

# 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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Volume 35 Issue No 3

May-Jun 2019



### The Prez Sez:

Shipmates:

We recently held a Ritual for a Past President (S/M Dan Cheche

this was my first and I really appreciate all of the help from all who were present. This is a reminder of our mortality and what it really means to be a Ship Mate. You have probably received a postcard or email from FRA requesting information to update your profile, this NOT a scam, the FRA has published a book providing information about ALL members, I encourage you all to provide this information so your Shipmates can see what you've been doing after your service. We continue to

face major problems in our Branch, the continuing decline in Membership if you have ideas, please share them.

## Gabriel Falu

From the Vice President



We have had three Shipmates pass away in the past month, our membership is aging rapidly and are succumbing to numerous health problems; I'd like to take some time to provide some advice that may help. I'm sure most of you have heard this before but, it's worth repeating. The keys to good health are

1. Keep active
2. Eat healthy food
3. Expand your social circle

Keeping active includes routine exercise even a daily walk helps (always check with your family doctor before starting any exercise program).

Eating healthy doesn't have to be expensive, probably the first thing is to minimize portion size, most restaurants today seem to have portions more appropriate for two people. Once again, your family doctor can provide information about what to eat (and what you should not be eating).

Expanding your social circle can reap many benefits, too often as we get older, we tend to withdraw from many activities and stay at home. I encourage you all to expand your social circle, volunteer your services where you can and get involved with your **FRA** Branch. Check with our Veterans Service Officer (S/M **Woods**) to see what is needed and what you can do to help. This will also help you!

## Art Bailey



### Chaplains Corner

Shipmates:

Mother's Day and Father's Day are approaching, I'd like to remind you all, if you are lucky enough to have them still with you, take some time to visit them, take them to dinner or to an event they like. If they've already passed away do something in their memory, this will provide a good example to your Children and Grandchildren.

And, don't forget your significant other, do something special for them; it will pay huge dividends. I wish all of you the best!

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:

I have completed the required training to be an accredited **VSO**

officer on February 28. I am fully accredited as of March 20,2019. I still have a few things on line to fill out, but we are on our way. I hope to serve the Branch and any Veteran well.

This month shipmate Bill Ashton sent us some information about the Veterans Consortium Pro Bono Program. If interested and need more information about their program contact phone # 202-628-8164 toll free 888-838-7727 or email [vetsprobono.org](mailto:vetsprobono.org) this program is for appeals and discharge upgrades.

Please remember that what the government gives, it can take away. Your vote counts, your voice is important through organizations like the **FRA**, Membership counts.

### Upcoming dates at the VA Medical Center:

Country Fair May 1, 2019  
Building 110 Front Lawn

July 4 Cookout July 4, 2019  
Building 148 Front Lawn

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](mailto:mgw1812@verizon.net)

**Martin G Wood**

*Woody*

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**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

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- **Membership**

A Warm Welcome to all new members of Branch 99. Come to the next Branch meeting on May 8th 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**

S/M PP Dan Cheche  
S/M Richard Bass  
S/M Gilbert Whitney

- **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.

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- **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!

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- **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 P/P Dan Cheche and Gilbert Whitney who have joined the Staff of the Supreme Commander.

**GOOD OF THE ORDER.**

The Branch Home Committee advised all that we will be having Quarterly Dinners in March, July, November and December, Menus and Themes were not available at Press Time. More to follow.

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 May- Yard Sale  
05 May- Cinco De Mayo  
08 May- Branch Meeting at Branch 7PM  
08 May- Auxiliary Meeting at Branch 7PM  
10 May- Ritual for S/M Whitney at Branch at 3PM  
12 May- Mother's Day  
27 May- Memorial Day celebrated

12 Jun-Branch meeting at Branch at 7PM  
12 Jun- Auxiliary Meeting at Branch at 7PPM  
14 Jun- Flag Day  
16 Jun- Father's Day

04 Jul- Annual Picnic  
10 Jul-Branch meeting at Branch at 7PM  
10 Jul- Auxiliary Meeting at Branch at 7PM

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

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**SHIPMATES' REPORT**

Published bi-monthly by Kempsville Branch **99**, Inc. Fleet Reserve Association. It is distributed free of charge to Branch **99** members, East Coast Regional Branch Secretaries, and the **FRA** National Executive Secretary. Articles may be reproduced with acknowledgement of the source.

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Monthly meetings are held on the Second Wednesday of the month

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## News from the LAFRA Unit 99



### President LAFRA-Unit 99

Unit **99** LAFRA will be hosting a fundraiser Yard Sale at Branch on May 4, 2019, from **8 AM** to **3 PM**. Space is available and we are asking for any donations to sell. We will be available at **7 AM** for drop-offs. Please contact Dorothy Smiley if you have any questions. Thank you in advance for your support.

