

Shipmate's Report



FRA Branch 99 Newsletter

SERVING ACTIVE DUTY, FORMER ACTIVE DUTY AND RETIRED MEMBERS OF
THE UNITED STATES NAVY, MARINE CORPS AND COAST GUARD SINCE 1967
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The Prez Sez:

Shipmates:

We recently had our Annual Election and Installation of

Officers and our Board Of Directors (**BOD**), congratulations to all. I feel honored that I was re-elected to Branch Presidency and will continue to do my best. I encourage everyone to attend our **Annual 4th Of July Picnic**, here at the Branch Home. This is always an excellent event with good food and an opportunity to mingle with friends and Shipmates. I promise you a good time.

Gabriel Falu

From the Vice President



As your new Vice President, I'd like to take this time to thank

everyone for the trust and confidence you have placed in me and I assure you all that I will do my very best to maintain that trust and confidence.

I encourage you all to get involved with your Branch we need your help!

SKI



Chaplains Corner

Shipmates:

I encourage you all to attend our 4th of July Picnic, not just to celebrate the birth of our Nation but, to relax and spend some time with your family and Shipmates. We don't do this often enough. Holidays are provided for this reason, relax and enjoy!

If you're aware of any Shipmates in ill health or distress please advise me at the soonest.

God Bless,

Rev Adrian

S/M Chaplain, Adrian Knight



Veteran Service Officer:

Shipmates:

There is a new program with the VA it is called Mission Act. It is replacing the choice program.

If you have not received your welcome kit that provides a broad overview of the services VA can offer you email the VA at MISSIONActHamton@VA.gov.

Shipmates please remember there is a walk- in group designed to assist Veteran's with a number of issues for which they are trying to cope. It meets at 13:00 (1pm) for one hour. Anxiety, Depression, Social issues, communication problems, and employment. The Address is 1907 South Military Highway Suite B Chesapeake, VA 23320.

Shipmates important numbers

DAV driver is 728-3148

VA patient Advocate
757-722-9961 ext. 3763

Veterans crisis line
1-800-272-8255 press 1 or
text 838255

VA tele-a-nurse 722-9961
opt 3

Useful numbers:

Tricare.mil Humana East Region

Select & Prime 1-800-444-5445

Tricare for Life 1-866-773-0404

VA Medical Center, Hampton
757-722-9961

VA Homeless hotline
877-424-3838

VA Crisis Line 800-273-8255

VA Volunteer 757-728-3124

Navy Marine Corp Relief Society
Visiting Nurse 703-696-0032

If you have any questions, please contact me at the Branch Home or by my email.

mgw1812@verizon.net.

Martin G Wood

Woody

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- Membership

A Warm Welcome to all new members of Branch 99. Come to the next Branch meeting on **July 10th** to meet your new Shipmates. Meetings are held at **1900** on the second Wednesday of each month. Please check your calendar. If you come you may win a **free meal**.

S/M Vice President **Art Bailey** reported there were **0** newly joined, for a total of **582** active members.

- TAPS

None reported

- Hospital and Welfare

S/M **Long** is in Concordia Rehab on Bonney Road in Virginia Beach. S/M **Bill Griffith** is undergoing treatment for cancer, Members urged to contact the President or Chaplain for members hospitalized. There is a board in the Mess that will be used for Hospitalizations, Sick, and Rehab notifications if you know of someone and haven't heard the word put out please put the information there so that everyone can be informed. Also, S/M Chaplain Knight reminds us all that Shipmates learning of one of our fellow Shipmates illness or need of assistance to please contact him.

- BINGO

John Royal is our new Bingo Manager. **BINGO** is our primary moneymaker and we can't afford to let it die. we're always looking for

volunteers to help. If you have time, stop by and give them a hand!

- **BUDGET and FINANCE**

The Budget is balanced and the Branch is in Good Financial Shape.

KEMPSVILLE BRANCH 99

A **TWO BELL CEREMONY** Was held, by **S/M Chaplain Adrian Knight and S/M MAA Dave Moser**, in Honor of Shipmates who have joined the Staff of the Supreme Commander.

GOOD OF THE ORDER.

All Shipmates are asked to write a personal Bio and submit it to **S/M Quinn** who will include them in our Newsletter, feel free to be as detailed as you want.

