

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:

As your President Elect, I would like to express my thanks and gratitude for your vote of confidence. I look forward to working with other Newly Elected Officers and Board of Directors. I encourage all of our members to attend the monthly meetings and to focus on membership since our numbers are declining, it takes an entire branch to build a successful branch. Remember Shipmates, the strength and success of our branch is in your hands, not the hands of the few. I ask that you

bring your ideas and suggestions forward, put your Board of Directors to work. Let us, by working together, leave a heritage to those Shipmates and Ladies who come after us, a Branch Home that they too will be proud of. Once again, thank you for electing me as your Branch President for the upcoming year. I encourage you all to attend our 4th of July Picnic I'm sure this event will be a great success and I look forward to meeting all of you!

Gabriel Falu

From the Vice President



Chaplains Corner

Shipmates:

As we prepare to celebrate Our Independence Day, which is July fourth, we must remember our freedoms and enjoy the many freedoms of this Great Country, the United States of America. God has given us a great country. May we remember the cost of these freedoms in the lives of men and women who gave their lives!

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

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- Membership

A Warm Welcome to all new members of Branch 99. Come to the next Branch meeting on May 9th 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 1 newly joined, for a total of 669 active members.

- TAPS

Shipmate Owens

- Hospital and Welfare

S/M Long is in Norfolk General Hospital, more information as it becomes available. S/M Dan Cheche is in Rehab after suffering a stroke, 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

Bingo is in dire need of additional managers to allow us to continue. We've been relying on ONE Manager for too long. We're getting close to actually lose our BINGO owing to a lack of a 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! Thank you to S/M Joe Conner for stepping and volunteering as a BINGO Manager, we still need one more.

- 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 S/M Owens who has joined the Staff of the Supreme Commander.

GOOD OF THE ORDER.

Comments from Guest/Members S/M S. D. Martin, President Branch 166, Installing Official congratulated newly installed

Thank you all for reelecting me as your Vice President, I'll continue to do my best to live up to the high standards you all expect and deserve. Branch 99 (as well as the FRA in general) continue the decrease in membership, we NEED to do something to stop this trend. If you have any ideas or suggestions please advise me or any of your Officers. There is no such thing as an unsolvable problem, we're just missing the correct approach and maybe You have the answer!

Another item on the agenda for July is our Annual Picnic, come on out and enjoy this once a year event, good food, good company and a great time !

Art Bailey

Officers and wished them all success in the coming year.

Shirley Vatter, ECRP LA Auxiliary, congratulated the Officers and members of the LA Auxiliary Unit **99** and wished them continued success

EC Regional President Phelps addressed the Assembly and praised Branch **99** for Historical excellence and encourage everyone to attend the upcoming convention.

Special Drawings:

Lifetime membership: N/A

One (1) year membership:

S/M J. Crosby

Results of drawings for Dinner

Certificates: **2**

Congratulations to all!

- Coming Events:

04 Jul- Independence Day and Annual Picnic

11 Jul- Branch Meeting at Branch 7PM

11 Jul- Auxiliary Meeting at Branch 7PM

22 Jul- National Parents Day

27 Jul- National Korean War Veteran's Armistice Day

08 Aug- Branch Meeting at Branch 7PM

08 Aug- Auxiliary Meeting at Branch 7PM

03 Sep- Labor Day

12 Sep- Branch Meeting at Branch 7PM

12 Sep- Auxiliary Meeting at Branch 7PM

21 Sep- 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 veterans 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

Our ladies have been very busy the last few months. We have made skirts for all our members.

We are making lap blankets to take to the East Coast regional convention to sell. Once we sell them we will in turn take that money to make more blankets for

our Veterans at the VA Hospital. .

We have a cookbook that will be published soon and we hope everyone will buy one for their spouse and a couple more to give as gifts. We had Installation of officers on **June 13th**. Our new officers are:

Pres. Joyce Meeker.

joycemeeker@cox.net

V-Pres. Mary Kenney

catlady1ofva@cox.net

Sect. Dorothy Smiley.

candlesamist@yahoo.com

Treas. Julie Wood.

mngw1812@verizon.net

We had a guest from Arizona. Our National Treasurer, **Bea Parco** and her traveling companion **Marion** who took some great pic. Also our National Vice-Pres **Christina Murray** who is from Branch **40** here in the area.

