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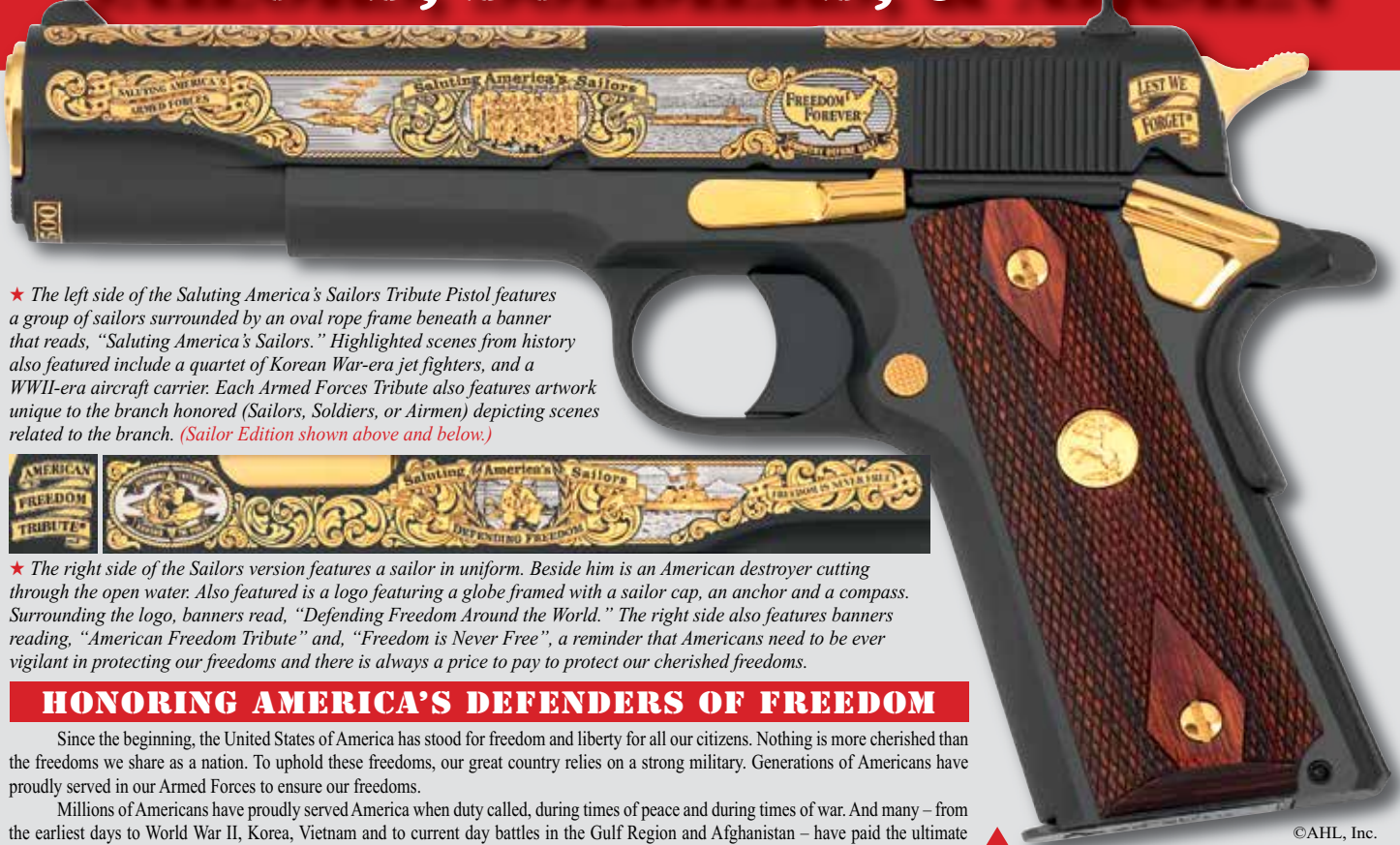
ENLIST WITH
COAST GUARD

SPARS

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SALUTING AMERICA'S SAILORS, SOLDIERS, & AIRMEN



★ The left side of the Saluting America's Sailors Tribute Pistol features a group of sailors surrounded by an oval rope frame beneath a banner that reads, "Saluting America's Sailors." Highlighted scenes from history also featured include a quartet of Korean War-era jet fighters, and a WWII-era aircraft carrier. Each Armed Forces Tribute also features artwork unique to the branch honored (Sailors, Soldiers, or Airmen) depicting scenes related to the branch. (Sailor Edition shown above and below.)



★ The right side of the Sailors version features a sailor in uniform. Beside him is an American destroyer cutting through the open water. Also featured is a logo featuring a globe framed with a sailor cap, an anchor and a compass. Surrounding the logo, banners read, "Defending Freedom Around the World." The right side also features banners reading, "American Freedom Tribute" and, "Freedom is Never Free", a reminder that Americans need to be ever vigilant in protecting our freedoms and there is always a price to pay to protect our cherished freedoms.

HONORING AMERICA'S DEFENDERS OF FREEDOM

Since the beginning, the United States of America has stood for freedom and liberty for all our citizens. Nothing is more cherished than the freedoms we share as a nation. To uphold these freedoms, our great country relies on a strong military. Generations of Americans have proudly served in our Armed Forces to ensure our freedoms.

Millions of Americans have proudly served America when duty called, during times of peace and during times of war. And many – from the earliest days to World War II, Korea, Vietnam and to current day battles in the Gulf Region and Afghanistan – have paid the ultimate sacrifice for the principles that America stands for – freedom, liberty, and justice for all.

To pay Tribute to the brave warriors who have served our country, America Remembers is proud to offer handsome Tributes in honor of those who have served and sacrificed to ensure our freedom: the Saluting America's Armed Forces Tribute Pistols. For these Tributes, we have selected the Colt® Government Model® .45 caliber pistol, a firearm that stood the test of time and was the official military sidearm for our country's Armed Forces for almost 75 years. No firearm in history can boast a more impressive record of American military service than the classic Colt .45 military service pistol. Craftsmen commissioned specifically for these Tributes by America Remembers decorate each Tribute with handsome artwork in stunning 24-karat gold and nickel artwork over a blued steel canvas. There are three separate editions honoring America's sailors, soldiers, and airmen – each separate edition is issued in a strictly limited edition of 500 pistols per branch of the Armed Forces.

For the veterans of America's Armed Forces who carried the Colt .45 Pistol, the classic military sidearm has special significance. It was a constant companion that offered superior stopping power against all enemies. To put it simply, the Colt .45 pistol was a lifesaver. The Colt was utterly reliable, and virtually indestructible. In the hands of courageous American warriors, it would become a military and firearms legend. For decades, wherever Americans fought for freedom the Colt .45 was present.

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These exclusive Tributes stand as monumental salutes to those who have served our country and carried the iconic pistol in defense of freedom as well as all those who continue to serve. As a nation, we must never forget the courage and sacrifice of those who served and continue to serve today. Secure your Saluting America's Armed Forces Tribute pistol today and keep it forever as a handsome symbol of fine firearms craftsmanship, American military history and service in defense of freedom.

Model: Colt® Government Model® Pistol • Caliber: .45 ACP • Edition Limit: 500 Per Service Branch

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★ On the left side of each Tribute, prominently displayed as the focal point, there is an image of a sailor, soldier, or airmen framed with a patriotic banner. Additional artwork features a banner reading, "Saluting America's Armed Forces" and "Lest We Forget®". Also featured is an outline of the USA framing "Freedom Forever", a reminder that our Armed Forces are always on duty protecting our cherished freedoms. Another banner reads, "Country Before Self", a reminder of the daily sacrifices our sailors, soldiers, and airmen make on behalf of all Americans.



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Featured

- 18 HONORING U.S. COAST GUARD SPARS**
In honor of the U.S. Coast Guard's 224th birthday, this edition of *FRA Today* highlights the pioneers who served in the Women's Reserve of the U.S. Coast Guard program. Officially nicknamed the "SPARs," these women played a key role during World War II and paved the way for women serving in the Coast Guard and other branches of the military today.



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LOYALTY, PROTECTION AND SERVICE

FRA IS A CONGRESSIONALLY CHARTERED, NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION ADVOCATING FOR CURRENT AND FORMER ENLISTED MEMBERS OF THE U.S. NAVY, MARINE CORPS AND COAST GUARD ON CAPITOL HILL. FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP, PLEASE VISIT WWW.FRA.ORG OR CALL 800-FRA-1924.

ON THE COVER

The SPAR recruiting poster was illustrated by Bradshaw Crandell in 1944. Middle right: Olivia Hooker, circa 1945. Middle, upper left: Lois Bouton, 1943, at Palm Beach boot camp. Middle, lower left: Charlotte Bart, circa 1944. Remaining photos found in *The Coast Guard at War: Women's Reserve*.



Lauren Armstrong

Embracing Change

CHANGE IS INEVITABLE, BUT it can often be a challenge. The ladies highlighted in this month's feature story about Coast Guard SPARs can certainly attest to that. Charlotte Bart, Olivia Hooker and Lois Bouton took incredible leaps of faith to join the service during World War II and, although each had different reasons for making that decision, all found themselves in new — and challenging — circumstances. Each of these remarkable women looks back on her time in service with warmth and considers that part of her life to have been incredibly rewarding. That's often how change works: We approach it with trepidation and fear, but come through the process with newfound skills, relationships and confidence.