- **Coming Events:**

04 Jul- Annual Picnic

10 Jul-Branch meeting at Branch at 7PM

10 Jul- Auxiliary Meeting at Branch at 7PM

14 Aug-Branch meeting at Branch at 7PM

14 Aug- Auxiliary Meeting at Branch at 7PM

02 Sept- Labor Day

11 Sept-Branch meeting at Branch at 7PM

11 Sept- Auxiliary Meeting at Branch at 7PM

11 Sept- Patriot Day

23 Sept- First Day of Autumn

In a program initiated by our Past President, Charlie Baldwin, local Restaurants are providing donations of dinner meal gift certificates to encourage attendance at Branch General Membership meetings. These certificates are presented as prizes in drawings held at Branch meetings. The restaurants' support of our non-profit veteran's association is greatly appreciated. Those that are currently participating are:

Cheeseburger In Paradise

739 Lynnhaven Pkwy. Virginia Beach.

Texas Road House

South Independence Blvd, Virginia Beach

Waffle Town USA

Pleasure House Road at Shore Drive, Virginia Beach

Virginia Steakhouse

620 First Colonial Rd, Virginia Beach

Golden Corral

Independence Blvd, Virginia Beach, VA

Pembroke Pizza

633 Independence Blvd

We appreciate the support of these participating restaurants, so when you are dining out, patronize them. And if you go to one of them with a free meal coupon, remember to tip the waiter for the full value of the check, before the discount. (he/she is working hard for a living and is not the one donating the free meal.) Remember to thank the manager on your way out, on behalf of Kempsville Branch **99, FRA.**

Other Merchants supporting this program are:

Priority Ford, North Military Hwy, Norfolk, VA

News from the LAFRA Unit 99



President LAFRA-Unit 99

LAFRA members attended a special **Memorial Day program** With LAFRA National President Christina Murray at the City Hall in Chesapeake VA. One member assisted in presenting a patriotic reef made by **Unit 99 LAFRA**. It was a beautiful event followed by a picnic for all who attended.

Installation took place on the **12th of June**. We introduced Cat Elcock as our new **Unit Chaplin** and **Mary Whitney** is the **Unit Marshall**. "Congratulations" **FRA** and **LAFRA** members.

John and Donna **Thumma** are still **FRA** and **LAFRA** members with our branch and unit so it was great seeing them. They were in town from their move to Colorado. They were greeted at the Golden Coral for breakfast by several **FRA** and **LAFRA** members. They were greatly missed.

Hope to see you at our next meeting which will be **10 July**.

Joyce Meeker

SHIPMATES' REPORT

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Monthly meetings are held on the Second Wednesday of the month

News of Interest to Veterans

Imagine if Republicans and Democrats worked together to pass reforms that improve the lives of millions of people. And imagine if those reforms put America's Veterans at the center of their healthcare decisions, leading to better customer service for our Nation's heroes.

This isn't hypothetical. It happened last year when Congress passed the [MISSION Act](#).

With state-of-the-art facilities, cutting-edge technology, and increased clinician recruiting and retention incentives, VA continues to enhance its coordinated care system through high-quality VA health care and community care provider networks.

The legislation sailed through Congress with overwhelming bipartisan support and the strong backing of Veterans' service organizations.

President Donald J. Trump's signature put us on a path to implementing these reforms. On June 6, the **MISSION Act** will enable VA to consolidate the Department's community care efforts into a single, simple-to-use program that will empower Veterans with the ability to choose the healthcare providers they trust.

So what can Veterans expect on June 6?

Less red tape, more satisfaction and predictability for patients, more efficiency for our clinicians, and better value for taxpayers.

Veterans will be eligible to get community care for a variety of

reasons, including when VA can't provide the treatment they need or when care outside our system is in the best medical interest of the patient.

We listened to Veterans and heard they preferred standards based on drive times rather than driving mileage because those standards better reflect Veteran experiences, especially in large urban areas with lots of traffic.

To ensure our Veterans are spending their time getting care instead of driving to it, patients facing an average drive time of 30-minutes or more for VA primary or mental healthcare, or non-institutional extended care services, will have the option of choosing a community provider closer to home. For specialty care, the drive-time standard will be an average of **60** minutes.

And to get Veterans the care they need when they need it, VA patients facing a **20**-day or more wait time for primary or mental healthcare, or non-institutional extended care services, will have the option of choosing a community provider who can deliver that care faster. For specialty care, the wait-time standard will be **28** days.

