates truly reflects your motto of 'Loyalty, Protection and Service.'" By the time of the National Convention, the majority of FRA Shipmates viewed NP "Mac's" *Stark* decision as proper and not a word of criticism was heard on the convention floor.

Shipmate Past National President McCarley is survived by his wife of 56 years Helen; 4 daughters Gail Lee, Cheryl Lynn, Karen Anne and Robin Kaye; son Robert; 15 grandchildren and 2 great grandchildren.

AE Sailors Association, Inc.

4-8 October 2007, Washington, D.C.
Call Dulles Crowne Plaza and mention
AESA at (703) 471-6700.

Aviation Logistics Marines

3-6 May 2007, Havelock, N.C.
Contact Don Davis ALM P.O. Box 293,
Havelock, NC 28532, (252) 444-1777
or Greyegl@ec.rr.com.

USN Composite Squadron (VC-7)

4-6 May 2007, Jacksonville, Fla.
Contact Joe D'ambrosio (916) 689-
6924 or joeandterri@softcom.net.

USN MCB 9

1-4 June 2007, KOA Lodge and
Campground Hill City, SD 57745. All
Seabees Welcome. Contact Pat Moses
at ppcmoses@cs.com.

**NAS Sanford Florida and all
Squadrons 1942-1968**

21-24 June 2007, Sanford, Fla.
Contact Jerry Bohm 450 River Drive,
Debary, FL 32713-9711, (386) 668-
4851 or Dlfrsf@aol.com.

Naval Cryptologic Veterans Association

10-13 September 2007, Saratoga
Springs, NY. Contact Al St. Onge (603)
881-7752 or aastonge@aol.com.

USS Agerholm (DD-826)

25-27 September 2007, Reno, Nev.
Contact Harold Thompson 2264 LaVista
Woods Dr., Tucker, GA 30064-4211,
(770) 493-7648,
Harold@agerholm-dd826.com.

**USS Antietam (CV/CVA/CVS-36 &
CG-54)**

12-16 September 2007, Hershey, Pa.
Contact Bill Hiebert 7901 Candlewood
Drive, Alexandria, VA 22306, (703)
768-6419 or william.hiebert@att.net.

USS Archerfish (SSN-678)

19-22 July 2007, New London, Conn.
Contact Steve Jackson 558 Fire St,
Oakdale, CT 06370, (860) 443-5672,
sjackson05@excite.com.

USS Bausell (DD-845)

18-23 July 2007, Seattle, Wash.
Contact Eugene D'arezzo P. O. Box
1865 Lake Havasu, AZ, (928) 453-
6066 or genied@frontiernet.net.

**USS Bergall Association
(SS-320/SSN-667)**

12-15 September 2007, Bremerton,
Wash. Contact Dick Fiske 315 Holly
Rd., Wakefield, RI 02879-4928, (401)
789-7099 or dixf@cox.net.

USS Cascade (AD-16)

23-30 September 2007, Boston, Mass.
Contact Barb Kennovin 176 Teal Drive,
Millsboro, DE 19966, (302) 975-2719.

USS Chambers (DER-391)

2-6 September 2007, Albany, N.Y.
Contact George J. Chambers 14161
Elystan Circle Westminster, CA
92683-4823, (714) 893-0000 or
gjchambers@aol.com.

USS Des Moines (CA-134)

3-5 August 2007, Mercer, Pa. Contact
Tom Macfarlane 1099 Vineland St.,
Cocoa, FL 32927, (321) 632-6347 or
tmmmax@hotmail.com.

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

23-26 September 2007, Oklahoma
City, Okla. Contact Earl Faubion 6908
S. Villa Ave., Oklahoma City, OK 73159,
(405) 686-0686.

USS Galveston (CLG-3)

3-7 October 2007, Covington, Ky.
Contact Tom "Soupy" Campbell, Jr. 310
Monroe Avenue, Beverly, NJ 08010-
1822, (866) 398-2655 or
galveston@comcast.net.

USS Lapon (SSN-661/SS-260)

27-30 September 2007, Las Vegas,
Nev. Contact Chris Calligan , (702) 371-
2517 or Lapon.reunion@yahoo.com.