English philosopher Alan Watts once said, "The only way to make sense out of change is to plunge into it, move with it, and join the dance." I think it's safe to say that your National Headquarters (NHQ) staff is "dancing" feverishly these days. The NHQ building is undergoing some major capital improvements and the changes are just beginning. As this issue of *FRA Today* is going to print, the entire NHQ staff has been relocated to the third floor of our Alexandria, Va., home, so that construction can begin on the lower two floors. That may sound like a relatively simple change, but to put it in perspective, the operations footprint has been cut by two-thirds!

To facilitate this first step in the process, files had to be purged, artwork had to be removed from the walls and all our "hard assets" had to be moved. That means all the desks, computers, filing cabinets, supplies, phone lines, copy machines, shredders, even the water cooler, had to be relocated in preparation for the actual construction. This preparation and relocation process was a group effort that involved tremendous planning, logistical coordination and lots of sweaty, hard work!

We now have staff members operating in every nook and cranny of a single floor, including hallways and areas that were previously used for storage. And like our intrepid SPARs, your NHQ Team is embracing the change (and close quarters) with good humor and making the most of the challenges. The process is going to take several months to complete, and the NHQ operation is now positioned to operate effectively during the renovation. Although there are lots of changes going on, the level of service to our shipmates shouldn't be impacted in any way.

Change can often be uncomfortable, but it can also offer great rewards. Regardless of the circumstances, I challenge you to occasionally step out of your comfort zone, embrace those pangs of anxiety and try something new and different. To paraphrase SPAR Olivia Hooker, "You don't know what heights you might reach."

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

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VOLUME 93 NUMBER 8



Spirits Ride High in this Tribute to THE UNITED STATES MARINES!



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James Griffin

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Management and Leadership

THIS MONTH, I'D LIKE to start an “old time” discussion on leadership and management, and explore ways those concepts affect FRA's day-to-day work and what has been accomplished by effectively applying these concepts.

Many of you might remember the days, some years ago, when we took those classes on *Total Quality Leadership and Management*, or simply TQL and TQM. You might think I'm really digging below the bilges, but the application of these concepts is very much alive today. Leadership was, and still is, defined as the ability to deal with people, while management deals with systems. We lead by example and manage by objectives. Leadership and management styles ideally work in concert to effectively accomplish the mission. When the two clash, we gather the troops to regroup, re-energize, make any needed course corrections and proceed from there.

Paul Brown, the famous head football coach of the Browns and Bengals, once told my dad, “I manage the team and lead the players.” He forged his leadership and management styles as a football coach at Great Lakes Naval Training Center and, like many other great coaches and leaders, he knew that getting to the heart of a man's being was the way to push him forward to success.

FRA recently had an opportunity to weigh in on a situation that absolutely spoke to a man's heart. A shipmate shared a local news story about a submarine Sailor, who was underway in the Pacific when he was ordered to appear in court or risk losing custody of his child. Despite a federal law that prevents such court proceedings from taking place while service members are deployed, the judge refused to reschedule the hearing and threatened

to hold the Sailor in contempt if he failed to appear.

While FRA doesn't normally get involved with legal issues, we did make sure the situation was brought to the attention of the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy's office and expressed our concern for this Sailor's rights and welfare. I also had the opportunity to share the story with two lawmakers at FRA's recent Coast Guard Caucus Breakfast, both of whom shared our outrage and vowed

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to weigh in from the legislative quarter. The following week, I received personal phone calls from the congressmen, telling me the matter was resolved: the Sailor's court date was delayed until he returns from deployment in October.

FRA's calm, but vigorous, action regarding the recent VA scandal has proven to be another demonstration of effective leadership. While some veterans' organizations and media “experts” were demanding symbolic resignations, FRA focused its energy toward resolving the problems. We certainly didn't condone the actions that led to the scandal, but we continued to work with VA leadership to affect policy and management improvements. We are



Tom Snee

actively engaged in discussions with VA leaders to identify areas of highest concern and evaluate possible solutions that will have the greatest impact. Much remains to be done at all levels, and FRA will keep communication channels open to ensure our shipmates' concerns are heard and addressed. If you haven't already, please visit www.fra.org/survey to share your most recent VA experiences. Shipmates who participate in this brief online survey will provide crucial, up-to-date grassroots details for our ongoing discussions with VA.

These two recent incidents — one that required immediate action and one that evolved over a much longer time period — capture what FRA is doing to support current and former service members. As we have for the past 90 years, we continue to lead the way by providing statistical and anecdotal data, identifying objectives and proposing solutions to lawmakers, policy makers, civilian and military leaders. FRA's history of success is the result of various *management* practices that have been gleaned from our collective military experience and our organization's long-standing tradition of Loyalty, Protection and Service.

I ask each member to take stock of these three cardinal principles, use our rich history as a guide, and be advocates for our organization as a whole, as well as for one another as shipmates. I urge all FRA and Auxiliary members to seek win-win solutions, rather than finding barriers that divide us. Recruitment and membership retention initiatives are only as successful as the manner in which we lead our people and manage our resources and objectives.

Tom Snee is FRA's National Executive Director and can be reached at NEDFRA@fra.org.

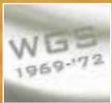
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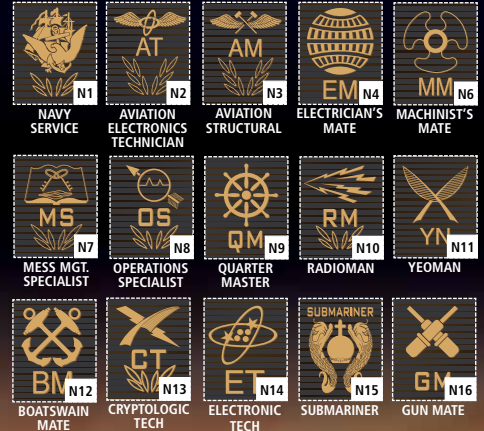


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NP Courneya is “Right On!”

That was a really good article President Virgil Courneya wrote for the July 2014 issue of *FRA Today*. It was RIGHT ON. We are so fortunate to have him with all his energies as the National President. His leadership is turning our organization around three steps at a time. I fondly remember when FRA recruiters had an open door policy at MANY, if not ALL Naval facilities. Membership exceeded 160,000 during those years. No doubt, it is attainable again under the strong leadership of shipmates like Virgil.

Now, all the Branches need to join in the rejuvenation of our FRA Family. Young leaders in our branches have the energy and expertise to utilize new and exciting communication technologies in reaching out to young potential members. Look to them for more leadership roles in our branches. It will pay dividends!

The National Staff can provide uniformity, coordination and assistance as we refurbish our voice and legislative energies. When I retired in 1969, I was surprised to find I no longer had the health care I was promised. Today, I have to pay a little, but I have Medicare, supplemented by Tricare For Life! Thanks FRA and all the other veteran groups that work so hard to ensure fair treatment.

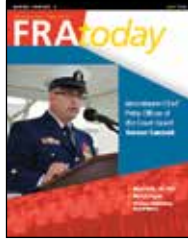
H. V. “Bud” Harris

Mail Order Medication Delivery

Now that Congress has mandated that military retirees utilize the DoD/Tricare Mail Order Pharmacy, we must rely on the U.S. Postal Service to deliver our continuing prescription medications through their regular postal delivery service. I, for one, have utilized this mail order service for several years and have experienced numerous problems with delivery. I also have detected that many other retirees have, or are having, delivery problems, too.

My experience has shown me that the majority of U.S. Mail Carriers have absolutely no concern about the safeguards desired in the effective delivery of medications. My medications are haphazardly piled into our street mailbox at different times of the day, even when temperatures are in the mid-90s. Also, my medications have been delivered to incorrect addresses. I have consistently complained to every responsible level in the U.S. Postal Service, as well as my senators and representative, without any significant improvement.

I am hoping that by expressing my frustrations via this forum, many others will join me in seeking relief through congressional action. The U.S. Postal Service Labor Agreement seems to be a major hurdle in implementing proper handling and delivery of prescription drugs and that needs to be corrected ASAP. If this problem is as widespread



as I believe it is, and if we all submit complaints, there may be enough complainers to bring Congress to corrective measures, rather than just submitting “inquiries.”

Richard Holland

Agent Orange

When I served on the USS Hamner (DD-718), we never tied up to a pier and we never set “boots on ground” in Vietnam. But we did take that destroyer up a few rivers to provide NGFS and we were sprayed with Agent Orange while we were up those rivers. The VA has determined that the ship, while I was stationed on board, was exposed to Agent Orange during two of those trips up-river.

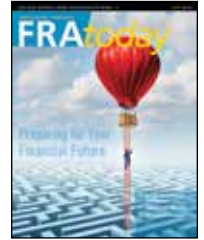
In 2010, I had a heart attack determined to be due to “Ischemic Heart Disease,” one of the diseases listed as presumed to be due to exposure to Agent Orange.

I filed a claim package including all five of my DD-214s, copies of my service record, which indicated I was on the ship at the time indicated by the VA that the ship was exposed to Agent Orange, and all other paperwork the VA required. At the time I submitted my claim I was already receiving a 20-percent service-connected disability from the VA but, in spite of this long-established disability, the VA required I resubmit copies of my DD-214s and resubmit the paperwork establishing I was, in fact, on the ship at the time indicated. Then they required I send them all the paperwork again.

