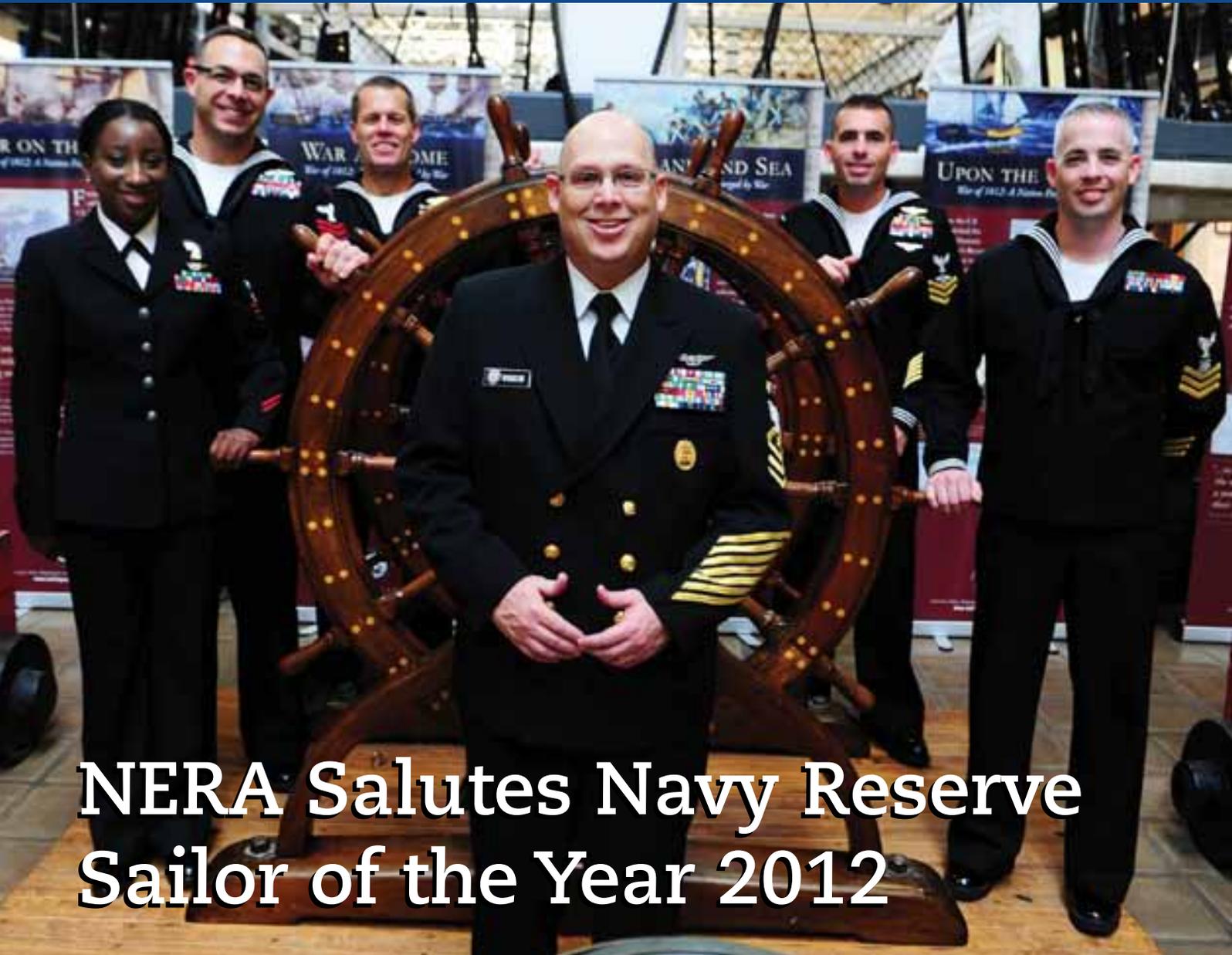


THE
MARINER

2013 Spring Edition | Volume 56 · Issue 1

The Official Publication of the Naval Enlisted Reserve Association



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**AWS1 (NAC/AW)
Brian W. DeNike**

(second from right)



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**NAVAL ENLISTED
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NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS**
6703 Farragut Avenue
Falls Church, Virginia 22042-2189

OFFICE: 703-534-1329
TOLL-FREE: 800-776-9020
WEB: www.nera.org

National President
SKCS(AW) Nick Marine, USN (Ret.)
770-426-8060
president@nera.org

