

# ***THE MARINER***

2016 Spring Edition | Volume 59 · Issue 1

The Official Publication of the Naval Enlisted Reserve Association



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# CONTENTS

**2016 SPRING EDITION**

Volume 59 • Issue 1

# THE MARINER



A Design for Maintaining  
Maritime Superiority

14

16

20

- 4 President's Message
- 5 Defense Suicide Prevention Office
- 6 Executive Director's Message
- 7 Vice President's Message
- 8 NERA Executive Counselor
- 9 In Memoriam
- 10 Tips & Clips
- 12 Legislative Updates
- 14 NAVY News
- 16 Coastie Corner
- 17 Letters to NERA
- 20 Faces of NERA
- 24 Reading List
- 26 NERA Members
- 29 USAA/NERA College Scholarship Program
- 30 TAPS
- 31 NERA Benefactors

*Cover: NERA's Navy Reserve 100 Years Commemorative Coin, Photo Courtesy of Molly Purtill*

The Mariner, an official publication of the Naval Enlisted Reserve Association, is devoted to the interests and mutual benefit of its members. Regular Membership is open to all enlisted personnel of the Naval Reserve, Marine Corps Reserve, and Coast Guard Reserve; others may join as Associate Members. Annual dues in the amount of \$3.75 per member is set aside to defray the cost of publishing The Mariner. Single domestic subscription price is \$15 per year. Persons eligible for Regular Membership are not required to pay subscription rates. Articles, letters, and photos for The Mariner should be submitted to the Managing Editor via e-mail to: [marinereditor@nera.org](mailto:marinereditor@nera.org) or NERA Headquarters, Falls Church, VA. Credit will be given for materials used. Letters may be condensed for publication. Articles and letters appearing in The Mariner do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the National Executive Council of the Naval Enlisted Reserve Association or the Editor, nor are they to be interpreted as official policy of the United States Navy, United States Marine Corps, United States Coast Guard, or the Naval Enlisted Reserve Association. The Mariner (ISSN 0164-3029) is published quarterly by the Naval Enlisted Reserve Association, 6703 Farragut Avenue, Falls Church, VA 22042-2189. Postmaster: Send address change to The Mariner, 6703 Farragut Avenue, Falls Church, VA 22042-2189. For general questions, advertising or to learn more about NERA, e-mail: [members@nera.org](mailto:members@nera.org).



**Stephen Sandy**  
National President

## Shipmates,

As the snow falls here in the Northeast, spring seems so far away. Yet I know in a month's time, the daffodils and crocuses will start sprouting up. It is with this hopeful knowledge that spring will eventually come that has helped me get this through rough winter. As some of you may know, NERA has lost many friends. Among them Chief George Wardwell

in early January. He was such a dear friend to NERA, and we are at a loss to fill the shoes of this great and kind man. Then on February 1, as Geno Koelker (NERA's Past National President) was wrapping up a visit to DC, he was notified that his beloved wife Verna had passed away suddenly of an apparent heart attack at their home in Rockford, Illinois. Verna was Geno's rock standing beside him in sickness and in health. Rarely do you see a couple so in love after so many years of marriage and I found them truly inspirational. Please keep the Wardwell and Koelker families in your thoughts and prayers.

I apologize for this rather somber letter, but with all this loss, it does bring to mind the subject of depression and suicide. While depression can manifest itself at any time of year, the dark and dreary days of winter brings a gloom that can make it seem intolerable. While I'm not an expert on depression, I have been a victim of it. I have observed it in close family members and it can be as painful as a fractured leg or as crushing as someone sitting on your chest. In the past, we were told it was a weakness and to toughen up, but today we understand that it is not that simple. When we recognize the symptoms in our shipmates, family and friends, we must stop, reach out, and intervene. If it is you who is suffering, you must reach out for help NOW. Seek out a friend or family member you trust to

help you or call the Military Crisis line listed below. If it's a shipmate, family member or friend take them by the arm and seek guidance for them before it leads to harming themselves or taking their own life.

There is another aspect of suicide that we don't often discuss: those left behind. Those left behind constantly ask why did they do this? Why didn't I see it coming? What could I have done to stop it? The truth is we may never know the answer to these questions. We must remain ever vigilant and refrain from blaming ourselves or our shipmates. Sometimes our closest friend will not let us know their darkest thoughts. With all the sacrifices we ask of our military, I think it is important that they know there is free help. It is also important for their family members

**When we recognize the  
symptoms in our  
shipmates, family and  
friends, we must stop,  
reach out, and intervene.**

and friends to know what to look for and that there is help. According to the The Real Warriors Campaign, if you or someone you know is thinking about hurting or killing themselves, seeking access to pills, weapons or other means of harming themselves, talking or writing about death, dying

or suicide contact the Military Crisis Line immediately (1-800-273-8255). Also it is important to seek out professional help if you are experiencing any of these signs: unable to sleep or oversleeping, withdrawing from friends, family or society, increasing alcohol or drug use, acting recklessly or engaging in risky behavior, experiencing excessive rage, anger or desire for revenge, having feelings of anxiety, agitation or hopelessness, reliving past experiences, experiencing dramatic changes in mood, and feeling hopeless.

To have a friend is to be a friend, and NERA wants to help during these difficult times. Let people know that there is free help and give them the Military Crisis Line phone number. NERA's goal is zero military suicides moving forward.

— Steve

**With all the sacrifices we ask of our military,  
I think it is important that they know there is free help.**





# Military Suicides on the Rise

**S**uicide is a major public health concern among U.S. military members and unfortunately it appears to be on the rise. A report by the Pentagon's Defense Suicide Prevention Office found that the military saw an increase in suicides among active and reserve components, compared to the same period last year. During that third quarter of 2015, 72 suicides were among the active-duty components of the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines; 70 suicides among reserve components; and 38 among the Army and Air National Guard. The data indicates that all branches (with the exception of the Air Force Reserve) saw an increase in suicide numbers.



Even one suicide is one too many, and NERA wants to help spotlight this issue. The military tracks this information to help get mental health care at the unit level. Suicide can occur before, during, and after military deployment or service. For this reason, it is so important that mental health counselors are trained to identify risk at an early stage. It is also important for people to realize that no warrior or military family is alone. If you, a service member or veteran in your family or friend is considering hurting or killing him or herself, please know that there is free help.

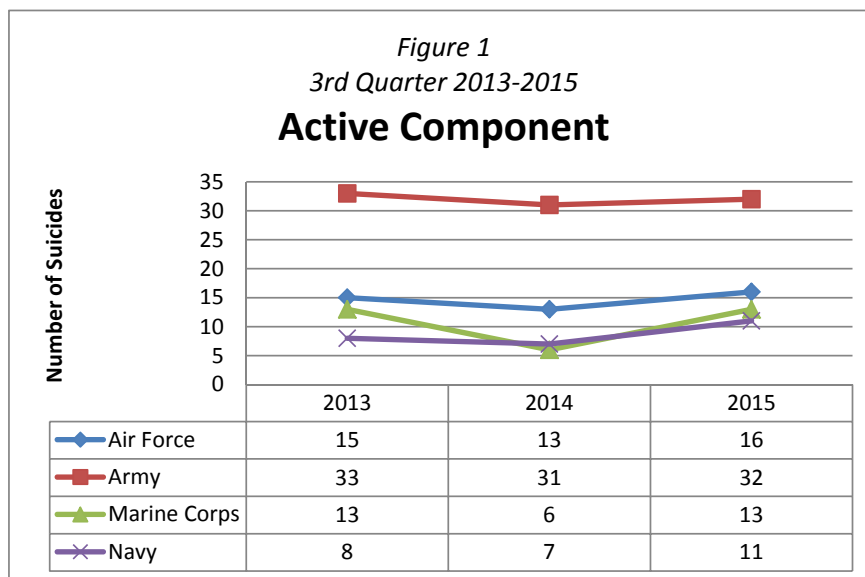
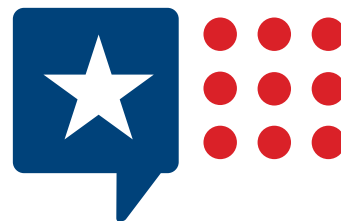


Image Courtesy of Department of Defense

## All military families can speak to a trained professional 24/7 for free by contacting:

- The Military Crisis Line (visit the Military Crisis Line Chat or call **800-273-TALK** FREE to talk with a crisis counselor)
- The DCoE Outreach Center (visit Real Warriors Live Chat at [www.realwarriors.net/livechat](http://www.realwarriors.net/livechat) or call **866-966-1020** FREE to talk with a health resource consultant)
- Military OneSource (call **800-342-9647** FREE for one-on-one counseling)
- Veterans Crisis Line (call **1-800-273-8255** FREE and **Press 1**, chat online at [www.veteranscrisisline.net](http://www.veteranscrisisline.net), or send a text message to **838255** to receive confidential support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.)