Shirley Vatter, our East Coast Regional Pres and her husband Tom came from Hollywood, MD so Shirley could do our installation. We were so grateful that all these people were able to attend and want to thank them for coming, hope to see you next month, which will be **11 July**.

Joyce Meeker

SHIPMATES' REPORT

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Monthly meetings are held on the Second Wednesday of the month

A note from Branch 99 Veterans Service Officer

Shipmates as your new VSO (Veteran Service Officer) I would like to thank all who made donations of new men's and women's underwear, they were greatly appreciated. We will continue to collect new underwear all sizes men and woman.

Hearing Aids: There are two ways you can get your ears checked. You may not even need hearing aids. Through the VA Medical Center Hampton, bring your last **DD214** to the front desk (Health Benefits) and apply for VA Medical Care. It takes about **5-6** weeks to receive a card then you may self-referral /or get appointment with a VA doctor. Another way is to have your **P.C.P** write a referral and then call the Portsmouth Medical Center. These hearing aids are at cost at Portsmouth Medical Center

Please shipmates apply for VA Disability. It may be worthwhile if not for you for your spouse.

If you have any questions please contact me at the branch home or by my email.

mgw1812@verizon.net.

Martin G Wood

News of Interest to Veterans

DOJ Settles on USERRA Case
The Department of Justice recently reached an out-of-court settlement with Syncom Space Services, LLC (**S3**) that resolves allegations that **S3** violated the employment rights of Louisiana Air National Guardsman, **Jason Cooper**, under the Uniformed Services Employment and

Reemployment Rights Act (**USERRA**). **USERRA** safeguards the rights of uniformed service members, including Reservists and National Guardsmen, to all benefits of employment following periods of absence due to military service obligations. The benefits of employment protected by **USERRA** include promotional opportunities.

Cooper worked as a Predictive Testing and Inspection (**PT&I**) Specialist for **S3** at Stennis Space Center in Hancock County, Mississippi. On June 13, 2016, he was **deployed** on active duty with the Air National Guard. During his deployment, Cooper applied for a vacant **PT&I** Shop Lead position. Although Cooper had the most **PT&I** experience of all applicants, **S3** failed to promote him to the position upon his return from deployment. As a result of the employer's failure to promote him to a position that he was qualified for, because of his military service, Cooper lost promotional income and benefits.

Under the terms of the settlement agreement, **S3** has **agreed** to pay Cooper for lost wages and to make his promotion effective as of the date on which he returned to work from active duty. The settlement agreement did not determine liability. Cooper initially filed a complaint with the Department of Labor's Veterans' Employment and Training Service, which investigated this matter and then referred it to the Justice Department after resolution attempts failed.

FRA supports the enforcement of **USERRA** and urges continued attention to veteran's employment issues to ensure that veterans returning home are not penalized for their military service.

Additional information about **USERRA** may be found on the

[Justice Department's website](#) or the [Labor Department's website](#).

VA Opens another Veterans Crisis Line

The Department of Veterans Affairs (**VA**) has opened its third Veterans Crisis Line (**VCL**) call center in Topeka, Kansas. The Topeka-based center was opened to support increased demand. **VA** has two other call centers located in Canandaigua, New York and Atlanta, Georgia. Since **VA** launched the **VCL** in **2007**, the crisis line responders have answered more than **3.5 million** calls. If you are in crisis, or know a veteran who is, call the Veterans Crisis Line for confidential support **24** hours a day, **7** days a week, **365** days a year. Call **800-273-8255** and press 1, or [chat online](#). You can also **text** to **838255**.

Desert Storm Memorial Site Picked: By a vote of 4-2, the U.S. Commission on Fine Arts finally agreed with the National Park Service and the National Capital Planning Commission that the new National Desert Storm Memorial will be located at the intersection of Constitution Avenue and 23rd Street, NW, Washington, D.C. This **FRA**-supported location is within eyeshot of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the yet-to-be-built Vietnam Veterans Education Center and the Lincoln Memorial. Joining the **FRA** in public comment were House Chairman Phil Roe, M.D. (R-Tenn.), and Senate Armed Services Subcommittee on Strategic Forces Ranking Member Joe Donnelly (D-Ind.). No one could have envisioned an American-led international coalition defeating the then-**fourth largest standing army** in the world in **six weeks** from the air and **100** hours on the ground. But we did, and we did so magnificently, all because of our equipment, our training and our leaders — all of whom honed

their teeth in Vietnam, where they learned how not to fight the next war.