USS New Orleans (CA-32)

17-20 May 2007, Washington, D.C.
Contact Henry Wristen 15 Wason Road,
Hudson, NH 03051-5036, (603) 882-
3951 or hwdive32@aol.com.

USS Passumpsic (AO/TAO-107)

13-15 September 2007, St. Johnsbury,
Vt. Contact Bob Brockman P.O. BOX
1632 ONALASKA, TX 77360, (936)
646-5086, passumpsic@eastex.net.

USS Pollux (AKS-2 & AKS-4)

27-30 September 2007, Washington,
D.C. Contact Glen Broxson 4518
Peaden Rd., Pace, FL 32571-4518,
(850) 994-0416 or glenbroxson@aol.com.



USS Prichett (DD561)

11-16 September 2007, Salt Lake
City, Utah. Contact Terry Crawford 528
Mildred Wood River, IL 62095, (618)
259-3007 or prichett@charter.net.

USS Sargo (SS-188/SSN-583)

26-30 September 2007, S. Lake Tahoe
Calif. Contact Mike Hacking 5728
Tortuga Road San Diego, CA 92124-
1214, (858) 495-0562 or
mrhacking@san.rr.com.

USS Segundo (SS-398)

9-13 April 2007, Laughlin, Nev.
Contact Kenneth P. Owen 909 Richland
Rd #137 San Marcos, CA 92069,
(760) 744-1771 or kenowen1@cox.net.

USS Sierra (AD-18)

6-9 September 2007, Erie, Pa.
Contact Dan Romando 8 Tisdale Road,
Whiting, NJ 08759, (732) 849-4657 or
drom1111@aol.com.

USS Sphinx (ARL-24) All Crews

10-13 September 2007, Branson, Mo.
Contact Frank Ironi 954 Lilac Dr., Sauk
Centre, MN 56378-1643, (320) 352-
3271 or fironi@mainstreetcom.com.

USS Waccamaw (AO-109)

3-6 May 2007, Charleston, S.C.
Contact Sandy Jackson, (318) 222-
3828 or sjackson@sport.rr.com.

Wisconsin-Midwest USS LSM/LSMR

21-22 May 2007, Wisconsin Dells,
Wisc. Contact Irving Koren
P.O. Box 300, Eden, WI 53019, (920)
477-4770.

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



Survivors and family of crew of CGC WHITE ALDER (WLM/WAGL-541)

Marine Safety Unit (MSU) Baton Rouge, Louisiana maintains a memorial flag pole dedicated to all crew members who served on the CGC WHITE ALDER when she was tragically lost in the Mississippi River on December 7, 1968, killing 17 of her 21 crew. If you are a friend or family member of any lost soul aboard, we would like to extend our deepest sympathies to you for your loss...

On December 7, 2008, the 40th anniversary of this tragic loss, MSU Baton Rouge would like to host a memorial service commemorating the lives of all 21 crew members, presenting each family with a Coast Guard Ensign. The ensigns will be flown proudly from the memorial flag pole that is located on the banks of the Mississippi River, marking her final resting place at Latitude 30 12' 01" N Longitude 91 10' 02" W. Please contact either MST3 Robert F. Feus, Jr. (225) 298-5400 x 227 e-mail: Robert.F.Feus@uscg.mil or MSTC Matthew Valenti (225) 298-5400 x 235 e-mail: Matthew.J.Valenti@uscg.mil or by mail at Commanding Officer MSU Baton Rouge, Baton Rouge, LA 70809 L.N.C.S.

L.N.C.S. David R. Bland USN (Ret.)
Last known address was Longview, Texas. Please contact YNC Earl Rooks USN (Ret.) (530) 243-4178 or reddingrooks@yahoo.com.

TM1 Harold Burgess

Last seen NAVWEPNSTA Seal Beach, Calif. **RMC Roy Hintze**
Last seen on USS Towers DDG-9, Yokosuka Japan, last residence known, Pallayup Wash. Contact David Atchison, USN Ret, 740 537-3143, 825 Euclid Ave, Toronto, OH 43964, texasretnavy@hotmail.com

Bruce Burleson or any USS Swordfish crew 1970-1974

Contact QMC[ss]Richard Huntley qmcssrah@yahoo.com or (512) 914-4126

Raymond J. Dailge PH2, (wife Gladys)

Last duty station USS Canopus AS 34 Jerry W. Strugill HTC (wife Carol)
Last duty station USS Canopus AS 34 Contact James G. Dickinson HTCS (Ret.) 880 Bent Tree Rd., New Elleton, SC 29809, (803) 652-3656.