# Veterans Crisis Line



**1-800-273-8255**  
**PRESS 1**



**Mike Hughes**  
NERA  
Executive Director

One of the key responsibilities President Steve Sandy and I have at NERA is representing our association on The Military Coalition (TMC).

## Representing NERA

As of this writing, we are still recovering from the blizzard of 2016 that dumped over 30 inches of snow with high winds across the mid-Atlantic coastal and Nation's Capital area. I'll be heading to NERA headquarters with my shovels as I'll likely have to dig my way in from the half plowed street.

One of the key responsibilities President Steve Sandy and I have at NERA is representing our association on The Military Coalition (TMC). The TMC consists of 32 different military and veteran associations working together to support and defend benefits and compensation for our Nation's military and veteran members. These 32 associations represent over 5 million members which can be a powerful political influence when dealing with Congress on military and veterans issues. We attend regular monthly meetings of the full TMC as well as monthly meetings of the TMC Guard and Reserve (G&R) Sub-Committee, which deals with most of the issues of concern to NERA's members. Following are the top goals for 2016 of the G&R Sub-Committee that NERA fully supports:

**Goal No. 1** Health Care Reform: Evaluate DoD and other proposals to reform health care and Guard/reserve coverage for options to include these principles: a.) continuity of care, b.) affordability, c.) simplification and d.) access to all health care programs for all Reserve Component members.

**Goal No. 2** Financial Training: Ensure development and implementation of a robust financial education program for Guard/Reserve members who will be under the blended retirement system beginning in 2018 and urge Congress to review and resolve inequities resulting from Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) contributions and matching for Reservists and Guard members who train for points only.

**Goal No. 3** Veteran Status: Authorize "veteran" status for certain Reserve Component retirees.

**Goal No. 4** Guard & Reserve Readiness: Increase Guard and Reserve Operational Readiness by improving transition in counseling and behavioral health services and disability rating processing and strengthening reemployment, legal and financial protections (SCRA, forced arbitration, etc.) for Guard and Reserve members and by ensuring adequate personnel strengths and associated funding for Reserve components in order to meet national security strategy requirements.

In addition to our TMC broad goals, we still need help with more mundane goals. As always, donations for repairs and maintenance projects for our national headquarters in Falls Church, VA are needed and appreciated. The roof, soffits, gutters and downspouts, and front and rear steps need replacement. President Steve Sandy has informed us that a member has volunteered to do the work to replace the rear door this spring. My heartfelt thanks for that and rest assured that person will be recognized by NERA.

Jennifer Abbott, our Office Manager, is currently setting up our new and updated database and web site. NERA.org will have a brand new look and you will be able to do more NERA activities (renew membership dues, register for the conferences, read all the Mariners, buy coins, obtain NERA Chapter information etc.) more easily. As with all new computer update and revisions, there will likely be a few glitches and frustrating start-up issues. Please bear with us for a short time while we work through these issues.

If you have suggestions on issues you feel NERA should address email me at [neraexec@nera.org](mailto:neraexec@nera.org) or call me at 443-812-9591.



**Chuck Cox**  
NERA  
Vice President

### Dear Shipmates:

The time has come to sit up and take notice of the current situation regarding the military health benefits to which you will be entitled upon retirement. Those of us who have already served out our time and have come to that bridge of retirement, seem to have conflicting information based on the promises that we were given when we were recruited and initially enlisted.

My own recollection is that I was told I would have medical benefits for the rest of my life, following 20 years of service. I enlisted in the late 60's and internet

unfortunately the court ruled that these promises of free health care for life did not constitute a contract.

NERA realizes budgets are tight, but Congress must act in good faith to keep their promises. Through more recent years, DOD has promised two benefits to encourage someone to stay 20, 30 or 40 years: the immediate receipt of retirement pay and very low Tricare premiums for the member and spouse. Now Congress is trying to chip away at both these benefits. I doubt Congress realizes the sacrifices that went

**“The battle, sir, is not to the strong alone; it is to the vigilant, the active, the brave.” — Patrick Henry**

research has turned up stories from others (pardon the pun) in the same boat. Over the years, it seems the promise has been modified and we are no longer able to count on that information that our retirement years would be free from worry about our medical health benefits.

Senator Lindsey Graham (R-SC), who was a presidential candidate until he dropped out recently, prides himself on fighting for the veterans of military service. He stated however, “I don't believe anybody was promised free lifetime medical care. That is a popular myth”. He further stated, “I think we have an obligation to the retired force to be generous and to be compassionate to help recruiting and retention. But, you know there was never any contract with anybody that, for the rest of your life, you will get free medical care. That's not part of the deal and was never part of the deal.” In the past several veterans have taken their claims to court. They stated that recruiters promised them free medical care,

into receiving those benefits. I am hoping they recognize every unwanted move (dozen or more times), every deployment, every missed birthday or holiday, uprooting children from their favorite school, spouses left alone to raise children or difficulty in homeownership. With the knowledge of these sacrifices, NERA is requiring Congress to honor our vets by honoring their promises of benefits.

Ladies and gentlemen, a word of advice was given online by an anonymous vet who said: “Keep a healthy life style, brothers and sisters, as it will never get better as we die and fade away”. In other words, get informed, stay informed and get active, both in your lifestyle (for your own health's sake) and in your involvement with NERA....someone needs to see that our veterans are taken care of in their retirement years. It's the right thing to do and NERA is working it's hardest to achieve this goal.

— Chuck





**Debbie Fallon**  
NERA  
Executive Counselor

## Hello NERA Members,

We are about to begin another spring season and it brought to mind that over these past few months, we at NERA have been working hard to report updates on information we feel is pertinent to you, our members. However, a better approach

would be to ask you the question: "What would you like to hear from us?", especially from those members still on the drill decks. For many of us, it has been a long time since we had to report for muster and I know the way the Armed Forces does business is constantly evolving. It is because of these changes that certain situations might develop that need modifying or correcting. I would like to give drilling reservists the best possible benefits in their current job and for their future, so please let us know your thoughts.

As always, your Naval Enlisted Reserve Association is working with other veteran service organizations to monitor various bills that are before the House and Senate. One such bill of concern is H.R. 3016, Veterans Employment, Education, and Healthcare Improvement Act. Most of the bill positively affects Veterans, but the bill is paid for by changing service members' ability to transfer GI Bill education benefits to their family members. It also changes the point where they are able to utilize the benefit from six to ten years of service. And on the backside, the payback is decreased from four to two years, with an increase in the total obligation from ten to twelve years. This means that if passed, those planning to send their spouse or child to college with the GI bill after six years of service will have to wait an additional four more years, as well as add an additional two years of service commitment.

Below are a few of NERA's other efforts:

- "Veteran" status be allowed for Reservists who serve 20 or more years without qualifying active duty.
- Elimination of the Tricare Standard deductible for Reservists called to active duty for more than 30 but less than 180 days.
- Disability retirement for Reservists with more than 15 but less than 20 years of service.
- Early retirement credit for Reservists activated 90 days or retroactive to September 11, 2001. (Currently it is only back to 12/31/2008 or later.)
- Reduce the 30 types of orders for Reserves to 10 or less with maximum benefit to the Reservist.

And lastly, just a chapter reminder: if you have not submitted your NERA Chapter Officer Report, please complete it and fax it to my attention at (978) 521-4083. If you need a blank form mailed to you, please call 603-858-4144. We are in the process of updating our website, and I will let you know when the forms are available online. Thank you for your patience.

If you have any questions or suggestions, please let me know.

Sincerely,

*Debbie Fallon*

Deborah "Debbie" Fallon, YNC (ret)  
National Executive Counselor

**If you have additional questions, contact Debbie Fallon at 603-858-4144 or [NC@nera.org](mailto:NC@nera.org).**

Visit our newly redesigned website!  
**[www.nera.org](http://www.nera.org)**



## IN MEMORIAM



# RMC George A. Wardwell, RMC, USN (ret.)

**June 1, 1942 – January 6, 2016**

RMC Wardwell passed into eternal life on January 6, 2016 after suffering a heart failure. George is survived by his wife Edna, sister Diana (Wardwell) James; children Michael Wardwell and Shannon Fuentes; step-children Jason Roach, George Roach, and Claudia McPherson and eight grandchildren: Tiphany and Myranda Fuentes; Joshua, Julia and Ryan Simmons; and Sean McPherson, Linsay Roach and Alysian McGowan-Roach.