LAFRA Unit **99** enjoyed the Americanism / Patriotism essay contest. We also graded and judged the **200** essays; it was nice to see the faces of the

winners. **LAFRA Unit 99** members attended the **U S Fleet Forces Sailor of the Year** Candidates and their significant other recognition event at the Virginia Beach **Social Club 5** March 2019. It was a beautiful event and awards were given to all nominees. In attendance were the National President, National Executive Director, Regional and Vice resident. LAFRA National and Regional President, LAFRA Regional President, Regional Secretary, **Unit 99** LAFRA Chaplin and Secretary. Hope to see you next month, which will be **8** May.

*Joyce Meeker*

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## News of Interest to Veterans

### Bill Introduced in Senate

Sens. Kirsten Gillibrand, (N.Y.), and Steve Daines (Mont.) have introduced the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act (S.1195).

The bill clarifies that service members who served **off the coast** of the **Republic of Vietnam** during the Vietnam conflict have a presumption for filing disability claims with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for ailments associated with exposure to the **Agent Orange herbicide**. The bill also extends the presumption of herbicide exposure for veterans who served on or near the **Korean DMZ** between **September 1, 1967** and **August 31, 1971**. The legislation provides health care, vocational training, rehabilitation and monetary allowance to a child who was born with **spina bifida** if at least one of the child's parents served in **Thailand** between **January 9, 1962** and **May 7, 1975**. The VA also must determine that at least one of the parents had been exposed to an **herbicide agent** during that period.

The Chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, Rep. Mark Takano (Calif.) introduced the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act (H.R.299), which is similar to the Senate bill. Last year's House bill had 335 co-sponsors and passed the House (382-0), only to stall in the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, and was tabled at the end of the session.

The **FRA** believes Congress should recognize these veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange herbicide and authorize presumptive status for **VA** disability claims associated with this exposure. Members are urged to contact their legislators to ask them to support these bills.

### Budget Bill Stalls on House Floor

The **FRA** is thankful that the administration's proposed budget provides **\$750** billion for Defense spending (\$34 billion more than the current budget). Thanks also goes to the House Budget Committee for voting to lift sequestration spending caps for two years. The House bill (H.R. 2021) would provide **\$733** billion for Defense spending in **FY2020**.

Unfortunately, differ-ent factions in the House could not agree on spending limits and there were not enough votes to pass the measure. The bill was intended to be an opening proposition from House Democrats in budget talks with the White House and Republican-led Senate about spending levels. The Inability of the House to pass a measure to lift sequestration spending caps could be a sign of gridlock in the legislative process. Without legislative changes, more sequestration cuts are scheduled for **FY2020** that begins **Oct. 1, 2019**, potentially placing our national security at risk.

Budget cuts mandated by the **Budget Control Act of 2011** (known as **sequestration**) pose a

threat to national security and will substantially impact member pay and benefits. These automatic cuts require that **50** percent of the cuts come from the **Defense budget**, even though Defense spending makes up only **16** percent of the entire federal budget. The **FRA** believes the **FY2020** Defense budget should provide adequate funding for "benefits and bullets."

**Protect Bankrupt Disabled Veterans from Losing Benefits**  
Sens. Tammy Baldwin (Wis.) and John Cornyn (Texas) have introduced the Honoring American Veterans in Extreme Need (**HAVEN-S.679**) bill to shield veterans' disability benefits from debt collectors when a veteran declares bankruptcy.

Under current law, when a disabled veteran declares bankruptcy debtors can seize their disability benefits because they are considered disposable income. Yet social security benefits are exempt from being included as disposable income. Disability benefits in any form are not taxable and therefore should not be considered disposable income. The legislative sponsors noted that it is unfair veterans may be forced to give up their disability benefits when declaring bankruptcy, while the general population receiving similar benefits from social security do not.

Sen. Baldwin believes this bill will help veterans with mental health issues by easing their financial burdens.

### **New Navy CNO and Vice CNO Nominated**

The current **Chief of Naval Operations Admiral John Richardson** is scheduled to step down from his position later this year. **Admiral Bill Moran** has been nominated by President

Trump to become the **32nd** Chief of Naval Operations (**CNO**), if confirmed by the Senate. Moran has been the vice chief of naval operations since May 2016. The **CNO** is the Navy's top admiral and is a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The **CNO** reports directly to the Secretary of the Navy.

**Vice Admiral Robert Burke** has been nominated to be promoted to a **four-star Admiral** and assigned as the **vice chief of naval operations**. If confirmed by the Senate, Burke would take over the Navy's number two job from Admiral Moran. Burke, a career submarine officer, is currently the Navy's Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Manpower, Personnel, Training and Education.

### **American Forces Travel Discounts**

Service members, veterans and their families can now receive a military discount if they book their travel through American Forces Travel, which is supported by Priceline. The Department of Defense teamed up with Priceline and created an online travel booking site exclusively for U.S. military members. American Forces Travel is a new Morale, Welfare and Recreation (**MWR**) program that came out of a joint service initiative, which combines the efforts of the five branches of service.

The following personnel can use the travel booking service:

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 enhancing the quality of life for the military community, American Forces Travel will help fund **MWR** programs with commissions made from each booking done online. American Forces Travel is a full-service company that offers hotel, flight, car rental and cruise deals. They also offer bundled or package deals.