MMCM Robert "BOB" Gray, USN, (Ret.)

Last known Station, Gitmo, Cuba 1972. Before, USS NK Perry (DD 883), Newport, RI. Contact BTCS Fred Peckham, USN (Ret.) in Lynn Haven, Fl. (850) 265-8505 or BTSnipe@aol.com.

AECS Donald Ray Nichols, USN

Wife: Donna, Children: Stanley and Linda. Last known duty station NAS Beeville, Texas. Senior Chief Nichols graduated from AE "B" school in February 1970. Contact Clyde C. Oreder, Jr., AEC, USN (Ret), 269 Pine Park Road, Cairo, GA, Phone 229-377-3334, or cdo3233@mchsi.com.

PO1 Lenny Schilling

Retired in Meridian, Miss. in the early 1990's. Contact Bobby Byrum (MA1-Retired) at 731-286-8283 or bobbyrum@cableone.net.

EM3 Ronald Lee Sells, USN

Last known address was Ottumwa, Iowa. Please contact ACC James H. Hazelett, USN (Ret.) at (360) 202-2543.

1945 Crew of USS Sibley

Looking for information about my father, Charles "Bill" Carr, who was a member of the "206" convoy. Please contact Madelaine MacLeod, (250)-746-7804.

James Thomas

Lived in the Slidell area of New Orleans and worked at ODECO around 1983. He was assigned to Diego Garcia prior. Contact Peter Marinelli psmarinelli@aol.com.

Jim Wilburn, GM

Last seen on USS Prichett (DD561), contact Terry Crawford 618-259-3007 or prichett@charter.net.

OMC James Wilkie

Last known duty station was USS Markab (AR-23). Please contact Dot Streett Cullins, 10951 Chardonnay Place, San Diego, CA 92131 or cullins@san.rr.com.

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Cohick, Faith M., E2 USN	059	Langnau, Albert F., AOC	022	Warren, Louis C., AMH1	091
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You may charge to your VISA or MasterCard by including your card number, expiration date, and signature. For even faster service, have your credit card handy and call toll-free 1-800-772-7285, Ext. FSB1150.

Perhaps you're asking, “If seniors can get this information free... why is there a charge for the book?”

It's no secret that all the programs listed in “Free For Seniors” can be found for no charge through the hundreds of government agencies, libraries and local senior organizations if you know exactly what benefits are available, what office to contact, and exactly what information to ask for.

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Have you been putting off a trip across the country to visit a loved one due to the high cost of flying? Or, maybe you'd like to vacation in some romantic foreign city?

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Brains Conquer Beauty

Scientists break code to create impeccably brilliant cut jewelry with even more clarity and color dispersion than mined diamonds.

There is little doubt that a natural mined diamond of top quality is one of the world's most magnificent gems. It is much coveted for its exquisite beauty, but the simple truth is that diamonds are just compressed crystallized carbon. The laboratories at DiamondAura were created with one mission in mind: *Create brilliant cut DiamondAura jewelry in precious metal settings that allow everyone to experience jewelry with superb clarity and large carat weight.*

Perfection from the laboratory. We named our brilliant cut collection DiamondAura, because simply said, "they dazzle just like natural diamonds but without the outrageous cost." Our DiamondAuras are an absolute marvel of modern gemological science. We insisted that our scientists reproduce the look of a loupe-clean diamond in the laboratory, and would not accept any result other than perfection. We will not bore you with the incredible details of the scientific process, but will only say that it involves the use of rare minerals heated to an incredibly high temperature of over 5000° F. This can only be accomplished inside some very modern and expensive laboratory equipment. After several additional steps, scientists finally created a clear faultless marvel that looks even better than the vast majority of mined diamonds. Noted jewelry expert Steven Rozenzky said, "The color and clarity of DiamondAura rivals that of a flawless D colored diamond". Of course, flawless diamonds sell for in excess of \$50,000 a carat, so they are priced out of reach. With precious metal settings and sizes exceeding 1 carat, the visual effects are breathtaking!