Chief Wardwell served 4 years of active duty service in the Navy and 28 years in the Navy Reserves. He joined NERA in 1986 and was a life member. In 2009, George received NERA's highest honor, the 1776 Award, for his long and dedicated service to NERA and his shipmates. He served as NERA's Senior Enlisted Liaison to the Senior Enlisted Academy until his passing and created and regularly presented a NERA award to honor students at the Academy. George held numerous NERA offices during his career, including: Edmund Couto Chapter President and Secretary, NERA National Conference Director, RI State Membership Director and regularly participated with and supported the Sea Cadets. He was a dedicated recruiter of members to NERA and always willing to step up and help when asked for any assistance from NERA headquarters.

During his Navy career Chief Wardwell was awarded: the Navy Achievement Medal; Good Conduct Medal; Naval

Reserve Meritorious Service Medal; National Defense Service Medal, Navy Expeditionary Medal w/ 3 stars, Vietnam Service Medal; Armed Forces Reserve Medal (Gold Hourglass); and Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal. He was also authorized to wear the Navy "E" ribbon, Meritorious Unit Commendation, Naval Reserve Sea Service Ribbon and the Navy and Marine Corps Overseas Service Ribbon.

George was also exceptionally involved in other organizations and community services. He was a member of and served in several national and local offices for: Navy League, Veterans of Foreign Wars, The Retired Enlisted Association, Fleet Reserve Association, American Legion, Association of United States Army, Navy Surface Association, U.S. Navy Radiomen Association, Naval Order of the United States Treasurer, Fort Adams Trust Restoration Project in Newport, RI, Aquidneck Land Trust and the Council for International Visitors Newport, RI.

In his civilian occupation Chief Wardwell had a 40 year career in the U.S. Civil Service as a Telecommunication Specialist at the Naval Communications Station, Newport, RI where he received numerous awards

We offer our sincere condolences to George's wife Edna and to all of his family. He was truly a good man and a true asset to NERA. He will be sorely missed.

## Help NERA Go Paperless

The electronic version of the *Mariner* is sent via email or instantly available for download at [nera.org](http://nera.org). If you want to go paperless, just email [jabbott@nera.org](mailto:jabbott@nera.org) and say you want the electronic version of the *Mariner*.

If you would like to help defray the costs of the *Mariner* and its postage, please feel free to donate to NERA. (Even \$15 can help someone keep their printed *Mariner*.)

**Go paperless — email [jabbott@nera.org](mailto:jabbott@nera.org)**





**Joanne Elliott**  
National Treasurer

Whether speaking with fellow VFW, American Legion or NERA members, the universal question seems to be “How to reach out to our returning veterans and how do we encourage them to join our respective organizations?” Although it is still a possibility to communicate with our troops on bases, if we obtain permission from the Base CO, we might want to consider trying some other options. Last

month while speaking with a reservist, who had recently returned, I was made aware (again) that while our individual augmentees (IAs) are deployed, some of their spouses don’t have anyone to reach out to while they are gone. I think we, as members of NERA, need to step up to the plate and reach out to the families of deployed military members. It means so much to them to know that there is someone that they can call if they have questions.

Additionally, take the time to reach out to them at least once a month to make sure they are okay. In my area, several churches post names of all those who are currently serving. You might want to consider contacting your church’s pastor and reaching out to the families that way. In addition to sending care packages to them, you can ensure that their families will have someone to contact if needed.

### Form 1095

I recently received an inquiry about Form 1095. Under the Affordable Care Act, everyone is required to have medical insurance. For tax year 2015, you will receive either a Form 1095-A, 1095-B or a 1095-C in the mail from your insurance providers. You need to submit them to your tax preparer with your income tax information to prove that you have medical insurance. These will also assist the tax preparer when determining if you are entitled to a tax credit for premiums paid. After you turn 65, you will receive one from Social Security for Medicare and one from DFAS for Tricare for Life. If you are over 60 or have Tricare Prime, Standard, etc. you will also get a form 1095B. You can also download the form from the DFAS website.

---

## Survivor’s Pension

Managing Agency Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) <http://benefits.va.gov/benefits/Subscribe>

### Program Description

Survivors Pension is a tax-free benefit payable by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to a low-income, un-remarried surviving spouse and unmarried dependent child(ren) of a deceased wartime Veteran.

### General Program Requirements

To qualify for this benefit, you must be the surviving spouse or child(ren) of a deceased wartime Veteran. Children may be eligible if they are

- under the age of 18,
- between the ages of 18 and 23 and enrolled in a VA-approved educational/training institution, or
- permanently incapable of self-support prior to the age of 18.

### Wartime Service Requirements

World War I	World War II	Korea	Vietnam	Gulf War
04/06/1917 to 07/01/1921	12/07/1941 to 12/31/1946	06/27/1950 to 01/31/1955	02/28/1961 to 05/07/1975 <i>*Between 02/28/1961 to 08/04/1964 had to have served in country Vietnam</i>	08/02/1990 through a date to be prescribed by Presidential proclamation or law



Income and net worth limits apply. Higher income limits may apply if the surviving spouse is severely disabled or has custody of the Veteran's dependent children. In addition, unreimbursed medical expenses may help to reduce the survivor's countable income.

### Your Next Steps

The following information will lead you to the next steps to apply for this benefit.

### Application Process

To complete an application, use VA Form 21-534 or VA Form 21-534EZ, "Application for Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC), Death Pension, and/or Accrued Benefits."

For more specific information, download the Fact Sheets (<http://www.benefits.va.gov/BENEFITS/factsheets.asp>).

### Program Contact Information

If you have questions:

- Visit the Inquiry Routing & Information System (IRIS) website to search Frequently Asked Questions or ask a question on-line.
- Call 1-800-827-1000
- Call 1-800-829-4833, if you are hearing impaired

To apply for additional Veterans' benefits and view your benefit status, open an eBenefits Premium account. eBenefits is a one-stop source for information on Department of Defense (DoD) and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits and services. With a free Premium level eBenefits account, Veterans and Servicemembers can conduct self-service transactions such as checking claim status information, GI Bill enrollment, and obtaining copies of civil service preference letters, Form DD214, and other personal information. For further information and to register for a free Premium level account, visit the eBenefits website.

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## Educational Benefits from the VA

(Reprinted from <http://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/25444/the-post-911-gi-bill-it-can-change-your-life/>)

Earning a college degree seems like an expensive proposition. But for today's Veterans, that shouldn't be seen as an unsurmountable hurdle. Especially since, according to a Pew Research Center report on higher education, a college diploma is more valuable than ever. Among the findings:

- A college education is worth more today: There's a wider earnings gap between college-educated and less-educated millennials compared with previous generations.
- College benefits go beyond earnings: In addition to earning more, college-educated millennials also have lower unemployment and poverty rates than their less-educated peers.
- College grads are more satisfied with their jobs: College-educated millennials are more likely to see themselves on a career path, rather than just working at a job to get them by.

Yet, I know what you're thinking...what about the biggest issue facing all students on campus? Yes, the dreaded tuition bill. We've all read about soaring tuition rates — and you

don't want to be in debt before you even crack a textbook.

But for our nation's newest generation of Veterans, there's good news: Your service entitles you to reap all of the benefits of the Post-9/11 GI Bill. The GI Bill will cover the full cost of an undergraduate education at any public university or college — and many private schools — in the country.

Besides paying 100% of your tuition and fees, the Post-9/11 GI Bill offers additional benefits for Veterans pursuing an education, including:

- Monthly housing allowance
- Up to \$1,000 a year for books and supplies
- A one-time relocation allowance
- The option to transfer benefits to family members

To get an easy-to-digest overview of all the Post-9/11 GI Bill offers, visit [newgibill.org](http://newgibill.org), a website set up by the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America. And before you pick a major, consider how you can use your field of study to cultivate a career supporting your fellow Veterans. Now, if you're ready to begin a career among Veterans serving Veterans, please Join VA.



Credit: Architect of the Capitol



# LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

## Spring Mariner 2016

*By Michael P. Hughes, OSC, USNR (ret.)*

As always, NERA continues to follow numerous legislative proposals in Congress that concern our members. Here are the highlights of the current legislative initiatives NERA is tracking:

### REAL ID ACT of 2005

This act required states to meet minimum federal security require-

ments for state-issued driver's licenses and other forms of identification to access certain government facilities and services, including military bases and airline passenger screening by a deadline of Jan. 10, 2016. 23 states are in full compliance and all but 5 of the others have requested and received waivers for an extension of the deadline. The states of Illinois, Missouri, Minnesota, New Mexico and Washington drivers' licenses are non-compliant and don't have extensions. Military bases have begun to refuse to accept these licenses as ID for visitor access and the Department of Homeland Security has granted airline passengers a waiver to continue to use their non-compliant ID's for the time being. If a person is accompanied by a DoD ID card holder they will be granted access on military bases. The VA ID cards are non-compliant.