I was lucky that it only took the VA 18 months to decide that I was, by their own guidelines, exposed to Agent Orange and to determine that my heart attack was attributable to that exposure.

One thing we know for sure is that there is not one single aspect of the VA’s disability determination procedure that is effective or efficient. Keep submitting those claims and eventually someone will take time to properly review them and make the appropriate determination.

Vin Faris



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

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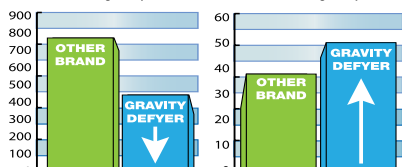
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FY 2015 NDAA Freight Train on Schedule ... So Far



John Davis

IF THE HOUSE AND Senate Defense Authorization bills were freight trains, they would be on schedule to make it to the President's desk to be signed into law before October 1, 2014, the start of the new fiscal year. As *FRA Today* goes to press the House has passed its version (H.R. 4435) of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) and the Senate Armed Services Committee has approved the Senate version (S. 2410). The Senate bill awaits further consideration by the full Senate. Before the two bills go to

the President for approval, they must be considered by a conference committee where members from both chambers will decide what freight will be on the final train coming from Capitol Hill to the White House for approval. The engineers (leadership in the House and Senate) will start negotiating once the Senate passes its version of the bill. The table included on page 9 compares the two bills as they relate to issues of importance to FRA.

FRA Supports More Colon Cancer Research

The Military Coalition, including FRA, dispatched a letter to Senator Richard Durbin (Ill.), Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Defense Subcommittee, urging accelerated funding for research at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, in collaboration with industry, to develop a blood test for the early detection of colorectal cancer, with secondary applications for other cancers, blood-borne infectious diseases and bio-threatening agents.

a line medic so that service members need not be removed from the field for complex medical testing. For retirees and their families, a simple blood test would transform access to cancer screening, providing easy access in rural and urban areas alike.

Additionally, blood samples do not need an appointment in a doctor's office as they can be drawn at a local clinic or pharmacy, or in-home by a visiting nurse. Only those who test positive would be referred for colonoscopy. It is worth noting here that the recently revealed scheduling delays at the VA include an inability to meet demand for colonoscopies. The proposed research at Walter Reed will not only benefit our service members and retirees, but will provide VA with a long-term solution to colorectal cancer screening and access to immediate care.

The cost to the federal government in Medicare reimbursements, TRICARE and VA for colonoscopies, and treatment of late stage cancers is estimated at \$30 billion. Upon full deployment, this blood test can save the federal government \$20 billion annually, in addition to saving an estimated 35,000 lives annually and reducing unnecessary suffering.



Colorectal cancer is one of the most treatable cancers if detected early, yet it is the second leading cause of cancer death.

Colorectal cancer is one of the most treatable cancers if detected early, yet it is the second leading cause of cancer death. It impacts DoD's most experienced military officers, NCOs and retirees, typically over age 50. Blood samples can be drawn in the field by



Photo by Sandy Jones/PREBAND

VA Investigated for Retaliation Against Whistleblowers

The Office of Special Counsel (OSC) is investigating numerous claims of retaliation against VA employees, known as "whistleblowers," who exposed wrongdoing at the agency. Press accounts indicate that whistleblowers at the VA regularly receive retaliation from VA management when revealing wrongdoing to the press, Congress, or the GAO. Retaliation includes demotions, transfers and even termination of employment. If OSC determines that retaliation occurred against whistleblowers, it can recommend termination of employment of guilty supervisors. Final determination of such terminations of employment is decided within the agency and can be appealed to the Merit System Protection Board.

COMPARISON OF HOUSE AND SENATE DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION BILLS

ISSUE	H.R. 4435*	S. 2410*	FRA POSITION
TRICARE Fee Increases	Does not authorize increases for TRICARE fees or pharmacy co-pays for military retirees as requested in the Administration's FY 2015 budget	Provides for increase in certain retiree pharmacy co-pays through 2024 and that non-generic prescription maintenance medications be refilled at a military treatment facility or with the mail-order pharmacy program. (Sec. 702)	<i>FRA opposes Administration's proposed TRICARE fee increases and opposes Senate provision.</i>
Pay Increase	Increases pay 1.8% effective January 1, 2015, and one-year extension for various pay and bonus programs (Sec. 601)	Authorizes a 1% increase effective January 1, 2015, and one-year extension for various pay and bonus programs (Sec. 601)	<i>FRA supports the House provision. FRA wants an annual pay increase that at least keeps pace with pay increases in the civilian sector (1.8%)</i>
BAH	Provides full Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) benefits	Holds BAH for FY 2015 below the rate of inflation (Sec. 603)	<i>FRA supports the House provision</i>
Commissary Funding	Rejects Administration's request to cut Commissary subsidy	Rejects Administration's request to cut Commissary subsidy	<i>FRA supports commissary benefit for active duty and retirees</i>
Ship Count for Agent Orange Presumption	Sec. of Navy to review logs of ships used during Vietnam War to determine Agent Orange exposure (Sec. 1090)	Sec. of Navy to review logs of ships used during Vietnam War to determine Agent Orange exposure (Sec. 1062)	<i>FRA strongly supports these identical provisions to help Vietnam veterans determine their eligibility for disability benefits from exposure to Agent Orange herbicide</i>
End Strength	Cuts end strength of all services by more than 52,000 except for the Navy. (Sec. 401)	Cuts end strength of all services by more than 52,000 except for the Navy (Sec. 401).	<i>FRA wants to ensure there are adequate personnel available to meet operational requirements</i>
Grandfathering retirement cuts	No similar provision	Grandfathers those who joined the military prior to January 1, 2016, (currently January 1, 2014) from one-percent cut in cost-of-living (COLA) for military retirement.	<i>FRA supports Senate provision</i>
Navy Name Change	Changes the name of the Secretary of the Navy to the Secretary of the Navy and the Marine Corps (Sec. 901)	Senate bill has no similar provision	<i>FRA supports the Navy name change provision in House bill.</i>
Education Assistance	Provides \$30 million in aid to schools impacted by military populations (Sec. 571) and \$10 million for military children with special needs (Sec. 572)	Provides \$25 million in aid to schools impacted by military populations (Sec. 571) and \$5 million for military children with special needs (Sec. 572)	<i>FRA supports House provision. Supplemental Impact Aid funding enhances funding from Department of Education.</i>

* Provisions reported are based on House bill (H.R. 4435) that passed the House on May 22, 2014.

** Provisions reported are based on Senate legislation (S. 2410) that was approved by the Senate Armed Services Committee on June 22, 2011.

VETERANS AND RETIREE ISSUES

FRA and Others Support VA Reform

FRA, in cooperation with 16 other Veteran Service Organizations, sent a joint letter to chairmen and ranking members of the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees to express common views to be considered during conference committee negotiations to resolve the differences between House and Senate legislation (H.R. 3230), which was recently passed to address the current health care access crisis at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The letter stresses that no veteran who is eligible for health care services from VA should be forced to wait too long or travel too far to get medical treatment and services they have earned through their service.

The letter requests that the VA coordinate and pay for all non-VA health care provided to veterans, and that the VA use all unobligated funds before requesting supplemental spending authority.

Some legislators are reluctant to approve due to the cost of these reforms, estimated by the Congressional Budget Office to be \$35 billion over the next three years. This cost is in addition to the \$44 billion the VA now spends for medical care annually, and could ultimately increase costs by an additional \$50 billion per year. These legislators need to hear that the price of taking care of our veterans "who have borne the battle" is part of the cost of defending the nation.

NED Discusses Continuing Education on Capitol Hill

National Executive Director (NED) Thomas Snee participated in a panel discussion on Capitol Hill regarding continuing education. The panel discussion was in conjunction with the 70th anniversary of the enactment of the GI Bill of Rights, which provided educational opportunities for service members returning home from World War II. Before the panel discussion there was a short documentary on the changing role of higher education in America. The documentary indicated that today only 15 percent of college students are full time students between ages 18–24. The documentary mentioned that a significant proportion of new students are veterans using the Post-9/11 GI Bill.

FRA Participates in VSQ/MSQ Roundtable

FRA staff and staff from several other associations participated in a roundtable discussion of veterans' issues with House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (Calif.). The focus of the discussion pertained to the recent scheduling scandal at the VA and finding legislative solutions. Many associations support letting veterans use non-VA health providers only as a short-term solution to the claims backlog. FRA DLP John Davis urged legislators to pass legislation to allow Agent Orange/Blue Water Vietnam veterans to file claims at the VA for disabilities related to exposure to the Agent Orange herbicide. Davis also thanked House and Senate Armed Services Committee members for putting provisions of the Agent Orange Ship Accountability Act on the House and Senate versions of the Defense Authorization bills (S. 2410/H.R. 4435). The long-term punitive effects of sequestration (automatic budget cuts) were also discussed.

VA Audit is Released and Legislation Moves Forward

A nationwide audit of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) was recently released. It indicates that 57,000 veterans have waited more than 90 days for an appointment at VA medical facilities and 64,000 requested medical care but did not even get onto a waiting list. The audit also found that 13 percent of schedulers were told to falsify appointment requests to make the wait times appear to be shorter than they actually were.