For additional convenience and timely treatment, eligible Veterans will also have access to urgent, walk-in care that gives them the choice to receive certain services at participating community clinics in their communities. (To access this new benefit, Veterans will select a provider in VA's community care network and may be charged a copayment.)

Veterans will be encouraged to ask VA about these new options, and well-trained staff will be available to help them quickly understand their choices.

These exciting and important changes speak to my top priority – delivering the best medical customer service and offering Veterans more healthcare choices.

While we still have more work to do, the VA is making progress.

We are seeing more patients than ever before, more quickly than ever before and studies show VA now compares favorably to the private sector for access and quality of care – and in many cases exceeds it.

And Veterans have noticed.

Patients' trust in VA care has skyrocketed to **87.7** percent, and in the last fiscal year VA completed more than **58 million** internal appointments – a record high and **623,000** more than the year before.

VA employees are noticing improvements as well. VA ranked [sixth out of 17](#) Federal Government agencies in the Partnership for Public Service's most recent "Best Places to Work" survey, up from 17th the year prior.

To maintain the trust of our Veterans, we must continue to deliver. And we will constantly innovate, upgrade, and pursue ways to better serve our Nation's heroes.

The **MISSION Act** is a vital part of this effort, giving **VA** the ability to implement the best practices we've learned in our nearly **75** years of experience offering community care.

The core of the doctor-patient relationship is trust. President Trump promised Veterans that this core value would shape the **VA**.

With the **MISSION Act**, the future of the **VA** healthcare system will lie in the hands of Veterans – precisely where it should be.

That's exactly what President Trump promised, it's exactly what Congress voted for, and it's exactly what **VA** will deliver to America's Veterans.

We will provide more information and progress updates over the next several weeks.

For more information on the Mission Act, and what this will do for all Veterans, please go to www.MISSIONAct.va.gov Your support and health are our mission. Thank you for choosing VA

Blue Water Navy Act Now Law: The president signed the **FRA** Supported *Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019* into law. It now restores **VA** benefits to thousands of Vietnam veterans who lost their disability eligibility in **2002** after arbitrary regulatory changes. For Korean **DMZ** veterans, it provides an earlier start date to encompass the timeframe when various defoliants were tested — from April 1, 1968, to Sept. 1, 1967. The new law expands benefits to

children born with spina bifida due to a parent's exposure in Thailand, coverage that already exists for the children of Vietnam and Korean **DMZ** veterans, and it requires the **VA** to report on research being conducted on a broad range of conditions possibly related to service in Southwest Asia. "The **FRA** is proud to have helped lead the charge to return benefits to these deserving veterans and to expand existing benefits to dependent children". The **VA** has yet to update its webpages to reflect the new law, but veterans and their families can still learn more about **VA** benefits associated with Agent Orange exposure, and about spina bifida birth defects related to exposure. For assistance in filing claims contact your Veterans Service Officer.

Women Veterans Taskforce Roundtable: A Women Veterans Taskforce roundtable was formed this week to discuss how the **FRA** and other veterans organizations learn from and advocate for women veterans. Members of Congress asked representatives from veterans organizations what they believe is needed to ensure women veterans have their voice represented in the fight to improve veteran benefits. They discussed the need to ensure servicewomen know about the benefits that come with joining veteran service organizations such as the **FRA**.

Senate Passes the NDAA for FY 2020: The Senate passed S.1790, National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020 (**NDAA**) by an **86-8** vote. The bill provides **\$750 billion** in total spending, a **3.1 percent pay** raise for our **2.15 million** uniformed service members, and reforms to the Military Housing Privatization Initiative to improve quality of life for military families. Ninety-three bipartisan amendments were also adopted which included an

amendment allowing the families of the **1983** Marine Barracks bombing victims to access **\$1.68 billion** in **Iranian funds** currently held by Clearstream. Unfortunately, Sen. Doug Jones (D-Ala.) amendment to end the Widow's Tax was blocked by Senate leadership.

Legislation to Give Student Veterans Break Pay Introduced: Senators Stabenow (D-Mich.) and Roberts (R-Kan.) introduced the **FRA** supported S. 1946, Student Veterans Housing Act which would extend housing payments for student veterans during certain breaks between semesters. This proposed change would allow student veterans to focus on their educational goals by reducing the burden of housing costs. The **FRA** thanks Senators Stabenow (D-Mich.) and Roberts (R-Kan.) for their bipartisan efforts to enhance the lives of student veterans.