### Agent Orange Exposure/Blue Water Navy

We continue to follow this current legislation in both the House and Senate. This was very well covered in the previous Winter 2015 issue of the Mariner.

### Veteran Status

The issue of giving the title of "veteran" to certain reservists seems to be close to resolution. Currently reservists who serve 20 or more years, but have not served at least 180 days of active duty are not considered veterans by law. Legislation has now passed both the House and Senate giving reservists who have served 20 or more years under honorable conditions and qualified for retirement to be called veterans, with no additional benefits accorded as a result. There are differences between the bills and it is still awaiting a conference committee to iron out the differences.

### Military Health Care

Both the Senate and House have started scheduling hearings on the entire health care programs for military members and their families, as of this writing. NERA will follow these hearings, along with our partners of The Military Coalition (TMC), and advocate for our members and report on their progress.

### Compensation and Benefits

- Military base pay was increased 1.3% this year, the third year in a row that a military pay increase is below that in the civilian wage growth.
- Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) rose 3.4% on Jan. 1, but recipients are required to pay increased portions of their housing costs per the NDAA for 2016, 2% this year and 1% a year for the next 3 years for a total of 5%.
- Basic Allowance for Subsistence (BAS) rose minimally this year, 25 cents/month for officers and 37 cents/month for enlisted. It is tied to the Department of Agriculture's food cost index which was almost flat in 2015.
- TRICARE Pharmacy Co-Pay Increases—
  - TRICARE Network pharmacy co-pays rose from \$8 to \$10 for generics and from \$20 to \$24 for 30 day brand names.
  - Non-formulary co-pays are up from \$46 to \$49.
  - 90 day brand name by mail up from \$16 to \$20.
  - 90 day generics by mail and those obtained at a military pharmacy remain at no cost.

### FACT Act

The Furthering Asbestos Claim Transparency Act (FACT Act) has passed the House and is now being considered in the Senate. NERA and many of our partner military and veteran organizations are strongly opposed to this legislation and have been writing and visiting representatives and senators in opposition to it. This act will make it harder for Americans who are sick and dying from

asbestos caused diseases and illness to obtain compensation. Almost one-third of all victims of mesothelioma, an incurable cancer caused by asbestos exposure, are veterans. The bill requires these veterans and others to publicly disclose personal highly sensitive information such as health records and the last four digits of their Social Security number. It requires the trusts set up to compensate these victims to publish this data on the internet on a publicly accessible database.

### VA News

VA Secretary Bob McDonald has asked Congress for legislation to simplify and shorten the disability claims appeals process. He stated that the system is decades old and the layering of law and policy over time has

resulted in an antiquated system that no longer serves the veterans well. Appeals are currently averaging 3 years to adjudicate and the Secretary said they should average less than a year. VA has significantly reduced the disability claims backlog, defined as cases pending for over 125 days, from over 612,000 three years ago to less than 80,000, although they missed their goal of a zero backlog by the end of 2015. During the same time the appeals cases have risen by more than 30%, to over 440,000 cases. The percent of appeals compared to the number of claims has remained fairly constant, but the number of claims has risen by a higher number. NERA supports the Secretary's initiative and believes that the backlogs of both claims and appeals need to be reduced to better serve our disabled veterans.

## NERA's NAVY Reserve 100 Years Commemorative Coin

The US Navy Reserve has been ready to answer our nation's call for 100 years. The mission of the Navy Reserve is to deliver operational capability and strategic depth to the Navy, Marine Corps, and Joint Forces. On March 3, 2015 the US Navy Reserve celebrated its centennial anniversary and NERA wanted to commemorate this special occasion with these coins.

If you would like to purchase a coin for \$10.00 (\$2.00 shipping), see below. (Discounts for orders of 10 or more).

### Choose one of these payment options:

- 1 Send a check to NERA**, 6703 Farragut Ave, Falls Church, VA 22042 (Write Coin in memo)
- 2 Pay by Credit Card** by calling NERA at (800)-776-9020.
- 3 Pay online at [nera.org](http://nera.org)**. Click Giving and Support, and click Products.







NAVY NEWS

# A Design for Maintaining Maritime Superiority



Version 1.0  
January 2016





# CNO Releases 'A Design for Maintaining Maritime Superiority'

*From Chief of Naval Operations Public Affairs*

WASHINGTON (NNS) — Chief of Naval Operations Adm. John Richardson released 'A Design for Maintaining Maritime Superiority,' Jan. 5, a document that addresses how the Navy will adapt to changes in the security environment and continue to fulfill its mission.

The term 'design' refers to the document's built-in flexibility, recognizing the rapid rate of change occurring in both technology and the maritime domain.

"This guidance frames the problem and a way forward, while acknowledging that there is inherent and

fundamental uncertainty in both the problem definition and the proposed solution," said Richardson.

"As we move forward, we'll respect that we won't get it all right, and so we'll monitor and assess ourselves and our surroundings as we go. We'll learn and adapt, always getting better, striving to the limits of performance."

The CNO's design reaffirms the Navy's mission, describes the strategic environment and identifies four lines of effort, each with corresponding objectives to guide the actions of the Navy and its leaders.

## The four lines of effort are the following:

- Strengthen Naval Power at and from Sea
- Achieve High Velocity Learning at Every Level
- Strengthen our Navy Team for the Future
- Expand and Strengthen our Network of Partners

The document also details four 'Core Attributes' that serve as guiding criteria for command decisions in decentralized operations: Integrity, Accountability, Initiative, and Toughness.

**INTEGRITY:** Our behaviors as individuals and as an organization align with our values as a profession. We actively strengthen each other's resolve to act consistently with our values. As individuals, as teams, and as a Navy, our conduct must always be upright and honorable both in public and when nobody's looking.

**ACCOUNTABILITY:** We are a mission-focused force. We achieve and maintain high standards. Our actions support our strategy. We clearly define the problem we're trying to solve and the proposed outcomes. In execution, we honestly assess our progress and adjust as required — we are our own toughest critic.

**INITIATIVE:** On their own, everybody strives to be the best they can be — we give 100% when on the job. Our leaders take ownership and act to the limit of their authorities. We foster a questioning attitude and look at new ideas with an open mind. Our most junior teammate may have the best idea; we must be open to capturing that idea.

**TOUGHNESS:** We can take a hit and keep going, tapping all sources of strength and resilience: rigorous training for operations and combat, the fighting spirit of our people, and the steadfast support of our families. We don't give up the ship.

To read *A Design for Maintaining Maritime Superiority* go here:  
[http://www.navy.mil/cno/docs/cno\\_stg.pdf](http://www.navy.mil/cno/docs/cno_stg.pdf).



# Sector Lake Michigan Enforcement Team Has Busy Season

*By Lt. Anthony Cooling*

Every year when hot weather hits Wisconsin, thousands of boaters take to the waters of Lake Michigan for relief and recreation. The Reserve Enforcement Branch at Sector Lake Michigan did their part this past season to keep them safe. Spearheading the effort was seasoned Boarding Officer MEC Joel Borland. MEC Borland and his five man team conducted several recreational boating safety surge operations at Station Two Rivers and AUXOP Green Bay.

They also joined with the active duty to participate in OPERATION LAST CALL at Station Kenosha, logging approximately 45 hours underway the Reserve team boarded 55 vessels, issued 14 violations for faulty safety equipment, and turned over one suspect in possession of illegal drugs to local police. Lt. Dustin Ottman, the group's supervisor noted, "The active duty was thankful for our help. Many of the violations came from larger recreational boats that require putting (CG) people on board. The stations usually don't have enough qualified Boarding Team Members on duty at any one time to give those types of vessels a full examination. I'm glad we could help change that."

The key part of this effort was MEC Borland's initiative in getting his team to coordinate their schedules months in advance, efficiently making the most of their two weeks of summer training, and several blocks of weekend drill periods over the busiest boating times, like Labor Day weekend. The law enforcement



crew at Sector Lake Michigan gave up the opportunity for enjoying a backyard barbeque by arranging their duty during peak boating traffic, but it was a chance to demonstrate their law enforcement proficiency and the higher calling of service to country.





**NERA loves feedback. Keep them coming  
by emailing us at [members@nera.org](mailto:members@nera.org).**



## Letters to NERA

**NERA received correspondence from SFC Richard Kudrak AR-RET (Formerly RMC USNR) regarding the changes coming to TRICARE Pharmacy benefits. He states in his letter:**

"Page 6 of the Fall Edition of The Mariner (Changes Coming to TRICARE Pharmacy Benefit) contained this notice: *'Starting October 1, 2015, a new law requires all TRICARE beneficiaries, except active duty service members, to get select brand name maintenance drugs through either TRICARE Pharmacy Home Delivery or from a military pharmacy.'* I know this statement to be incorrect.