DHA Executive Council Meeting: The **FRA** participated in the quarterly Defense Health Agency (**DHA**) **MSO/VSO** Executive Council meeting led by **DHA** Director Vice Adm. Raquel Bono. She was joined by Program Executive Officer for the Defense Healthcare Management Systems Stacy Cummings, Director of the Department of Defense/Veterans Affairs Collaboration Office Michael Odle, and research personnel from the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness. Also in attendance were the presidents of both Humana Military and Health Net Federal Services that currently hold the **TRICARE** contracts for the East and West Regions, respectively. The briefing included an overview and update of the **TRICARE** implementation in the East and West service regions, a discussion regarding copay calculations for **TRICARE** recipients, the priorities that the Joint and Health Executive Committees have for this upcoming year and an update regarding Military Health System Genesis. Also discussed was the upcoming change to the **TRICARE** Retiree Dental Plan, which is scheduled to end on **Dec. 31, 2018**. Eligible beneficiaries will instead be eligible to enroll in the **Federal Employee Dental and Vision Insurance Program**. [Learn more](#) about how this change may impact you.

Senate Defense Authorization Bill Would Increase TRICARE Fees: This week, the Senate passed its version of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019. Similar to the House version, it would provide a **2.6 percent pay raise** for service members and includes many **FRA** priorities, such as

expansion of Military OneSource eligibility to ease the military to civilian transition; preventing the Armed Forces Retirement Home from increasing fees of its residents; requiring **DOD** to conduct burn pits outreach; and authorizing programs to improve treatment for military sexual trauma. However, the bill would increase cost shares for certain **TRICARE** beneficiaries, which the **FRA** opposes. The provision would increase the enrollment fees up to **\$900** for certain beneficiaries. The Senate and House must now resolve the differences between their versions of the bill. Stay tuned for updates on this important bill.

Hearing on VA Staffing Shortages: The House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Health held a hearing to review the large number of staffing shortages within **VA**. Currently there are approximately **38,000** vacancies, most of which are related to direct care for veterans. The fields with the most critical shortages are psychiatry, primary care, nursing and human resources. Some of the major issues facing **VA** in recruiting and retention are non-competitive wages and low morale leading to high turnover. The **FRA** has advocated for many years to fill the vacancies at **VA** and offer fair market wages in order to attract and retain the best and the brightest to properly serve our veterans. The **FRA** thanks **Chairman Neal Dunn** and **Ranking Member Julia Brownley** for making this a priority..

Hearing on Military Health System Reform: The House Armed Services Subcommittee on Military Personnel held a hearing to discuss recent changes in the Military Health System (**MHS**) to address the opioid epidemic. **DHA** Director Vice Adm. Raquel Bono informed the

committee that the **MHS** has reduced opioid prescriptions by **15** percent and plans to expand non-pharmacologic therapies at military treatment facilities to reduce the reliance on high dose pain medication. Chairman Coffman expressed his desire for **DOD** to ensure service members are weaned off opioids instead of being taken off high dose medications without proper alternatives.

VA Releases Report on Veteran Suicides: **VA** released its annual report on veteran suicides on Monday. This data, which includes the number of suicides from 2005-2015, also includes the number of suicides from **DOD**. In 2016, **VA** released data that found the average number of veterans who die by suicide each day to be **20**. The average daily toll remains at **20** per day, but also includes the numbers of those who died by suicide while on active duty, as well as in the Guard or Reserve. The average number of those currently serving is reported to be **3.8** suicide deaths per day. The data shows that the number of veterans who are actively enrolled in **VA** is six veterans per day. The remaining **10** per day either have not used **VA** within a year, are not enrolled in **VA** or were still serving in uniform. Women veterans and older male veterans who never deployed are still at the highest risk for death by suicide.

DHA PTSD Care Webinar: The Defense Health Agency (**DHA**) will host the "PTSD Care and Support: Real Warriors Campaign Resources" webinar. This webinar will discuss post-traumatic stress disorder (**PTSD**) signs, symptoms and treatment options, as well as how to overcome barriers to seeking care. An overview of Real Warriors Campaign resources for service members, veterans, and families who are coping with **PTSD** will also be provided.