Sloan Gibson, Acting VA Secretary, said in response to the audit findings, "These problems demand immediate actions." The Acting Secretary said further that VA would spend an additional \$300 million to pay for extra hours for VA medical staff and contract with private clinics to get veterans prompt medical care. Gibson also eliminated the 14-day scheduling goal for initial VA appointments by veterans, a policy that was unrealistic and caused persistent cheating among medical bureaucrats whose annual bonuses were connected to reaching that goal.

The House unanimously passed H.R. 4810, which requires VA to let veterans who have waited for an appointment to be sent to health care providers outside of the VA. The bill also prohibits bonuses for senior VA officials through FY 2016. The House had earlier passed a bill (H.R. 4310) that provides authority for the VA Secretary to discharge senior management staff for misconduct. Both bills are sponsored by House Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Jeff Miller (Fla.). The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) is now investigating criminal misconduct at the VA.

The Senate amended H.R. 3220 with the provisions of the "Veterans' Access to Care through Choice, Accountability, and Transparency Act" (S. 2450), and passed the bill (93-3). The amended bill now goes back to the House to concur with the Senate amendment and send it on to the President to be signed into law. The amended bill intends to provide veterans with quicker access to health care by allowing VA-enrolled veterans who have been on waiting lists and enrolled veterans who live more than 40 miles from a VA facility to receive a "Choice Card" that allows them to go to Medicare providers, Military Treatment Facilities (MTF) and federally qualified health care centers. VA already spends about \$5 billion a year on private sector health providers. Eligibility for such care is complex and varies by veteran status and condition. The bill would make it easier for VA to use outside providers and the bill further provides:

- An additional \$500 million to the VA to hire more doctors and nurses;
- Authorizes 26 new VA medical facility leases;
- Enhances authority for the VA Secretary to fire senior VA executives;
- Creates a new independent commission to review patient scheduling problems;
- In-state tuition for veterans using GI Bill benefits; and
- GI Bill benefits transfer to spouses of fallen troops.

For additional information on this issue, members can read the June 12, 2014, Military Update on the FRA website.

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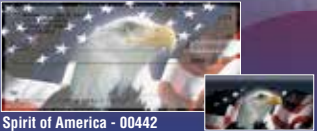
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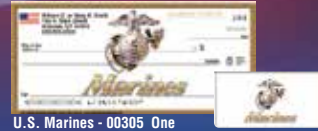
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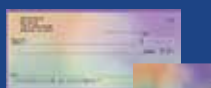
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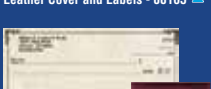
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Introducing *OnWatch*: FRA's New Quarterly News Update for Active Duty and Reservists



OnWatch is published quarterly in the interests of active duty and reserve U.S. Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard personnel. Each issue of *OnWatch* will focus on a particular facet of military service and the benefits earned through that service. Our legislative team will explain in detail how congressional decisions impact your pay and benefits, what FRA is doing to support your interests and how you can get directly involved and make your voice heard. To see the current issue of *OnWatch*, go to www.fra.org/OnWatch. If you would like to subscribe, e-mail onwatch@fra.org with your full name and preferred e-mail address to receive future issues directly.

Senate Confirms New DoD Comptroller

The U.S. Senate recently confirmed Michael McCord to replace Robert Hale as Pentagon Comptroller. McCord had served as Deputy Comptroller since January 2009. The Defense Department Comptroller is the principal advisor to the Secretary of Defense on all budgetary and fiscal matters, including the development and execution of the Defense Department's annual budget of more than \$600 billion. As the agency's Chief Financial Officer, the Comptroller also oversees the Department's financial policy, financial management systems and business modernization efforts. The Senate also confirmed Christine Wormuth to be DoD Policy Chief.

Other important nominations awaiting Senate confirmation include Jessica Wright as Under Secretary for Personnel and Readiness, and Jo Ann Rooney as Navy Under Secretary. Both of these nominations were submitted to the Senate for confirmation on January 6, 2014.

ACTIVE DUTY/RESERVE ISSUES

Defense Spending Bill Passes House

The House passed the FY 2015 Defense Appropriations bill (H.R. 4870). It provides \$202 million more than the Administration requested and \$4.1 billion more than the current fiscal year. The spending bill provides \$128.1 billion for personnel expenses, \$830 million less than the Administration's request and \$668.6 million less than fiscal 2014 appropriations. The bill provides for a 1.8 percent pay increase (instead of 1 percent requested by Administration) and no additional TRICARE fee increases, as are provided in the House Defense Authorization bill (H.R. 4435). The bill provides funding to continue to pay for 100 percent of troop housing costs through the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH); the Administration request had proposed a reduction in the BAH. The bill also restores a \$100 million cut to the Defense Commissary Agency for stateside commissaries. The measure cuts current end strength by 52,800. The bill would provide \$275 million for sexual assault prevention and response programs, \$50 million more than in current fiscal year (2014). FRA will continue to monitor Appropriations legislation that impacts member benefits.

FRA Hosts Coast Guard Caucus Event

FRA recently hosted its 16th annual Coast Guard Caucus Breakfast, an event designed to expand awareness of the Coast Guard's remarkable service to our nation and promote dialogue between members of Congress and key Coast Guard leaders.

The Caucus is a bipartisan group of 73 lawmakers who share a common interest in the Coast Guard, co-chaired by Representatives Howard Coble (N.C.), the only USCG veteran serving in Congress; Frank LoBiondo (N.J.), Rick Larsen (Wash.) and Joe Courtney (Conn.).

The new Commandant of the Coast Guard, Admiral Paul Zukunft, presented Congressman Coble with a Distinguished Public Service Award. Coble served and supported the Coast Guard for over 23 years as a member of the Coast Guard and Coast Guard Reserve, and has continued to be an ardent supporter during his 30-year career in the U.S. House of Representatives. Congressman Coble's exceptional public service and extraordinary contributions to the service were praised as befitting the highest traditions of the U.S. Coast Guard.

Zukunft and Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard (MCPOCG) Steven Cantrell acknowledged FRA's long-standing and strong commitment to the Coast Guard, thanking the association for its constant support of Coast Guard personnel and their families. FRA's advocacy work focuses on compensation, health care and various quality-of-life programs that affect USCG personnel and their families. Specifically, FRA works to ensure Coast Guard pay and benefits remain on par with those enjoyed by Department of Defense personnel, and that adequate funding is available to support these programs. FRA is committed to educating members of Congress, their staff and the public about the Coast Guard's critical missions as a part of the Department of Homeland Security.

Other lawmakers in attendance included Representatives Walter Jones (N.C.), John Garamendi (Calif.), Mike McIntyre (N.C.), and Mark Meadows (N.C.) who all praised the versatile, multi-mission service of USCG.



Coast Guard Commandant Paul Zukunft presents a Distinguished Public Service Award to North Carolina Congressman Howard Coble (left). Coble is the only Coast Guard veteran serving in Congress today and the placard at the right shows Coble as a USCG yeoman. (FRA Photo by Chris Slawinski)

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The History of FRA

1980-1989

1980

FRA's warning that combat readiness will decline if "hemorrhage of talent" continues results in 11.7-percent pay increase in 1980, with follow-on increase of 14.3 percent in 1981.

1



Photo courtesy of Defense Commissary Agency Historian.

1

1984

FRA is the only veterans service organization to oppose a Senate plan to test privatization of three military commissaries, suspecting that contractors might "eat their losses" during the test period to gain control of the commissaries. The provision was defeated.

2

1985

FRA becomes a founding member of The Military Coalition when laws threaten to significantly cut military retired pay. The Association is one of 12 military and veterans organizations that band together to reverse the potential loss of 22.5 percent in cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) over a seven-year period. Today, TMC counts 33 military and veterans organizations among its membership.

3



1986

FRA plays key role in restoring full COLA for military retirees.

1987

FRA sponsors "Sound Off to Congress" program, soliciting input from enlisted personnel across the country.

3

1989

FRA sponsors the "Homecoming" statuary for the U.S. Navy Memorial in Washington, D.C., with a \$1 million donation.

2





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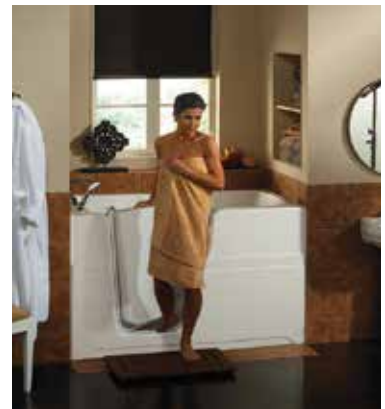
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FRA as a Veterans Service Organization

FRA IS A CONGRESSIONALLY chartered Veterans Service Organization (VSO) that works to advance legislative initiatives that benefit the veterans' community as a whole. Additionally, many shipmates and branches participate in projects that are making a difference for individual veterans in their towns and cities, as well as those serving today. Here are some of the recent highlights of their efforts:

It is always a great thing to acknowledge outstanding military service and Branch 294 in Crossville, Tenn., did a magnificent job of recognizing four WWII veterans in their branch. Shipmates Bobby L. Johns (who transferred to the Staff of the Supreme Commander shortly after the presentation), Turk Therkelston, Mario Gambaccini and Henry Dellarco all served in the Navy and received Certificates of Appreciation for their service and devotion during WWII — a time when our nation greatly needed military personnel who were willing to step up to the plate. Thank you to these and other shipmates who are members of the "Greatest Generation."