The issue, as you now understand, is I have Medicare Parts A and B as the primary payer for my hospital and doctor medical expenses. I also have Medicare Part D as the primary payer for my prescription drug expenses.

**From Managing Editor Joanne Elliott:**

The statement in and of itself is not incorrect. It pertains to "TRICARE beneficiaries except active duty." This statement refers to those already utilizing TRICARE as their Pharmacy. It means that they can no longer go to a CVS, RiteAid, etc for certain brand name maintenance drugs. Before you had a choice, now you have only two ways to get them. However as a retiree, if over 65, you get TRICARE FOR LIFE for free which covers

In all instances TRICARE is a secondary payer. In my situation I am required to follow the Medicare rules, regulations, and, procedures regarding all my medic health issues. Medicare will invoice TRICARE as a secondary payer. TRICARE will not invoice Medicare.

I understand the intent of the Changes Coming to TRICARE Pharmacy Benefit article was to educate those TRICARE beneficiaries who DO NOT have a primary payer. However, this is not what the article stated. Hence I saw a need for clarification"

pharmaceuticals. If you have Medicare, you pay separately for Part D.

Thank you for the clarification and NERA recommends if you have any questions regarding pharmacy benefits, please call Express Scripts at 877-363-1304 or visit [www.tricare.mil/RxNewRules](http://www.tricare.mil/RxNewRules).

**Please note the following email is from FORCM (AW/SW) CJ Mitchell, Force Master Chief of the Navy Reserve. It is filled with useful information, so please pass it along to those it will benefit.**

Happy New Year from Washington DC! I am very excited about 2016. I expect a busy year.

For the past couple of years, I have tried to send an update email before monthly Drill Weekends start. The intent of these emails is to update you on Navy Reserve initiatives but also to provide you a tool to assist in your leadership of Sailors. I want you to share this information with your Sailors, Officers included (I share with CNR). As I say often, please communicate this information in AOR liberally - to EVERYONE. Use all of your resources (e.g. TNR) to inform your Sailors to help make us the best

Navy Reserve we can be.

2016 brings us the CNO's A Design for Maintaining Maritime Superiority. Consider this a replacement to the Sailing Directions. This CNO guidance is important reading for every Sailor. Please pay particular attention to the CORE ATTRIBUTES of our professional identity: INTEGRITY, ACCOUNTABILITY, INITIATIVE and TOUGHNESS. We'll reference this throughout the year. Stay tuned. (Visit: [http://www.navy.mil/cno/docs/cno\\_stg.pdf](http://www.navy.mil/cno/docs/cno_stg.pdf))

*continued on page 18*



## LETTERS TO NERA, continued from page 17

\*\* The SECB has been completed and we are starting the FY17 Selection Board and Advancement Season. Work with your PSDs and Admin Offices to ensure your OMPF is up-to-date. If you or your Sailors do NOT send a letter to the board/package to these boards, you are possibly hurting your chances. Check for evaluation gaps via BOL and FIX THEM! Advancement and Selection Board preparation for Sailors is a Senior Enlisted Leadership is imperative. Make this a priority!

\*\* Right now - The SEA Reserve Course is EXCLUSIVELY for SELRES and starting this year, new SCPOs are REQUIRED to attend. Effective immediately, ALL MCPOs and SCPOs are APPROVED to attend the SEA. All you have to do is register with your desired class via email to this office [PSC Jessica Burkhart - jessica.burkhart@navy.mil]. For class dates and info: <https://www.usnwc.edu/Departments---Colleges/Senior-Enlisted-Academy.aspx>

ALL Chief Petty Officers will be approved with CMC/Command Senior Chief/SEL endorsement. I cannot make this easier. I have ~200 seats per year. Let's fill them up!

\*\* CNR wants to recognize your employer. This June CNR will host employers in Norfolk, VA, to recognize them for supporting the Reserve Sailors. The Navy Reserve Employer Recognition Event (NERE) will highlight and showcase some of the mission areas and capabilities of the Navy Reserve. This very popular event educates and shows appreciation to YOUR employer. There is still time to nominate your employer - we need more nominees. Please see below for the NERE GovDelivery message for details.

\*\* HYT - Exception to Policy. Previous emails and TNR have provided a clarification of the HYT policy. To be clear as possible: if you are in the VTU or eligible for the VTU and are ACTIVELY participating and contributing, then you can request an exception to policy (ETP) to remain in the VTU. For example, if you are a SCPO and want to go beyond 26 years or even beyond 30 years: you can. Even if you are a MCPO and want to go beyond 30 years in the VTU: you can. See your NC/CCC and TNR for details.

\*\* Next week, I will return to Chattanooga with CNR and others. Some of you have asked if and how you could

show support to the family of LS2 Randall Smith. The information below is provided for your information. There is no obligation or expectation of any action. There is a fund set up at Capital Bank for Angie Smith and her three young daughters.



Name of the Fund: For the Benefit of the Family of Randall Smith

Where: Capital Bank

[<http://www.capitalbank-ga.com/custom/fi/capitalbank-fortoglethorpega/branch/branches-fortoglethorpe.jpg>]

Fort Oglethorpe  
625 Battlefield Parkway  
Fort Oglethorpe, GA 30742

From Reserve instructors at SEA, to SELRES getting ready to support RIMPAC16, to mobilized Sailors in Iraq, Djibouti, and other places, to Sailors on the USS PONCE and ISA Air Base in Bahrain, to IDFOR Sailors on watch floors at this very moment, to Reserve HMs in support Marines in Mexico, to VR detachments all over the globe, to SELRES on duty executing HVU mission and much, much more, I continue to be proud of YOUR contributions to our Navy. Thank you for your leadership. It is going to a busy year: ARE YOU READY?

v/r force

FORCM (AW/SW) CJ Mitchell  
Force Master Chief of the Navy Reserve  
2000 Navy Pentagon Room 4E426  
Washington, DC 20350  
Email: [clarence.mitchell1@navy.mil](mailto:clarence.mitchell1@navy.mil)  
Mobile: 571-379-0954  
Office: 703-695-3976  
DSN: 225-3976

Date: Mon, 4 Jan 2016 13:27:32 -0500

Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Nominate Your Employer for the 2016 Chief of Navy Reserve Navy Employer Recognition Event June 24th!

## SUBJ/CHIEF OF NAVY RESERVE EMPLOYER RECOGNITION EVENT — JUNE 24, 2016//

1. Nominate your outstanding employer to spend the day at the Navy's Fleet headquarters in Norfolk, VA for an exciting and informative session hosted by the Chief of Navy Reserve; Commander, Navy Reserve Forces Command; and the Virginia Committee of Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR).
2. This high visibility, all day event will include briefings on current Navy operations, tours of Navy aircraft, ships and other hardware units. Transportation will be provided throughout the day's activities. Lunch will be provided and the day will conclude with an evening reception at the Pennsylvania House on historic Admiral's row onboard Naval Station Norfolk with the Chief of Navy Reserve and Commander, Navy Reserve Forces Command, as well as other Navy Flag Officers.
3. This event is designed to recognize executive leadership (Owner, President, CEO, COO, VP, etc.) of small, medium, and large sized companies and Selected Reserve (SELRES) personnel who are self-employed individual business owners. An excellent employer candidate should have all or some of the following attributes:
  - a. Values SELRES employees and is highly supportive of their service, even when SELRES are called on short notice orders.
  - b. Company leadership promotes a culture of pride and recognition of Reserve service and gets personally involved.
  - c. Maintains contact with the SELRES and their family members if he/she is on duty for an extended period of time.
4. Travel, lodging, and food costs, with the exception of event activities, are the responsibility of the attendee.
5. E-mail nominations must include: Name of company, name and position of employer, mailing address of employer (for mailing of official invitation), e-mail address of employer (or his/her administrative assistant), number of SELRES/GUARD members employed by the company (used to ensure we have equal representation of small, medium and large companies), your name and contact information and a brief description on why your employer should be selected to attend this recognition event.
6. Nominations are due by 30 January 2016; letters of invitation will be mailed to nominees in March 2016.
7. Send nominations to the Chief of Navy Reserve "NERE" mailbox at: [ocnr.nere.fct@navy.mil](mailto:ocnr.nere.fct@navy.mil)
8. For more information of the day's events, see the 2014 NERE video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XoNyLRjKQqQ>
9. Point of contact is CDR Tom Dixon, comm: (703) 614-7072, [thomas.e.dixon@navy.mil](mailto:thomas.e.dixon@navy.mil)

## Join NERA and Advance Your Career



Join or renew online at [nera.org](http://nera.org)



# Gold Country Chapter 10th Annual Children's Christmas Event

*By Norma von Dohren*

*Photographs by Howard George*

Due to the heightened security concerns of the NOSC/RESCENs in Sacramento where we usually held our annual "Military Children Christmas Event," we could not find a place to hold our 10th annual Christmas event. The Officers of the Gold Country Chapter were about ready to cancel when Norma thought of another idea — to hold a smaller version of what we used to do. She approached AETCM Travis Cholewa of the Coast Guard AIR STATION SACRAMENTO, (under the command of CAPT D.E. Nash), and discussed the possibility of having a NERA sponsored Children's Christmas event co-hosted by the Coast Guards at their location.