Following the presentation, a **Q&A** session with an expert from the Psychological Health Center of Excellence will take place and representatives from the Real Warriors Campaign will be available to answer any questions you may have.

MIA Update: The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency has announced identification and burial updates for American service members who had been missing in action from **Korea** and **WWII**. Returning home for burial with full military honors are:

Army Pfc. Felipe A. Champion, 19, of Brownsville, Texas, whose identification was previously announced, was buried on June 21 in his hometown. Champion was a member of Company K, 3rd Battalion, 38th Infantry Regiment, when he was reported missing in action following a battle with Chinese forces on **Feb. 12, 1951**, in an area known as the Central Corridor, South Korea.

Army Pfc. David Baker, 18, of Gary, Ind., whose identification was previously announced, was buried June 23 in Hobart, Ind. Baker was a member of Company I, 3rd Battalion, 24th Infantry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division. On **Nov. 25, 1950**, his unit was attacked by Chinese forces while positioned near Yongbyong, North Korea. The battalion suffered heavy casualties and Baker was listed as missing in action on Nov. 28, 1950. Later reports indicated that Baker was likely captured by the enemy.

Army Staff Sgt. Leo J. Husak, 21, of West, Texas, whose identification was previously announced, will be buried June 23 in his hometown. Husak was a member of Company A, 1st Battalion, 309th Infantry Reg-

iment, 78th Infantry Division, serving in the European theater. On **Jan. 30, 1945**, Husak was killed while out on patrol in Germany's Hürtgen Forest. The offensive in the forest was one of the longest battles the United States fought during World War II, lasting for nearly five months.

Army Air Forces Staff Sgt. Roy F. Davis, 26, of Peterborough, N.H., whose identification was previously announced, was buried June 23 in Ashby, Mass. Davis was a member of the 13th Bombardment Squadron, 3rd Bombardment Group. On **March 12, 1944**, he was one of two crew members aboard an A-20G Havoc bomber that failed to return to base in northeastern New Guinea after attacking enemy targets on the island. Attempts to locate the aircraft and crew during and after the war were unsuccessful and the remains were listed as non-recoverable on June 30, 1949.

hit by flak during the bomb run. As the B-17 fell out of formation, German fighters attacked and their plane crashed two kilometers southwest of the town of Barby.

Marine Pfc. John W. Mac Donald, 19, of Somerville, Mass., whose identification was previously announced, was buried June 22 in Bourne, Mass. Mac Donald was assigned to Company F, 2nd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division. Mac Donald's unit landed on the small island of **Betio** in the **Tarawa Atoll** on **Nov. 20, 1943**, against stiff Japanese resistance. Mac Donald was killed on the first day of the battle.

Navy Pharmacist's Mate 1st Class John H. Schoonover, 39, of Port Edwards, Wis., whose identification was previously announced, will be buried June 26 in Pensacola, Fla. Schoonover was stationed aboard the **USS Oklahoma**, which was moored at

Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, when the ship was attacked by Japanese aircraft on **Dec. 7, 1941**. The battleship sustained multiple torpedo hits, which caused it to quickly capsize. The attack on the ship resulted in the deaths of **429** crewmen.

Army Cpl. Morris Meshulam was a member of Battery D, 82nd Anti-Aircraft Artillery Battalion (Automatic Weapons,) 2nd Infantry Division. The Division suffered heavy losses to units of the Chinese People's Volunteer Forces between the towns of Kunu-ri and Sunchon, North Korea. Meshulam was reported missing in action on **Dec. 1, 1950**. Interment services are pending.



Installing Official S/M Martin and S/M President Kenney



New President **S/M Falu** and
S/M Martin



thanking her for her many
years of Volunteer Service to
Branch **99**



Officers of **LAFRA** Unit **99**
taking the Oath of Office

New Officers of **FRA** Branch
99 taking the Oath of Office



East Coast Regional President
Phelps addressing Branch **99** and
Unit **99**



Installing Official **S. Vatter** and
New President of **LAFRA** Unit
99 **Joyce Meeker**



Honorary **FRA** Member
Cathy Ciara receives an *Award*