Last September, Branch 309 in Newark, Del., sent out information about a program called "Stockings for Soldiers," a non-profit organization dedicated to sending needed items and treats to our deployed military personnel. Branch members collected several pounds of various items including socks, toothbrushes, nonperishable items, playing cards, CDs, DVDs, books and other items, which they donated to the organization. Branches in the Washington, D.C. area also contributed to this wonderful project and it's a model that can be duplicated anywhere in the country. For information on how your branch can help, visit www.stockingsforsoldiers.org.

Many of our shipmates volunteer their time and service at VA Medical Centers throughout the U.S. in an effort to support veterans. Several shipmates from Branch 298 (Grand Rapids, Mich.) make their rounds

Many shipmates and branches participate in projects that are making a difference for individual veterans in their towns and cities, as well as those serving today.

and drop off snacks and/or books to the veteran patients. Shipmate Dick Priest from Branch 298 heads up the Hospitals, Welfare and Rehabilitation Committee for the branch and has been instrumental in getting Navy recruiters and Delayed Entry Program personnel involved with our veterans, which facilitates much-needed interaction between the generations.

From a legislative perspective, there are several shipmates who are engaged with their states' Veteran Councils and give reports about items of interest that affect all of our veterans. At the recent East Coast Regional convention (June 27–29 in Williamsburg, Va.), we heard reports from Shipmates Abe Zino (Branch 207, Dale City, Va.), PRPEC Paul Gunther (Branch 182, Germantown, Md.) and George Cleveland (Branch 208, Jacksonville,



Penny Collins

N.C.) on things happening in their states that impact veterans. It is important to understand how the various state legislatures affect our veterans' quality of life initiatives and projects.

On a related note, Brian Hawkins, Director and CEO of the VA Medical Center in Washington, D.C., gave a presentation during the East Coast Regional Convention, providing a snapshot of how the medical center is tending to the needs of the veterans who use its services. There are 2,300 employees at the center and its community-based outpatient clinics serve a large veteran population in the surrounding metropolitan area.

Hawkins explained the Capital Excellence program, which has three elements aimed at improving service to veterans: Employee Engagement, Cultural Transformation, and Operational Excellence. There is also the "Hawk Eye Program," a 24-hour phone hotline designed to receive reports of things that need to be taken care of for the patient or veteran services in the medical center. Many of the patients who need appointments at this facility have same-day access to their primary care providers. The VA Medical Centers are always seeking volunteers to assist with services for veterans. If you can volunteer your time, please contact your local center and ask for the Office of Volunteer Services.

There are many ways our shipmates can support veterans in their community. Please volunteer to assist veterans, improve their quality of life and show them that their service is appreciated.

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

FRA Operation Flagship Refit

HELP US TO MOVE AND IMPROVE the FRA Museum! As part of our National Headquarters Flagship office overhaul, the FRA Museum is moving to a new home on the ground floor. Your contribution will help to ensure that the refurbished FRA Museum is a fitting showcase for artifacts that reflect our shipmates' legacy of Loyalty, Protection and Service.

When you donate to Operation Flagship Refit, we will salute your contribution to FRA history with specially commissioned commemorative gifts and our heartfelt thanks. Donors will also be recognized in the pages of *FRA Today*. Sign up today!

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ENLIST WITH
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SPARS

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Honoring

U.S. Coast Guard SPARs

While more than 16 million American fighting men were fully engaged in World War II, women were supporting the war effort in a number of ways. In addition to planting victory gardens and carefully rationing rubber and gasoline on the homefront, many contributed more directly to winning the war. Thousands took jobs that had previously been held by men, including serving in the U.S. military. Those who chose to serve in the Coast Guard exemplified the Coast Guard's motto and blazed a trail for other women to follow.

President Franklin Roosevelt signed Public Law 772 in November of 1942, creating the Women's Reserve of the Coast Guard to free men for duty at sea by employing women in shore assignments.

They would come to be known as "SPARs," an acronym for the service's motto of "Semper Paratus — Always Ready," and would be modeled after the Women's Naval Reserve (a.k.a. Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service or WAVES). The SPAR uniforms were a modification of those worn by WAVES and two particular Navy restrictions carried over into the Coast Guard: Women's service was restricted to the continental United States and no female, officer or enlisted, could issue an order to a male service member.

The first 153 enlisted SPARs and 15 SPAR officers were WAVES who agreed to separate from the Navy and join the Coast Guard. Recruiting began in earnest in 1943, as young women between the ages of 20 and 36 were encouraged to "Make a Date with Uncle Sam" and join the Coast Guard. To join the enlisted ranks, SPARs had to have completed a minimum of two years of high school and have no children under the age of 18.

Charlotte Bart, who is now 90 years old and a member of FRA Branch 13, in Atlantic City, N.J., was anxious to join the Coast Guard, but there were a couple of restrictions that blocked her path to enlistment. First, she had to wait until her 20th birthday, but she met that requirement in October of 1943. Married women were allowed to enlist, unless their husbands were members of the Coast Guard.

"I was married to a Coast Guardsman and there were regulations that prevented spouses being in the same service," she explains. "We were living in the Norfolk, Va., area and I was considering joining the [Navy] WAVES. Fortunately, the ban [on serving together] was lifted on February 3, 1944, and I enlisted in the Coast Guard on February 9th! I was the first Coast Guard wife in the district, possibly in the whole Coast Guard. And while other young women were getting their parents to grant permission to join, I had to get my husband to sign the paperwork allowing me to enlist. If he hadn't agreed, I wouldn't have been able to join."

Olivia Hooker, one of the first African-American females to become a SPAR, originally wanted to join the Navy, but found her way to the Coast Guard in 1945 after her application to join the WAVES was rejected on a "technicality."

"There were no girls of our race in the Navy," explains Hooker. "We'd been campaigning for that privilege, but no one joined. I thought to campaign for certain civil rights and then not use them seemed very futile to me. I was 30 — older than most — when I joined the Coast Guard in 1945. I didn't start out to be a military person, but after the battle we waged to get the opportunity to join, I was surprised when there were no takers. I thought if I joined, it would encourage more women to do the same."

She applied to the Navy, but "they kept writing back saying there was a technicality, but they didn't tell me what the technicality was. I eventually wrote to Secretary of the Navy [James] Forrestal to ask if he could tell me what the complication was."



Charlotte Bart signed her enlistment papers in 1944, while her husband proudly looked on. She was one of the first Coast Guard wives to join during World War II. (Photo provided by Charlotte Bart)

On the advice of her sister's friend, Hooker decided to check out the Coast Guard. "I was told that the Coast Guard was part of the Navy during times of war, so I decided to try that avenue. And the Coast Guard recruiter was just so welcoming. She wanted to be the first one to enroll an African-American woman."

As part of the recruiting process, Hooker had to take a skills-assessment test that included a question about getting a number of ships in the right place at the pier, ensuring that the water for each was deep enough to prevent them from running aground.

"During my studies at Ohio State University, I had a math teacher who told us that any problem could be solved with algebra. So I approached it with x's and y's and, when the recruiter told me my score, she said I'd done very well. That was February, but I had to wait until they had a total of eight recruits to send us to boot camp. That took a few weeks and I arrived at the barracks on March 9th."

Training

SPAR recruit training also followed the Navy model and, early on, a joint training center was created at Hunter College in New York City to train both Navy and Coast Guard enlisted women. By mid-1943, the Coast Guard had established its own boot camp facility in Palm Beach, Fla. Lois Bouton was one of the 7,000 SPARs to receive her training in Palm Beach. She was a 23-year-old school teacher living in Waukegan, Ill., when she decided to become a SPAR.

"I was always interested in swimming and life-saving, so the SPARs held more interest for me than the other services," she recalls. "I had no interest in the Army and was sort of interested in the Navy, but joining the Coast Guard seemed like a patriotic thing to do. We traveled to Florida and were housed at the Biltmore Hotel. It was a new training facility at that time, but not nearly as ritzy as it sounds," she chuckles.

"Training wasn't like it is today. It really wasn't that hard," Bouton, who will turn 95 in September, continues. "We learned to march and had some classes that were divided into three categories: Organization, which covered the structure of the Coast Guard; Personnel, which taught us about who was who within the service; and Activities, which covered the history of the Coast Guard."

"We did a lot of marching and calisthenics, but training wasn't nearly as rough as it is today," adds Bart. "We marched from the Biltmore to the beach, which was some distance away. Some of the girls had never seen the ocean before! That's one of the things I enjoyed most about my time in the Coast Guard; I got to meet people from all over the country and from all walks of life. It was very interesting."

The Coast Guard in general and boot camp in particular were entirely new experiences for many of the SPARs, including Olivia



Hooker, who attended boot camp at a facility in Brooklyn, N.Y. "I didn't know anything about military life. When they told us to go to basic training, I took a trunk with all my luxuries in it," she laughs. "The seven other girls who went when I did all had small duffel bags."

New though the experience might be, Hooker and her fellow SPARs weren't afraid to meet the challenges head-on. "We took the train to New York, but nobody had told us that someone from the Coast Guard would meet us. When we got there, we didn't see anyone in uniform, so we went to the travelers' aid station and asked how to get to the Manhattan Beach Training Station. We were told to take the Plum Beach bus, so we did! When we got there, the officers were astonished to see us there, unaccompanied."