Thanks to AETCM Cholewa, the Air Station's Command Master Chief, and his people, Our December 19, 2015 Children's Christmas turned out to be a very beautiful event! The support we received from the Officers, Chiefs, other Enlisted Personnel, and spouses was way beyond expectations. They did all the set-ups, decorations, as well as providing the fire truck to deliver "Santa" to the hangar where the party was to be held. They even had crafts for the children to do while waiting for "Santa."

There are other reasons for the success of events that Gold Country sponsors: it is blessed with officers and helpers (Norma, Bobby Aglubat, Ramon Nazareno, Howard George, Lynn Johnson, and "Santa" ) who are always willing to communicate with each other; and are very passionate about their job.

- Fred Schoppet, our "Santa, did his job with the same energy, enthusiasm and personal attention with the very last child as he does the first child." Every year for the past 10 years, he has traveled 500 miles, round trip, to attend these events.
- Howard George, our Chapter Public Affairs Officers, and professional photographer, has always been there to capture the moments.
- It is almost impossible to sponsor an event without Lynn Johnson, our fundraiser, Special Events Coordinator, "Face Painter," and "Mrs. Santa," who has been helping us since "Desert Storm."
- Bobby Aglubat and Ramon Nazareno who always serve as the "jacks of all trade" and did whatever tasks nobody had time to do.

**A big thank you to everyone who helped pull off this wonderful event!**









# Navy Unites Again with the Local Community to Bring Joy to a Family

*Pictures courtesy of Fort Jackson LCDR Ben Stickney, December 2015*

Once again, Il Giorgione's Pizzeria on Devine Street opened its doors to the World Famous Naval Operational Support Center and the Naval Enlisted Reserve Association in Columbia, South Carolina on Saturday, December 12, 2015. With the help of the local community and part of the Brad Herlong Adopt-A-Family project, a family's Christmas was made much brighter for the twenty-second year.

**Helping for the event:** First Citizen's Bank on Rosewood Drive, Correctional Officers from the Alvin Glenn Detention Center, Navy Staff from Task Force Marshall at Camp McCrady, Dr. Greg Millwood at Cayce Family Dentistry, Dr. and Mrs. Jim Knight and Kay Kinder, CPO Mess, NOSC, NOSC Columbia, AvaHoagland, YN2 Brenda Harrison, Darnell Dobson

"I want to thank everyone who helped us make this year's program a success, said CMDR Darryl Capo, Commanding Officer at NOSC Columbia. He added; "it is a true effort when the local civilian community joins forces with the military to help those individuals that need a boost during the Holiday Season. Chaplain Mark Weems, LCDR, Chaplain Corps and former NFL player Willie Scott added much to the festivities. Of course it would not be complete if Santa Claus and his Elf didn't come to add to the joy of the season."





Also, in January of 2016 the NOSC facilitated about \$16,000.00 worth of the Honest Company's children's products to Fort Jackson's Child Care program. The donation was initiated by LCDR Benjamin Stickney, USNR formerly of NOSC Columbia who now works at the Honest Company in California.







# 2016 Commandant's Reading List

The Coast Guard Reading List provides recommended books related to leadership, military history and culture, and contemporary issues. The goal is to provide a starting point or expand existing knowledge and skills.

Reprinted with permission from Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Paul Zukunft

I am pleased to offer my 2016 reading list. Each new year is an opportunity to reflect on past accomplishments and lay out the trackline for future endeavors. As you consider your goals for 2016, expand your professional and leadership horizons with one or more of the following offerings:



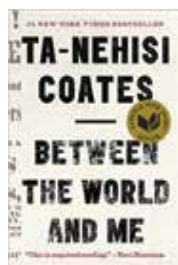
***Into a Raging Sea:*** When I introduced my leadership philosophy a year ago, the first principle I shared was know your purpose. *Into a Raging Sea* is a personal memoir by a Coast Guardsman who truly knew his purpose and then some. This Coast Guardsman is Bernard Webber, coxswain of motor lifeboat CG-36500, from Station

Chatham, Massachusetts. His and his station's story will be featured on the big screen when *The Finest Hours* premieres later this month. Until then, you can hear directly from Webber himself in raw, candid text about his role in the Pendleton rescue and what life was like at Station Chatham in the 1950s.



***Unbroken:*** Another shining example of knowing your purpose is in story of Louie Zamperini in Laura Hillenbrand's *Unbroken*. Zamperini and his Army Air Forces aircrew were on a search mission over the Pacific, one like many of our Coast Guard crews execute each and every day, when their plane went down in 1943.

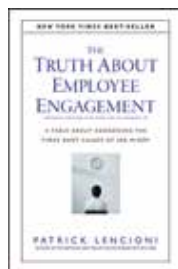
After close to fifty days lost at sea, he was captured and became a prisoner of war. Through Hillenbrand's writing, we see Zamperini's ability to channel his purpose, personal honor and integrity despite the degradations he suffered.



***Between the World and Me:***

A more recent example of finding purpose and our ties to the communities in which we live and serve is through Ta-Nehisi Coates' memoir *Between the World and Me*. Written as a letter to his son, Coates reflects on our Nation's racial history and explores the lives of African Americans today. As I read,

I kept going back to the themes of identity, trust and respect — this last one being an idea so foundational to the Coast Guard it is one of our Core Values. Altogether, Coates' personal perspectives struck a chord and his testament was eye opening and thought provoking.

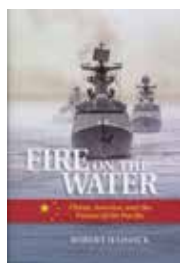


***The Truth About Employee Engagement:***

For those who have ever heard me speak at an all hands, you've likely heard me mention the book *The Three Signs of a Miserable Job* by Patrick Lencioni. Lencioni re-released the book this year under a new title that gets to the heart of why job

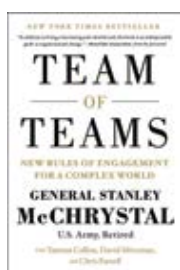
misery is so detrimental to an organization — it damages employee engagement. After addressing the three signs — anonymity, irrelevance and immeasurability — Lencioni shares what happens when you engage your employees, including increased productivity, greater retention and a competitive advantage. All three are needed in today's Coast Guard. As we hone in on our Duty to People, taking another look at engaging our workforce at all levels is a necessary refresh.





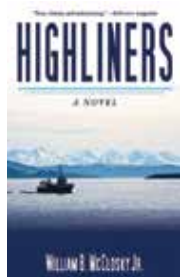
**Fire on the Water:** A key element of knowing our purpose is understanding how we fit into the broader global context. Robert Haddick's *Fire on the Water* offers an enlightening view on China's resurgence and how the U.S. should adjust its diplomatic, military and economic policies to promote long-

term stability. Just one example of the dynamic challenges that come with a rapidly changing and highly globalized world, U.S.-China relations underpin regional security and prosperity and will impact global order for decades to come. Understanding this strategic context is important for every Coast Guard member's tool kit.



**Team of Teams:** One of my leadership principles is trust and empower your people, and retired Gen. Stanley McChrystal certainly touches on the importance of trust to build teams organization-wide. He also explores relationships within these teams and networks using the line "it takes a network to defeat a network;" a phrase

Coast Guard leaders have utilized to discuss our Western Hemisphere Strategy and our fight against Transnational Organized Crime networks. In the end, solutions and the way forward come from all levels of the organization and we must actively seek out these solutions and empower members of our team to come forward.



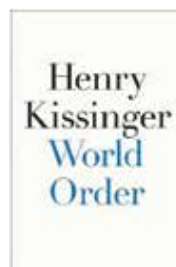
**Highliners:** We see teamwork and trust manifest daily at Coast Guard units around the world and that includes earning the trust of those we serve. This novel, sent to me by the crew aboard Coast Guard Cutter Boutwell, puts a spotlight on a unique community we serve to the Far North — Alaskan fisherman. Through the story of one young

man, or "greenhorn," we catch a glimpse of what life is like for commercial fishermen who brave Alaska's unforgiving elements to make a living. Boutwell's crew wrote it is, "a must-read for anyone involved in 17th Coast Guard District fisheries at any level, and a should-read for anyone who interacts with the fishing industry nationwide," and I couldn't agree more.