The DiamondAura Collection
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Cut— the radiant "Brilliant Cut"
Carat Weight— Starting at 1.58 tcw and up

The 4 C's. Our DiamondAura jewelry retains every jeweler's specification: color, clarity, cut, and carat weight. In purely scientific measurement terms, the refractory index of DiamondAura is very high and the color dispersion is *actually superior* to a diamond, and both are so hard they will cut glass. The transparent color and clarity of DiamondAura simulate the world's most perfect diamonds. Our team of experienced cutters artistically performs the symmetrically brilliant, 58-facet cut, and the carat weight is made available to you in an entire range of the most desired sizes. Once you have had the opportunity to wear your DiamondAura, you will understand why it looks just like a natural diamond in almost every way.

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A Message from the Southeast Regional President

IT IS A VERY humbling experience to be elected Regional President Southeast. I thank the members of my Region for having the trust in me to lead them this Association year. I will do my very best to fulfill your expectations.

We are busy trying to get Unit 183 back as a Unit within the Southeast. Several years ago the members handed in their charter. However it seems there is a renewed interest in a Unit and the shipmates of Branch 183 have voted to establish a Unit. It looks as if this may happen in the next several months. Branch 15 of Walhalla, South Carolina was instituted in 2005 and the shipmates are hard at work trying to form a Unit. The organizing kit has been sent and we will give them any support they may need to accomplish their goal of establishing a Unit.

It was a great pleasure to be an honored guest representing the members of the Southeast Region at the largest Veterans Day celebration in the United States held in Birmingham, Alabama.

The Southeast is proud to have several Branches and Units who annually hold ceremonies/festivities in commemoration of Pearl Harbor.

Branch and Unit 215 Savannah, Ga. held an observance at the Eighth Air Force Museum on December 3rd.

Branch and Unit 290 Mayport, Fla. held their observance on December 7th. What is unique with their observance, they are able to get a ship from the Mayport Naval Station to take attendees for the services on a cruise. During the Pearl Harbor services onboard flowers were cast in memory of those who gave their lives for our freedoms. Before returning to the dock, the crew of the USS Farragut held a ceremony in which they did nine burials at sea. Two of these burials were PRPSE FRA Herman Stange and PRPSE LA FRA Wiloudeen Petersen. Thanks to Commander Deidre McLay and the fine crew of the USS Farragut (DDG-99) for their outstanding hospitality. They need to be commended for their willingness to participate in this great event as well as for their service to our great nation.

The members of the Southeast were saddened by the loss of PNP Virginia Wilson's husband Harold Wilson on December 6th.

Now that the holidays are past I am preparing for visits with the Units within the Southeast Region. I am looking forward to an enjoyable and productive year. Knowing the hard working members we have in the Southeast Region, nothing less than excellence is expected.

In Loyalty, Protection and Service.

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



PRPSE Eileen Ligay and Ima Black on board the USS Farragut (DDG-99), Mayport, FL for Pearl Harbor Day



Photo by: Vince Cuthie

DONNA MEFFORD
Regional President Southeast

LA FRA Community

You can login to your LA FRA membership record using www.fra.org, and join the discussion on the LA FRA Community page!

To login to your record online, please go to www.fra.org and on the top right hand of the page, next to *Username* enter your **last name** and next to *Password* enter **LAFRA** and **your membership number** without any spaces. (example: LAFRA012345) Click the button to the right of Username and you are in.

Then click "Communities" on the top navigation bar and you'll see the LA FRA Community. This is a great place to keep in touch with all the members and share thoughts and ideas.

Make sure you click "Global Preferences" then click to subscribe to this Community. Go to "MY FRA" and choose "Edit" on the right hand side of the page. Enter your e-mail address so you can be notified when someone responds to what you posted!

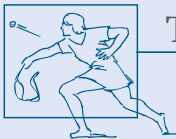


Asbestos Cancer Hits Former Sailors

Many sailors who served their country proudly aboard ships in the World War II, Korean, and Vietnam War eras, are now being **diagnosed with asbestos-related cancers.**

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