Hooker recalls her training with a smile. "Everything was new to me. They'd get you up at 5:00 in the morning and do exercises for an hour before you went to breakfast. And then, of course, you had to polish your floor, even though it didn't need polishing. They thought up chores for you."

After they graduated from basic training, the new SPARs went to various specialty schools, where they were trained in a particular duty area with their male counterparts. Based on previous work experience, most would be assigned to yeoman or storekeeper duties, but not all.

"We took a test to see what our skills were and then were taught how to do that job," explains Bouton. "As an enlisted female, we were most likely going to be yeomen or storekeepers, but a classifying officer saw that I'd been a teacher in civilian life and asked if I wanted to teach at boot camp. I agreed and three of us from my boot class went on to be instructors, which I enjoyed very much. But I didn't do that work for very long; only from October to December. Between Thanksgiving and Christmas, the Coast Guard conducted a survey of its manpower. Not surprisingly, there weren't a lot of volunteers coming in during the holiday season, so the survey showed that enlistments were down and they decided they didn't need as many teachers at boot camp."

Charlotte Bart had gotten married at 18 and was a 20-year-old female with no real work experience when she joined up. "Since I didn't have any stenography or storekeeping experience, being a yeoman or storekeeper didn't seem to be a good fit," she recalls.



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SPARs recruiting posters were a popular way to entice women to join the war effort. The image used in the poster on the left was painted by J. di Valentin. The illustration on the right was by L.W. Bentley.

“But I’d been driving since I was 17, so I thought I might try that. I qualified for transportation school and that’s what I did.”

Hooker went to yeoman school and, as a 3rd class yeoman, was assigned to duty in Boston. “The head of the yeoman school had written to all the Coast Guard stations ... there were 11 districts ... and Admiral [Wilfred] Derby in Boston was the only one who said he’d take an African American.”

Petty Officer Hooker would meet her advocate in an unusual way. “In boot camp, they’d taught us how to recognize officers in their blue and gold uniforms, but nobody told us about the summer uniforms! I was outside one afternoon and a man approached me and asked how I was getting along,” remembers Hooker with a smile. “We had a nice conversation and, after he walked away, I asked someone nearby who that was. They laughed at me and told me it was Admiral Derby!”

Actively Serving

Following her duty as a teacher at recruit training, Bouton was re-assigned to San Francisco. “A nice officer asked if any of us wanted to go somewhere else to serve, so I volunteered. There were five of us, some storekeepers and yeomen, who took the train from Palm Beach to San Francisco. I’d had some college, so they decided I was too qualified to be a filing clerk, so they assigned me to a maintenance crew at one of the barracks,” she says with a slightly amused tone. “If I had the morning watch, I’d swab the deck in the lobby or clean other parts of the barracks from 0600 to 1400. The building was eight stories high and I figured out a way to plug the vacuum in on the fourth floor and could clean the entire stairwell without having to unplug it. We’d man the elevators and stand fire watch if we had the 1400 to 2200 watch. We never had night watch, so we were free to explore the city.”

Bouton believed she could do more for her country and her service, so she applied to attend radio school. She got accepted and went in the summer of 1944. “I didn’t excel,” she says. “I was good at the bookwork, but not so fast with the coding and barely got through, but I was good enough to receive and transmit direction finder stats. I graduated and was sent to Cape May, where we’d get the bearings of ships in distress and copy their frequencies. There were eight SPARs who ran the radio shack and we lived with WAVES. The men accepted us, though I really never worked with too many males. We had a kind of sisterhood. I still hear from two SPARs who I met in radio school.”

Bouton met the man who would become her husband on the boardwalk in Atlantic City. “He was in the Army and we got married before I left Cape May. I transferred to Bethany Beach, Del., to be closer to him.”

Bart’s transportation duty took her to Charleston, S.C., where she drove “every vehicle you can imagine: trucks, jeeps, cars, whatever. I loved every minute. Tradd Street was near the Ashley



River, where the Coast Guard boats were docked. We had men’s football teams, baseball teams, basketball, women’s rowing, all sorts of sports teams. We used to jokingly call it the ‘College on the Ashley,’” laughs Bart.

“There were two SPAR barracks, one of which was in one of the nicest homes on the Charleston Battery. It was like a mansion! We could walk to the base, but part of my job was to operate a sort of shuttle service,” Shipmate Bart recalls. “We’d do ‘chow runs’ in the morning, starting at 5:30 AM. We’d get in the truck and drive around to pick up the SPARs, get them to chow and then to work on time. The shuttle also ran a circuit around Charleston to the District Office. It ran every two hours and you could get on and off along the circuit. On Sundays, we had a beach run to either Folly Beach or Sullivan’s Island Beach. That was great duty, because I had a day at the beach!”

One of Bart’s favorite duties was taking female SPAR officers on overnight duty assignments. “A SPAR could never accompany a male officer on an overnight trip; it just wouldn’t have been appropriate.”

Always Part of the Coast Guard Family

The SPARs were disbanded in 1946 and Bart, Bouton and Hooker all found their time in the Coast Guard influenced their life in the civilian world.

“The appropriations [for the SPAR program] were running out and they needed to discharge all of us,” explains Hooker. “I was working in the separation center and part of my job was to type discharge papers for anyone leaving the Coast Guard. It’s very important to have your discharge documents accurate. I was sick and in the hospital at the time the program ended, but my doctor refused to discharge a sick SPAR. He finally agreed when he was given the authorization to treat me as a veteran after I was discharged. But by then, there wasn’t anyone left to type up my discharge papers. They brought a typewriter to my hospital bed and I typed my own discharge.”

Bart left the Coast Guard for other reasons. “After my husband finished his tour in the Pacific, I became pregnant and the policy





Lois Bouton, the Coast Guard Lady, is made an honorary Chief and pinned at the Chiefs Call to Indoctrination dinner in St. Louis, Oct. 25, 2013. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Ayla Kelley)

of the day mandated that I had to leave active duty. I announced I was pregnant in January and was out of the Coast Guard in April of 1946. The SPARs were disbanded in May and all the SPARs were gone by December.”

But she never left the Coast Guard family. “My husband spent 32 years in the Coast Guard and I traveled with him, including a tour in Guam, where our oldest son was born,” continues Bart. “A lot of folks don’t think the Coast Guard serves overseas, but they’re wrong. It’s not just U.S. duty.”

In 1972, Charlotte and her husband divorced and she took the next two years to “get my head straight.” She decided she would return to school and serve others in a new way. “After 30 years as a wife and mother, it was hard to study, but I graduated in 1976 as a Licensed Practical Nurse and worked for nine years in surgery and recovery. I spent the last five years of my nursing career doing rehabilitation work with patients who’d been injured in automobile accidents. It was very rewarding. “

Bouton and her Army husband left military service at the same time and returned to Illinois. “I got my old teaching job back and taught, mostly first graders, until I retired. But I’ve always been a loyal Coast Guard supporter.”

Her loyalty manifests itself in the letters she writes to fellow Coast Guard personnel and veterans. “I write lots of letters,” Bouton says modestly of the estimated 40,000 letters she’s written in the past 40 years. “I prefer to write by hand, but sometimes use a computer. And I write to members of the Coast Guard family, but also to others. I expect to send out about 500 cards for the Coast Guard’s birthday this month and I’ll send a similar number of Christmas cards.”

Former Commandant of the Coast Guard Bob Papp made a visit to Bouton for her 94th birthday and presented “the Coast Guard Lady” with a Meritorious Public Service Award. “There was a birthday cake with my SPAR picture on it. Four Chief-Selects from St. Louis came to visit and they invited me to their induction ceremony. An Auxiliary member drove me 300 miles to attend the ceremony and they made me an honorary Chief!” she recalls proudly.

Trailblazers

The women who joined the military during World War II weren’t the first females to ever serve, but they proved their mettle in wartime and played a pivotal role in the feminist movement

that would sweep the country some 20 years later. They were game-changers.

“We didn’t consider ourselves pioneers at all,” says Bouton, “but we were the ones who got the women’s movement going. That wasn’t our purpose for joining, though. We just wanted to be patriotic or maybe we were just bored, but we didn’t see ourselves as trailblazers.”

“As a kid, I wanted to go to a military school and couldn’t understand when my parents told me I couldn’t go,” recalls Bart. “I was simply told, ‘because girls just don’t.’ There were female yeomen during World War I, but they didn’t go to boot camp or leave home. I’d never heard of the WACs [Women’s Air Corps] and when the WAVES came along, I thought it was neat that girls could serve. When World War II kicked off, I wanted to do something to help my country. We all wanted to do whatever we could, whether that was being a storekeeper, a baker, whatever. I thought, ‘Oh my God, what can I do?’ Back then, I figured I was destined to be a lowly seaman the rest of my life, but I met a SPAR about 10 years ago who’d been a transportation chief!”

When asked if she considers herself a pioneer, Bart immediately and emphatically says, “No! I certainly couldn’t have fathomed that we were blazing a trail for others and I’m sure the other girls didn’t realize it either.”

But women serving in today’s Coast Guard absolutely appreciate the path the SPARs paved for them and respect the sacrifices they made to do so. Command Master Chief Leilani L. Cale-Jones, Deputy Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard at USCG Headquarters, is proud to be standing on the SPARs’ shoulders.