**What is Code?:** While this isn't necessarily a book, the Bloomberg Businessweek article, "What is Code?" comes close to it at 38,000 words! The article peaked my interest

earlier this summer when I read the commentary from the magazine's editor who noted the disconnect between those who have sharpened their technological skills but know increasingly less about what makes that technology work. As he wrote: "Software has been around since the 1940s. Which means that people have been faking their way through meetings about software, and the code that builds it, for generations. Now that software lives in our pockets, runs our cars and homes and dominates our waking lives, ignorance is no longer acceptable." I am continuously humbled by the talents of our workforce, and that is especially true with our cyber professionals.



**World Order:** In framing my leadership principle of take decisive action, I wrote, "Situations evolve and we must adapt swiftly; as a leader your decision-making will be tested." That is true for leaders at all levels of our Service and certainly true for our complex, interconnected world. Former National

Security Advisor and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger provides a backdrop for taking decisive action in today's world by writing about century-long trends in foreign policy. Looking at the world order over time is a useful thought exercise as we confront today's global challenges.



**Ghost Fleet:** Speaking of our increasingly complex world, members of my staff shared this book with me in the late summer while I was on my way to the North Pacific Coast Guard Forum to the very region in which this book takes place. While *Ghost Fleet* is a fictional account of a future world war, it weaves in real-life defense assets and

current technology. While the Coast Guard's primary operating area remains the Western Hemisphere, we are active in every region of the world. This fast-paced read presents a compelling twist on the geostrategic challenges our military faces today.



# Meet the Members

## Delores Jean Von Haden Rucker, ACCM

NERA is proud to feature **Delores Jean Von Haden Rucker, ACCM** as our highlighted Meet the Member. If you or a person you know deserves to be honored, please let us know by emailing [ypurtill@nera.org](mailto:ypurtill@nera.org). We are proud of our members and the interesting lives they have lead.

### Tell us about yourself. Where did you grow up? Tell us about your life outside your career.

I was born in Sioux City, IA, and spent the first six years on a farm three miles outside of Winnebago, NE. We then moved to a farm three miles outside of Elk Point, SD, about twenty miles from Sioux City. One of the things about South Dakota that is still vivid in my mind is going to my country school (Pleasant View #17) when it was 32 below zero (that is what the radio said). It was snowing hard and we had to walk our one mile to school. We left home at 7:00 A.M. and arrive at school at 8:03. The teacher said we were tardy and it really upset me. However, the teacher really cared for us as she washed our hands and feet in snow to make sure that we didn't have frostbite. A few years later, we were able to get a second car so we didn't have to walk all the way to school in the snow. Those winters, we had to park our car at the top of the lane on the side of the main road which was about three city blocks from the house.

### Why did you enlist?

I joined the Navy because I had an older sister in college and my parents couldn't afford to have more than one child in college at a time. With seven kids in the family, things were tight. I picked the Navy because my dad had been in the Navy and my brother, Stephen, was in the Navy. Also, my dad's brothers were in the Navy, as were six of my mother's brothers (two were career). Where we lived, the TV would advertise, "Join the Navy and see the World". When my brother came home after boot camp and we went to see his Navy recruiter.

I signed up that day even though I was still seventeen. After my test, the recruiter said I could pick any field. Since I spoke clearly and everyone could understand me,

he recommended I become an Air Traffic Controller. (My dad had to sign seven forms for me to get in the Navy. He told me later that it was the hardest signatures he ever did.)



### What are some challenges have you faced in your career?

I went to boot camp in Bainbridge, MD, on the 12th of December 1969. At that time, there were only about 5,000 women in the Navy, so you had to wait until someone was getting off active duty before you could leave for boot camp. Bainbridge was not as cold as SD, so marching outside to the chow hall was not that bad. Air Traffic Control school was at the Naval Air Station Glynco, GA. We were one of the last classes in the old blimp hangar and "A" school was tough. I almost failed the weather section as it was getting the best of me - the names of the clouds, what weather was involved with each cloud, the stages of a thunderstorm, just to name a few of the elements.



I was stationed at the Naval Air Station Norfolk, VA. I worked at base operations for a couple months filing flight plans for pilots and ordering weather. I only had to clean the coffee pot once in my career. The Chief told me to clean the coffee pot and when I was done, it shined. I had scoured

it out and I was so proud that it looked like new. The Chief took one look at the coffee pot and started screaming, "What did you do?" I told him, "I did just what you said. You told me to clean the coffee pot and I did." The

Chief wouldn't let me touch a coffee pot again. Later, I was sent over to the Air Terminal across the field where I did flight planning and ordered weather reports for the pilots that carried cargo and passengers overseas. During my time there, I challenged a few.

As an airman working at a Naval Air Station, I was able to go home to SD, 10 times in one year. I would catch a hop one way or in some cases both ways to locations close to home. I would then take a bus or a commercial flight to finish my trip. One time on my return, I flew into Andrews AFB. One of my co-workers lived in Maryland and went home that weekend. He knew that if he didn't pick me up on his way back to Norfolk, that he would be working by himself. One time, I left Norfolk with 87 cents and my checkbook in my pocket and a paper shopping bag with a few clothes.

### **Tell us about your most professionally rewarding experience? Worst Experience?**

Once, on Thanksgiving Day, I had duty and I saw a car out on my ramp. I didn't notice the flag with stars on it. I went out and saw the driver go around the building, park and then he came into the Air Terminal. I confronted him and he told me he was Admiral Cousins' driver. I didn't know who Admiral Cousins was and told him he should not have been on my ramp. The driver told me that Admiral Cousins was CINCLANTFLT and I should have known his name. On Monday, when I returned to work, I found out that the driver had called my Chief to make sure I knew who was in the chain of command. I was escorted to the Base CO's office to look at the pictures of those in command of the base and then I was taken by CINCLANTFLT HQ and shown the pictures of those in command of the Atlantic Fleet and the Naval Station. Within a week, pictures were put up in the Air Terminal to show who was in command. I did go back to Base Operations for my last year on active duty. Instead,

I worked filing flight plans in base operations and controlling traffic in the tower.

After six years of active duty at NAS Norfolk, I joined the Reserves. About 8 months later, I was able to get a civilian position back at the Air Terminal. I have been very blessed throughout my career. It seems that I made friends with the right people who would back me up when I needed it.



I got to do Reserve duty in Rota, Spain, because I knew someone. When I got to Rota, I worked at the Air Terminal doing the same job as I did at the Air Terminal in Norfolk. I helped train some of their people and organize a few things. They gave me a nice Letter of Appreciation when I left.

I met my husband at the Air Terminal in Norfolk. I arrived to work one Saturday afternoon and there was a broke C-5 on the ramp. The pilot was out having lunch with his aunt and uncle and cousin. When he returned from lunch, I met Roger. I had been going to put some car parts on the C-5 for my brother stationed in Rota but since it was broken, I put them on a C-141.



After I moved to Dover, I transferred Reserve duty to NAS Willow Grove, PA. I worked in

Base Operations and most of the time I trained the active duty base operations personnel. At that time, I was working as an Airfield Manager at Dover AFB. I made Chief at NAS Willow Grove. In those days, I did most of my Reserve duty during the week as I had a weekend off once every eight weeks from my civilian job. On one of the few weekend drills that I did with my unit, one on the Chief's came by and told me that starting next month, I could attend the Chief's meeting because they voted on it. I told the Chief that since I made Chief, they should have let me come without a vote. Then I told him I would not be attending because this was my last weekend, as I was transferring to South Carolina.

*continued on page 28*



## NERA MEMBERS, continued from page 27

After drilling a few months at the Reserve Center in Columbia, it wasn't the same as an Air Station. They had openings on REDCOM Staff and I applied. Roger was requested to come to my interview because he had to confirm that I could manage my finances with not getting reimbursed for expenses on a drill weekend lasting from six weeks to two months. At that time, the expense travel claims for the REDCOM Staff were processed last. Traveling to all the Reserve Centers in North and South Carolina and Augusta, GA, was an experience. I would go to a Reserve Center and I would tell the units what they should be doing in career counseling, teach classes and do other unit work. Later I would return on the inspection team. In most cases, I found the notes I left on how to do something only to find it wasn't always completed.

Once leaving REDCOM Staff, I found the Naval Air Terminal Unit in Charlotte, NC, whose mobilization site was the Air Terminal at NAS Norfolk, VA. It was like going home to see my friends on weekends in Norfolk. When Desert Storm came, my unit was recalled to the Air Terminal. One of my accomplishments was getting approval for terminal leave for some of my unit members so they could go over 180 days of active duty. I knew someone who knew the approving authority at the Pentagon. My unit officers left early because they knew I was going to look after my guys.

