



Shipmates,

I have just returned from touring many of the East Coast Branches. I have had so much fun visiting and seeing the variety of meeting spaces that you use. I still have a few Branches to visit and I will reach out to those Branches soon to confirm your meeting location and time.

To start 2026, my first visit was to Branch 212, Fort Meade, Maryland, only 20 miles away! This Branch is no stranger to me, and I have been there many times. When Branch 6 of Baltimore City surrendered its charter, Branch 212 received Shipmate Jackson, who is heavily involved in youth activities. He has a great passion for martial arts and is the chairman of their essay contest. It was so great to see him at the meeting and to catch up and know he is still doing what he loves. The East Coast Master At Arms, Tim Kinsey hails from this Branch.

Branch 93 in Patuxent (Pax) River, MD was my next stop. Again, been there many times, but this was my first long drive in my new electric car. I was far from home and didn't have enough power to return on a single charge. Driving issues aside, the shipmates were delightful and held a productive meeting.

Branch 24, Annapolis, is my home Branch, and I serve as the Branch Chaplain. Although Branch 24 has the largest number of members in the FRA, we sometimes don't make a quorum of 20. We have the same struggles as the smaller Branches in getting consistent attendance and appointing committee chairs.

Branch 67, Suitland, Maryland, has its own home/club and is quite popular for mid-week karaoke! Like many Branches they have a few individuals who do all the work. Their President, Troy and Secretary Beverly keep the books in check. Shipmate Regional Chaplain Bill Speight has been an active member serving multiple officer positions for almost 2 decades.

Virginia Beach has been a frequent destination this year, with 4 active Branches and the Mid-Year meeting consistently being held here. There is a concentration of Past Regional Presidents in this area, and it's always nice to see them and have mentorship from them.

Branch 37, Portsmouth, Virginia, was visited via Zoom. Branch 166 was happy to have me return, as was I! This Branch meets at a VFW and has an unofficial Auxiliary who supports them with a smorgasbord of treats. I suspect it wasn't just because of my visitation that the food was FIVE-STAR worthy! Branch 40, invited me to present FRA Essay Contest certificates to their winners. At times, we all got choked up with patriotic sentiment as the essays were read. Branch 99, Kempsville, also had me present certificates to their winners and they too had a delicious dinner catered for all in attendance.

Mid-March, I was able to visit two Branches in North Carolina: Branch 301 has two meeting locations. The meeting I attended was at a Huckle Burger in Greenville. The April meeting will be held at Dees Restaurant in Goldsboro, more than 45 miles away. Shipmate President Jerry Leatherwood does an excellent job of running both sets of meetings!

Camp Lejeune Branch 208 in Jacksonville meets at a DAV. Winners from the 2025 FRA Americanism Essay Contest read their essays and were presented awards.

The following week, I visited Branch 41 in Roanoke, Virginia. Their meeting was at a Golden Corral. Branch 219, Richmond, Virginia met at a Harley Davidson dealership!

Maryland has introduced Senate Bill 9 (Sales-Tax Free Day) which proposes an annual tax-free day for veterans on Nov 11th (starting 2026) for items under \$2000. If this passes, we'll be getting a new oven on Veterans Day! I attended a hearing in the Ways and Means committee meeting room with a few other shipmates who were easily identifiable by their FRA covers or Veteran ball caps.

March 31 is an important date for filing your Annual Branch Officer and Committee Reports. The number of members your Branch has on March 31 is what you use for your reports. If you need help, please contact me and I will help you figure it out.

It's already April! The National Board of Director's meeting is to be held on the week of April 22nd at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Washington DC/Crystal City, 300 Army-Navy Drive in

Arlington, VA. This meeting is open to all Shipmates. It is encouraged to attend especially if you are thinking about becoming a regional officer.

The FRA National President and the National Board of Directors will visit **Capitol Hill on April 23rd** (invitation attached). Again, the Shipmates and Auxiliary are invited to go to the Capitol with us. We will be leaving the DoubleTree Hotel at 10am as a group; the presentation of the Pinnacle Award is scheduled at Noon.

The following day, **April 24th**, the Auxiliary will hold a ceremony at the Mast of the Maine (which is just up the hill from the Tomb of the Unknown) in **Arlington National Cemetery**. The Mast of the Maine Memorial overlooks the remains of 230 service members who died when the battleship exploded off the coast of Cuba in February 1898. Of the 354 crew members, 266 were killed.

Again, please attend one or both of these events! We need to show strength in numbers and your presence makes a huge difference!

In Loyalty, Protection, & Service,

Valerie Toulotte

RPEC@FRA.org (301)852-1151

Regional President, East Coast

Past National Chaplain



The Fleet Reserve Association



requests the honor of your presence at our

Annual Capitol Hill Visit

Featuring the Presentation of

The FRA PINNACLE AWARD

And Hill Advocacy on 2026 FRA Legislative Priorities.

Date: Thursday, April 23rd, 2026

Location: United States Capitol Hill

Attending: FRA Leadership & Members

RSVP : Please respond by April 10, 2026

Email: NED@fra.org

Phone: (703) 683-1400 ext 101

YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO THE

President's Tea

TO CELEBRATE OUR NATIONAL PRESIDENT

Kelly Pena

FRIDAY, APRIL 24, 2026 @ 10 AM

DOUBLE TREE BY HILTON WASHINGTON DC - CRYSTAL CITY, LOCATED AT
300 ARMY NAVY DRIVE, ARLINGTON, VA 22202.

ROOM RATE: \$229.00 PER NIGHT PLUS TAXES.

SELF-PARKING RATE OF \$29.00 PER NIGHT.

DEADLINE: MARCH 29, 2026.

CODE: FRA AND THE WEBSITE IS:

[HTTPS://BOOK.PASSKEY.COM/GO/LAFRAMEETING26](https://book.passkey.com/go/LAFRAMEETING26)

NATIONAL PRESIDENTS' TEA

- 10:00 AM – 11:45 AM
- VICTORY ROOM

ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY VISIT

- BUS DEPARTS HOTEL AT 12:00 PM
- WREATH LAYING AT THE USS MAINE MAST
- EULOGY BY THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT
- NO PERSONAL VEHICLES — BUS TRANSPORTATION REQUIRED
- RETURN BUS DEPARTS ARLINGTON AT 3:45 PM