“When the SPARs were established to enable women to assume clerical duties to free men for duty at sea, only a handful of ratings were open to them. As a testament to their commitment to Honor, Respect, and Devotion to Duty — they embodied these core values even though their service predated the official establishment of them — women were serving nearly 11,000 strong in the Coast Guard SPARs by the end of the war,” says Cale-Jones. “Every woman serving today owes a debt of gratitude to those whose contributions to the nation and our Coast Guard allow us the privilege to serve at every rank and in every rating in the Coast Guard.”

The Coast Guard christened USCGC SPAR (WLB-403) in 1944 and, following that cutter’s decommissioning in 1997, a second USCGC SPAR (WLB-206) was launched in 2000 to honor these inspiring women. Approximately 50 SPARs were on hand for the festivities, including Charlotte Bart. “We were piped aboard and the whole affair was very special. The all-male crew had t-shirts made up that said ‘Coast Guard SPARs, tough as nails’ and gave one to each of us.”

Coast Guard personnel find other ways to recognize the SPARs and keep their legacy alive, and CMC Cale-Jones has been



Olivia Hooker, who was 98 years old when this photo was taken in 2013, only served in the Coast Guard for a short period, but her military experience taught her about “order and discipline” and exposed her to a variety of perspectives. U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Ali Flockerzi.

privileged to be a part of some of them. “We try to honor these ladies as forever members of the Coast Guard family at every opportunity. As an example, while stationed in PACAREEA, we hosted a brunch on Yerba Buena Island, Calif., for about eight SPARs in the local area. They came with scrapbooks in hand and swapped tales of their adventures at basic training and at their duty stations,” she says, smiling at the memory. “In 2009 I was asked to participate in a women’s leadership panel and SPARs Morella Staggs, Barbara Ehrls, and Elfie Larkin were in the front row. These ladies’ eyes lit up when they shared the stories of their too-brief time in the Coast Guard. These were but a small glimpse of the sparkle that could have lit the night sky compared to the 2012 weeklong commissioning events for the USCGC STRATTON (WMSL-752) [honoring Captain Dorothy Stratton, director of the SPARs]. One ‘young’ SPAR even showed up in her uniform! It is both humbling and an honor to be a ‘sister in service’ with these ladies who continue to cherish our branch of the military and inspire us to do the same.”

Lessons from the Coast Guard

Although Lois Bouton, Charlotte Bart and Olivia Hooker’s Coast Guard careers were relatively short, all are proud of their Coast Guard service and to have played a unique role in the service’s history. And each carried lessons she learned into her civilian life — lessons that are applicable to others serving today.

Besides the skills she acquired as a driver, Charlotte Bart also credits the Coast Guard with helping her manage some of the challenges she faced in life. “The discipline I learned in the Coast Guard really got me through some tough times. I don’t think it hurts any young person to do four years in military service,” she advises. “If you go in with the right attitude, you can really learn some amazing things. The Coast Guard taught me discipline and respect and taught me that if I want to be respected, I needed to show it to others.”

“I was only in the Coast Guard for 18 months,” says Olivia Hooker, “but my time in the Coast Guard was an awakening. I met diverse people from diverse cultures. Some of their values were in line with mine and others’ were opposed. I learned so much.”

By way of example, Hooker shares the story of her friend and fellow SPAR, Eileen Cook. “There was a medical doctor who didn’t like any SPARs and made an attempt to discharge Cookie as unfit for duty. Cookie had been in the theater and, during her discharge hearing, she put on quite a performance and had the discharge board in stitches. In the end, she not only was allowed to remain on active duty, she got to pick her next assignment. You just never know what will happen. I tell people they should never turn down opportunities. If you have it in your mind to be an engineer, for example, go find out about it. Talk to people. Research background information. Give it a try. You just don’t know what might transpire. You don’t know what opportunity might come up.”



Lois Bouton agrees. “Although I didn’t think much of it at the time, serving in the Coast Guard was a wonderful experience. I’d encourage people to take a look at their lives and, if they’re unhappy, take a chance and do something different.”

Amazing Women

Although Lois Bouton never got assigned to swimming or life-saving duty, she feels good about her contributions and wouldn’t trade a single memory. “I enjoyed my time in the Coast Guard tremendously.”

Olivia Hooker, who would go on to earn her doctorate in psychology after her tour in the Coast Guard, believes in the importance of embracing differences and the value of service. “Before going in the Coast Guard, I didn’t know many people who were not of my hue. It was good for me to mix with other people and find out how they thought and what they were like. It taught me a lot about order and priorities,” she muses. “I would like to see more of us realizing that our country needs us. I’d like to see more girls consider spending some time in the military. If they have ambition, they don’t know what heights they might reach. It’s really nice to have people with different points of view and different kinds of upbringing. The world would really prosper from more of that.”

Hooker’s philosophy continues to inspire today. “Although I have never met her, I want to be like Dr. Hooker one day. To call her an inspiration is an understatement. She exemplifies the word ‘pioneer,’” says Cale-Jones. “Not only as a woman, but as a black woman, she wouldn’t take ‘no’ for an answer when she heard her nation call. She brings a profound perspective about why it is as important as ever to be an organization that is inclusive.”

Hooker is honored by such tributes, but humbly downplays her contributions to equality. “I’ve been told I’m an amazing woman,” she says. “I don’t know about that, but I have certainly known a lot of amazing women. I can just say I’ve always tried to do my best.”



Lauren Armstrong is the Contributing Editor and Member of the FRA Auxiliary. She can be reached at lauren@fra.org.



How to Outsmart a Millionaire

Only the "Robin Hood of Watchmakers" can steal the spotlight from a luxury legend for under \$200!

I wasn't looking for trouble. I sat in a café, sipping my espresso and enjoying the quiet. Then it got noisy. Mr. Bigshot rolled up in a roaring high-performance Italian sports car, dropping attitude like his \$14,000 watch made it okay for him to be rude. That's when I decided to roll up my sleeves and teach him a lesson.

"Nice watch," I said, pointing to his and holding up mine. He nodded like we belonged to the same club. We did, but he literally paid 100 times more for his membership. Bigshot bragged about his five-figure purchase, a luxury heavyweight from the titan of high-priced timepieces. I told him that mine was the *Stauer Corso*, a 27-jewel automatic classic now available for only \$179. And just like that, the man was at a loss for words.

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USS Barry (DD-933)

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VP-60

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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.

LOOKING FOR...

DM2 Glenn (or Glynn) Tatom

We were stationed together at the Enlisted Personnel Management Center (EPMAC), New Orleans, Louisiana, between 1980 and 1982. Please contact YNCS Darrell R. Schreiber, USN (Ret.) at 504-931-7212 or via e-mail at judar1@bellsouth.net

James R. (Bob) Hicks, Navy CPO (Deceased)

Looking for anyone who knew him from 1941 to 1961. He was aboard USS Lexington when it was sunk, USS Card, and on USS Ticonderoga when it was sunk. Flew in the Berlin Airlift, Port Lehoty, and Hawaii. I'm putting together a book for his grandchildren. Please contact Wanda Hicks at chiefhicks@global.net

NRTC San Diego & Camp Elliot Boot Training, 1951–1952

Please contact William L. Finlay at 3765 Reservation Drive, Lake Havasu City, AZ 86406; billfinlay@frontiernet.net; or 928-680-7422.

HN Lawrence (Larry) Donald Williams, USN

Larry served with me at Great Lakes for both boot camp and Hospital Corps School. Then, we met six months later at Camp Lejeune Marine Corps Base, N.C., for Field Medical Service School (Montfort Point) during the period of 1965 to 1968. At Lejeune, we were assigned to 2nd Medical Battalion, 2nd Marine Division, along with John Barleston. Larry was a Corpsman from New Orleans and was tall, slender, with

a dark complexion. I last saw him in January 1968, when I was deployed to the Mediterranean. I was discharged on my return to the U.S. in June 1968. Anyone having knowledge of his whereabouts may contact HM1 Johnnie (Butch) L. Swanson, USN (Ret.) at 620 NE 63rd St, Oklahoma City, OK 73105; 405-209-3857; or 405-767-9544.