A few months after Desert Storm, I put in for active duty in Bahrain. The orders were changed to Norfolk because of a problem with previous orders, but I wanted to go to Bahrain. My Reserve Center CO told me I could call anyone I personally knew to get the orders fixed. As a courtesy call, I called the REDCOM Master Chief and told him I was going to call the Force Master Chief about my problem. The REDCOM Master Chief asked me if I knew him and I told him I did and I had the permission of the Reserve Center CO to call anyone I knew. I told him I was going to start with the Force and then I would call the Admiral. The REDCOM Master Chief told me to wait a few days and he would get back to me. A couple days later, I had my order to Bahrain.

While at the Air Terminal doing Patriot Partner joint service exercises, I met an Admiral who invited me to drill at USTRANSCOM at Scott AFB, IL, which I did for one year. My Captain at USTRANSCOM was doing some active duty in New Orleans at COMNAVRESFOR and would have members of the unit go to New Orleans to do

special projects. I spent four months of my last two years in New Orleans doing special projects. One project was assigning every Air Traffic Controller in the Reserves an authorized billet.

I have been a Life Member of Naval Enlisted Reserve Association since 1982. I have been the Secretary, the National Counselor, the Liaison for the Employer Support of Guard and Reserve and Region Representative at National level. I have been the President, Secretary and Treasurer in the Mid-Carolina Chapter. I have received the "1776 Award" for my support to NERA. I made membership to the "Century Club" for recruiting over 100 members in a year. I have received Recruiter of the Year. Most years while on HQ Staff, I had the highest recruiting numbers, but as a member of the HQ Staff, you are not eligible to receive the award.

I am a Life Member of various organizations: The Fleet Reserve Association (FRA), Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA), Disabled American Veterans (DAV), American Legion, Navy League, the Armed Forces E9 Association (AFE9A) and the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR). I am the current National President of the Armed Forces E9 Association and all E-9's are welcome to join. I send out newsletters about how our organization is doing and let the members know they can get help with their VA and CRSC claims by calling our HQ. I have also hosted several National Conventions for NERA and AFE9A. E-9's, please contact me for more information and an application.

For the DAR, I am the current SC State Chairman and Granby Chapter Chairman for the Service for Veteran Committee. I am on the Wreath Across America (WAA) Committee for the Ft. Jackson National Cemetery, the ROTC, JROTC, Sea Cadet, CAP, Coast Guard and Merchant Marine Coordinator for WAA and I also coordinate the DAR ROTC and JROTC Awards to our assigned schools.

One of the best things about being in NERA is the meeting the people and having lasting friendships. I have met all the Force Master Chiefs and the Admirals since 1982. When I had any questions or needed help with my unit, I knew who to call to get an answer. I like friends in high places and the Staff at NERA HQ have been great. I appreciate them all and I offer my assistance when I am in the area.





# USAA/NERA College Scholarship Program

**The Naval Enlisted Reserve Association (NERA) offers a college scholarship program for NERA members and their family**

### General Information

#### Applications Due June 10, 2016

USAA/NERA College Scholarship Program recognizes the service to the United States and sacrifices by Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard Reserve component members, retirees and their families. These scholarships are made possible by generous grants from USAA ([www.usaa.com](http://www.usaa.com)) and additional donations from NERA and its members. The application is available at [www.nera.org](http://www.nera.org).

*(NERA reserves the right to modify or discontinue the scholarship program at any future date should funding not be available. In the event of non-qualifying NERA member applicant, NERA reserves the right to award these scholarship to a spouse, son, daughter or grandchild of a NERA member.)*

### Scholarship Amounts

- Two \$3,000 scholarships for any Regular or Associate NERA member.
- Four \$2,500 scholarships for any Regular or Associate NERA member, spouse, son, daughter or grandchild of a regular NERA member. Children and grandchildren must be unmarried and under age 23.

### Eligibility

To be eligible for the scholarship, the applicant must be any Regular or Associate NERA member. NERA members may also sponsor a qualified applicant: a spouse, son, daughter or grandchild. Sponsored children and grandchildren must be unmarried and under age 23 on the scholarship deadline: June 10, 2016.

In order to qualify for the scholarship, the applicant or sponsor must be a member in good standing and all

member dues must be paid in full by the scholarship deadline: **June 10, 2016.**

Scholarship applicants may be either graduating high school seniors or students already attending a college or university. Applicants must be enrolled or planning to enroll, full-time or part-time in the fall semester immediately following award of the scholarship. Enrollment may be in any undergraduate program leading to a bachelor's degree or associate's degree at an accredited college or university. All applicants must currently have an overall GPA of 3.0 or equivalent. If you have any questions regarding your eligibility, please contact NERA at (800)-776-9020 or [members@nera.org](mailto:members@nera.org).

### Scholarship Use Requirements

The NERA Scholarship can be awarded in addition to any other partial scholarship, including a ROTC Scholarship. Those applicants already in possession of an appointment to a U.S. service academy or receiving a "full scholarship" to any accredited college or university are not eligible. A "full scholarship" is usually defined as one that provides for payment of tuition, books, lab fees, and university supplied dormitory room and board.

### Essay Requirement

#### Applicants must write ONE 500 word essay

The requirement is a two part essay consisting of a 500 word minimum and 600 word maximum. The first part shall identify the applicant's aspirations, course of study and the school in which the applicant is enrolled for the coming fall. If the applicant's major course of study is undeclared, please indicate such but still identify their interests. The second part of the essay should identify and explain the role of the Reservist in America and the importance of the Reserves to our national defense.

**The application and additional instructions are available online at [www.nera.org](http://www.nera.org). Apply today!**



## We mourn the loss of our NERA members and compatriots.

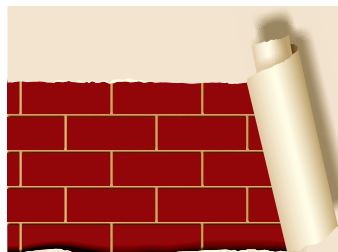
We suffer with their loved ones, who grieve the loss of vital love, companionship and guidance. Their place will always remain vacant among this patriotic assembly.

RADM Penrose L. Albright  
ADRC Joe H. Hinton, Jr.  
ICC Glen D. Hubbard  
SKC Robert (Bob) C. Landru  
ENC Robert Leopold, Jr.  
RM2 Robert L. Kirby  
Mrs. Verna Koelker

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Texas  
California  
Minnesota  
Pennsylvania  
Kansas  
Illinois

BMC Larry Mays  
CAPT Robert B. McDaniel  
AMHC Russell R. McKinney  
SKCM Mike McWeeney  
CTAC Patrick G. Reding  
RMC George Wardwell

California  
Florida  
Ohio  
Pennsylvania  
California  
Rhode Island



## NERA Memorial Walk

Pave the way for NERA's future by naming a brick today!

Become a part of history by purchasing a brick on the NERA Memorial Walk. NERA has a long history of protecting the rights and benefits of the enlisted reserves. You can help continue this tradition by purchasing a brick. Your brick can memorialize a shipmate, family member, yourself, or a significant time in your military history.

Each 4" x 8" brick costs \$100 and will be custom engraved to your specification and placed in the Memorial Walk in front of NERA headquarters.



### NERA Memorial Walk General Information

**Phase 1:** Will feature the bricks surrounding a lighted flagpole.

**Phase 2:** Construction of a brick walkway leading up to NERA HQ.

Donations to the NERA Memorial Walk are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

*NERA reserves the right to review all copy submitted.*

Questions can be directed to Jennifer Abbott, [jabbott@nera.org](mailto:jabbott@nera.org) or (703) 534-1329.



## New NERA.ORG

Check out the new [nera.org](http://nera.org). Browse the new site or login to review your membership status.

(For returning members: just use your email address as your username and click forgot password.)



# “A Tribute to HMCM Manny Ratner”

A distinguished group of NERA lifetime members whose outstanding dedication and support continues to fortify the legacy of the Naval Enlisted Reserve Association thus inspiring future generations to absolute greatness.

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MCPO-CGRF Mark H. Allen  
PNC William A. Anderson  
EMC Larry M. Arnold  
IS1 Judith A. Ayers  
CWO4 Shirley Barlow †  
SKCS John A. Bartlett  
LSC Michael F. Bartsch  
**AVCM Don Bauman**  
LCDR William D. Bennett  
BM1 Jeffrey Benton  
AEC Charles A. Berger  
CUCM David D. Boman\*\*  
OS1 Donald J. Bond  
IS1 Wayne E. Boyer\*\*  
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