Plans for Third North Korean Summit Underway: South Korean President Moon Jae-in stated that the U.S. is in early negotiations with North Korea over a proposed third bilateral summit to take place later this year. Moon, who has been acting as a mediator between the two countries, further stated that the U.S. had made a proposal for working-level talks with North Korea shortly following the Hanoi summit in February, and that he has been urging the North to return to the negotiating table. U.S. Special Envoy to North Korea Stephen Biegun arrived in Seoul in order to meet with South Korean officials ahead of a proposed stopover by President Trump as he travels to Osaka, Japan, for the 2019 G20 Summit.

VA to Reduce Rates for Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance: VA will be reducing the monthly premium for

Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) starting July 1, 2019. The monthly premium rates will fall from 7 cents per \$1,000 of insurance coverage to 6 cents per \$1,000 of insurance coverage. This will mean a decrease of \$4.00 per month for any service member who has elected the full \$400,000 of SGLI coverage. Service members who have elected Family SGLI coverage will see a monthly premium decrease in the range of 10 percent to 32 percent; the age of their spouse and amount of coverage effects their premiums. Reservists who do not receive pay due to a number of reasons, will start to be billed at the new rates in July 2019.

Update Your Information on the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry:

Service members and veterans who have already signed up for the registry should make sure that their contact information, phone number, address, and email are up-to-date. If you have not already signed up for the registry and you have served in one of the eligible areas, please

MIA Update: The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency has announced the identifications of two American servicemen who had been missing and unaccounted for from WWII and the Korean War. Returning home for burial with full military honors are:

Army Sgt. Vernon R. Judd was a member of Company D, 89th Medium Tank Battalion, 25th Infantry Division. He was reported missing in action on Nov. 28, 1950, when he was captured by enemy forces in the vicinity of Ipsok, North Korea. According to reports, **Judd died** at **Hofong** Prisoner of War camp

on **Feb. 15, 1951**. Interment services are pending.

Army Air Forces Sgt. Howard F. Gotts was a radio operator assigned to the 66th Bombardment Squadron, 44th Bombardment Group. On **Aug. 1, 1943**, the **B-24D** aircraft on which Gotts served, crashed during the largest bombing mission against the oil fields and refineries at Ploiesti, north of Bucharest, Romania. The Romanian govt announced they had recovered and buried **216 Americans** killed in the bombing raid, but could only identify **27** of the men at the time of the recovery.

The remaining casualties were said to have been buried as Unknowns in the Hero Section of the Civilian and Military Cemetery of Bolovan, Ploiesti, Prahova, Romania. Interment services are pending.

Service members, veterans and their families now have a one-stop shop for finding and booking travel with military discounts. The Department of Defense has teamed up with Priceline to create a travel booking site exclusively for U.S. Military members. American Forces Travel is a new Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) program arising out of a joint service initiative combining the efforts of each of the five branches of service and MWR. Military personnel, retirees and their family members now have access to an exclusive discount travel website managed by Priceline.

Authorized Patrons Today:

- All current Active Duty military (Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, and Coast Guard)
- All members of the Reserve components and National Guard
- All Retired Military, including those in the Reserves and

National Guard who are retirement eligible

- All Medal of Honor recipients and **100%** disabled veterans
- All Department of Defense civilians serving outside the United States, including appropriated funds (APF) employees and non-appropriated funds (NAF) employees
- American Red Cross and United Service Organizations (USO) paid-personnel currently serving outside the United States
- All eligible family members who are officially sponsored (ID card holder) by patrons in the above categories

In addition to dramatically enhancing quality of life for the military community, American Forces Travel will inject critical revenue into MWR programs by providing commissions from every booking made. American Forces Travel is a full-service travel booking site, offering hotel, flight, car rental and cruise deals as well as bundled or package deals.

For more information head to : <https://www.americanforcestravel.com/>



Memorial Day 2019



S/M President Falu and S/M Secretary Filipowski Present a Memorial Day Wreath



FRA Branch 99 Officers take the Oath of Office



LAFRA Unit 99 Officers take the Oath of Office



ECRP Martin with FRA Branch 99 President S/M Falu



LAFRA ECRP Dixon and LAFRA Unit 99 President Joyce Meeker



LAFRA Unit 99 Officers