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Gowitzke, William C, AZC, USN	022	Parker, Charles R, HMCS, USN	050
Greenwood, Carl I, MMC, USN	112	Patterson, Lanny A, AWC, USN	042
Grossman, Donald L, MS1, USN	365	Pellegrini, John A, CWO4, USCG	162
Gulick, James M, MMCS(SS), USN	269	Powell, Julius D, ADRC, USN	091
Hammje, Douglas A, AVCM, USN	MAL	Pratt, Arthur W, YN2, USN	338
Hammock, Franklin U, CPO, USN	MAL	Prusnek, Carl T, ENC, USN	017
Harris, Leroy E, BMCS, USN	043	Reichenau, Eddie W, CEC, USN	011
Hartman, Roy V, MMC, USN	077	Richards, Thomas A., LTCOL, USMC	005
Hatcher, Joel W, IC3, USN	261	Richings, Stanley J, DTC, USN	182
Hayden, August E., MM2, USN	098	Richter, Eugene D, BMC, USN	136
		Rogers, Richard E, ADJC, USN	093



NAME	BRANCH
Rubinowski, John L, ADR2, USN	061
Sample, Jack E, PNC, USN	276
Sandoe, John S., HMCM(SW), USN	163
Sauls, Joseph C, MMCM, USN	254
Schaefer, Norbert W, PO1, USN	091
Schiermeister, Herbert, ENC, USN	MAL
Schuck, Dan, AOC, USN	146
Schultz, Willard W, BMC, USN	296
Serfes, Bertel, SGT, USN	182
Shedd, Marshall L, PHC, USN	179
Shively, Charles E, SKC, USN	MAL
Shotwell, Joe A, RMC, USN	MAL
Smead, Leonard A, POC, USN	MAL
Smith, William C, AE1, USN	159
Smith, Terry L, EMC, USN	MAL
Smith, Robert F, CWO2, USN	070
Smith, George W, AMHC, USN	MAL
Smith, Carl T, AVCM, USN	097
Snell, Howard L, STC(SS), USN	216
Stapleton, Jolly R, GMG1, USN	175
Stine, Richard B, CTR1, USN	060
Stone, Leon E, MMC, USN	214
Stringer, Elmer L, EN1, USN	120
Sturgeon, Jack K, HTCM, USN	MAL
Thiebaut, Martin Vern, SH1, USN	MAL
Thornhill, Jimmie, POC, USN	MAL
Toohey, Christopher L, SGM, USMCR	146
Turner, Earl A, SK1, USN	061
Vendetti, Dominick A, SKC, USN	022
Voering, Hermann J, CS2, USN	136
Ward, Joseph J, IMCS, USN	MAL
Warren, Roger, LCDR, USN	MAL
Wasikowski, Lawrence J, CDR, USNR	276
Welch, William F, YNC, USN	066
Wilson, John, PO1, USN	MAL
Wilson, Donald, MCPO, USN	MAL
Wysup, Frank P, AQ1, USN	MAL

Names in red indicate 50 year continuous members.



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BRANCH 4 WASHINGTON, D.C.

Branch and Unit 4 hosted the East Coast Mid-Year Meeting in Waldorf, Md., which included a fashion show of traditional Filipino styles, as well as a demonstration of Filipino dances.



BRANCH 269 GOOSE CREEK, S.C.

At the Southeast Region Midyear Meeting JrPNP Mark Kilgore (left) and JrPRPSE Jim Robbins (right) present Shipmate Bob Huscher (center) with his Shipmate of the Year Plaque for Public Relations and the Leonard D. 'Swede' Nelson Plaque for Shipmate of the Year for Americanism-Patriotism awarded at the 2013 National Convention.



**BRANCH 77 GREEN VALLEY, ARIZ.
BRANCH 14 MILWAUKEE, WISC.**

PNP Tom Heaney, secretary of Branch 77, renews a 50-year friendship by presenting Shipmate "KC" Graun with his 50-year FRA membership pin and certificate. Graun resides in Tucson, but retains his FRA membership in Branch 14.



BRANCH 22 PENSACOLA, FLA.

Branch President Bob Hall (left) presents Shipmate Burnell Beall (center) with his 35-Year Continuous Membership Pin and Shipmate Earl Carroll (right) with his 10-Year Continuous Member Pin.



BRANCH 42 QUONSET POINT, R.I.

Shipmates John Kutger and Alan Crouch are recognized by PRPNEng Phil Justin for their 40 years of continuous FRA membership. Shipmates George A. Broadhurst, Lester W. Hazard, William R. Lauzon and Paul W. Murray were also honored, but are not shown in the photo.



BRANCH 315 JOPLIN, MO.

Shipmates and Auxiliary members, as well as invited guests, present a donation to the Ronald McDonald House. Shown (l to r) are Ronald McDonald House Manager Shirley Hylton, Unit Secretary Jan Head, Judy Schreck, Branch Secretary Milton Head, Ed Schreck, Unit President Jean Hoover, Rick Warden, Millie Alumbaugh and Kathryn Adams.



BRANCH 72 FALL RIVER, MASS.

Maggie Adams accepts a 50-year Membership Pin and Certificate on behalf of her father, John Morgan, who was unable to attend the ceremony. Shipmate John is a World War II veteran, served 30 years in the Marine Corps and taught at the Falls River Junior High School for 16 years.



BRANCH 146 JOHNSVILLE, PENN.

At the Branch Awards Dinner, shipmates were recognized for their long-standing involvement with the FRA. Shown (l to r) are Harry Goldstein (35 years), Tom Mahoney (20 years), Paul Weinburger (10 years), Don Doring (20 years), & Otto Blavier (15 years). Congratulations to all!



BRANCH 89 ATLANTA, GA.

Three shipmates were recognized for their collective 80 years of continuous FRA Membership. Branch President Don Lear and RPSE Fred Hill congratulated PRPSE Charles Blair (40 years), Joe Farquhar (20 years) and Ernie Rose (20 years), all of whom are Life Members of the FRA.



BRANCH 14 MILWAUKEE, WISC.

Shipmates sponsored a fundraiser at the St. Martin's Fair to support the branch's Americanism Essay Contest program. Shown (l to r) are Branch President Marcia Cunningham, PRPNC and Chairman Leon Zalewski, and Board Member Dan Jakubowski.

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.

Message from Northeast/New England Regional President Cindy Rodham-Tuck

AT THE END OF the 2013 National Convention in Chattanooga, we became the Northeast/New England Region. Despite the fact that this new region has a few strikes against it — aging population, limited resources to recruit new members, and many miles separating the seven units — there has always been a bond between us. At the very least, we could keep what we had and stay strong. Like newlyweds, we have been working to merge our two “families” and, as you would expect, there are always “bumps in the road,” but it is a lot easier when you love and respect each other.

For several years, the New England Regional President has been invited to present a plaque at the awards ceremony for graduating cadets at the Coast Guard Academy in New London, Conn. This year the award was given to Cadet Kaitlin Ward, who received the “Most Outstanding Athlete of the Class of 2014.” It was an honor to once again to be in attendance at this ceremony.

The units continue with various projects such as funding a Cakeless Cake Sale, making phone calls to shut-ins, and attending funerals, rituals and parades. For example, Unit 226 (Staten Island, N.Y.) donated to “Wreaths Across America” at Arlington National Cemetery; Unit 124 (Lakehurst, N.J.) members volunteered to read at local schools on America Day; another Unit donates to the local food pantry; Unit 20 (Groton, Conn.) helps serve breakfast at the Branch home. One of the members from Unit 42 (Quonset-Davisville, R.I.) who lives in Maine meets and greets servicemen and women at Bangor Airport as they leave for or return from deployment. Sadly, Unit 229 (Hudson, N.Y.) will be surrendering their charter, but are working hard right to the very end. The list of projects of Unit 66 (South Shore, Mass.) are too numerous to mention. This Region may only have seven Units, but each and every member does her part for the Auxiliary.

The upcoming Regional Convention is to be held in Newburgh, N.Y., on September 5–6, 2014, at the Hudson Valley Hotel and Conference Center, 90 Route 17K, Newburgh, N.Y. 12550. Room rates are \$80.00 per night plus N.Y. tax. For reservations, call (845) 564-9020 and be sure to mention you are with the FRA Northeast/New England Regional Convention.

I thank you for this opportunity to serve, and I hope to see you all at the Northeast/New England Regional Convention, and then again at the National Convention in Corpus Christi.



CINDY RODHAM-TUCK
*Northeast/New England
Regional President*



PRPNE Sue Hershberger, RVP Sara Piacentino and other Auxiliary members participated in a volunteer luncheon and delivered bingo prizes at Crystal Lake Rehab Center.



PRPNE Sue Hershberger, RVP Sara Piacentino and Unit Chaplain Aurora Semple placed a wreath at the New Jersey Arnetown Veterans Cemetery on Memorial Day.

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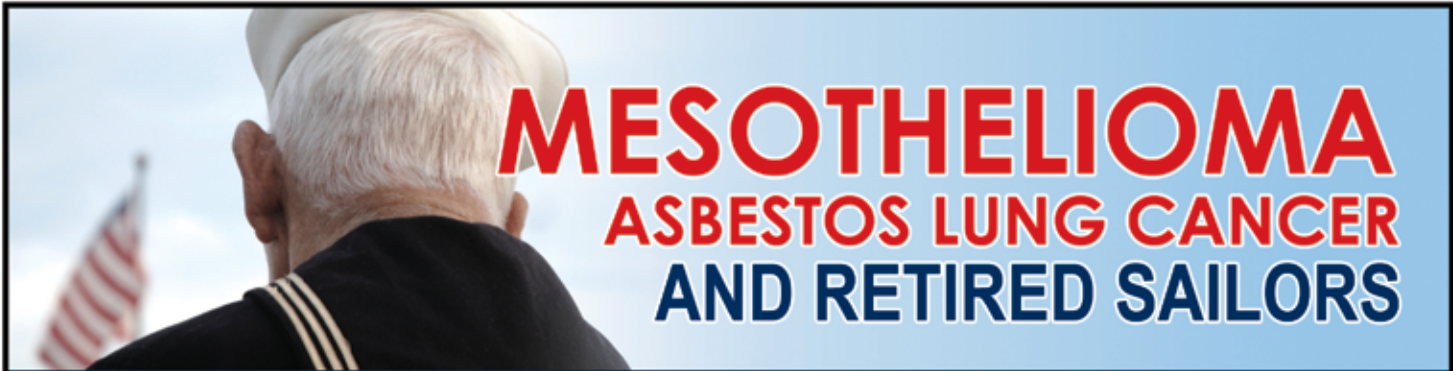
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