National Vice President
MNI Duke Hayes, USN (Ret.)
405-360-2186
vp@nera.org

National Secretary
YNC Marianne Mosher, USN (Ret.)
secretary@nera.org

National Treasurer
OSCS Paul Smurawski, USNR
treasurer@nera.org

National Counselor
SKCS Gene McCarthy, USN (Ret.)
404-714-0378
nc@nera.org

Past National President
YNC Joanne Elliott, USN (Ret.)
(H) 215-547-7004
ppp@nera.org

Executive Director
DCCM Stephen R. Sandy, USNR (Ret.)
703-534-1329
neraexec@nera.org

Deputy Executive Director
OSC Michael P. Hughes, USNR (Ret.)
703-534-1329
neradeputy@nera.org

Managing Editor
YNC Joanne Elliott, USN (Ret.)
(H) 215-547-7004
marineditor@nera.org

Printing
Mercury
240-631-1389

Design
Karen Durland
301-592-1887

CONTENTS

2013 SPRING EDITION

Volume 56 • Issue 1

THE MARINER



- 4 President's Message
- 5 Letters to NERA
- 6 Tips & Clips
- 8 Deputy Director's Message
- 10 Executive Director's Message
- 11 National Officers Nominations
- 14 NERA Membership
- 18 Faces of NERA
- 21 Coastie Corner
- 22 2013 USAA/NERA College Scholarship Program
- 24 New Recycling Program
- 26 Marine Marquee
- 29 Veterans Affairs Backlog
- 30 Bequest Form
- 30 Taps
- 31 NERA Life Benefactors

The Mariner, 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 entitled to published subscription rates. Articles, letters, and JPEG photos for The Mariner should be submitted to the Managing Editor/DED via e-mail to: MarinerEditor1@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: vp@nera.org.



Nick Marine
National President

Hello again!

Each year I examine NERA's operating costs and by far the greatest expense is our Mariner magazine at \$13,220 per issue or \$52,900 a year! So below, I answer many questions asked of me over the past few months.

How is NERA HQ doing with expenses?

We have stretched every dollar and nothing is wasted at NERA HQ. Unfortunately, times are tight and all of our NERA staff salaries (combined) are less than that of past Executive Director's salaries over 10 years ago. NERA staff have made many sacrifices being away from family and continuing to fight the good NERA fight. Thank you both! Also a special thanks to Mike Hughes who assists at NO cost to NERA!

What is NERA doing to grow? NERA has more than 6,900 Life members, many of whom joined years ago. This is the main reason we survived into the 90's; however, those past funds have been depleted. The good news is that we are NOT using any of our savings and living within our means. Today, we have over 225 new Benefactors, which have helped us greatly; but a far cry from our 6,900 NERA Life members.

We are asking all Life members to upgrade, and join the Benefactor program. The price to become a Benefactor member is \$400, but for all existing NERA Life members it is \$250 (giving credit for past investment.) Those unable to join, please consider contributing \$15 to help cover the Mariner mailing costs.

How is NERA surviving today? We owe a great deal of credit to NERA's major supporter: USAA! USAA will continue supporting NERA if our members support USAA. For every credit card NERA members apply for, we get credit. Just apply and keep the card on hand for a rainy day. We also owe a special thanks to our 225 New Benefactors, as well as our 3,400 Sailors, Marines and Coasties (Annual members) who pay \$30 a year to support NERA.

How can we help NERA? First, the simplest thing: give us your current email address (just email jabbott@nera.org or call 800-776-9020). By having your email address, we save the expense of snail mail and can give you all the NERA updates immediately. Second, apply for a NERA/USAA credit. Lastly, become a NERA Life member; just call 800-776-9020 with your new NERA/USAA credit card.

How do I see NERA surviving in the future? At this next upcoming National Conference, we need to discuss changing the Mariner from a quarterly to a bi-annual distribution. This is our greatest expense and we need to cut costs. In addition, I suggest we move the Mariner from hard print to an electronic PDF copy. We could email the Mariner to all members, keeping the information current and saving the expense of printing and shipping. Private sector businesses, like Time Warner, have already done



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away with hard publications due to printing and mailing costs. I understand how some members enjoy a hard copy, so this could be a gradual process.

In an effort to stay current, we need to fully support the social media outlets such as our webpage: nera.org, Facebook and Twitter. We can keep you up-to-the minute with news and updates. Did you know that nera.org is updated daily with the latest news? We keep saying we

want to attract younger members but are we willing to adapt? The young military want instant information and rely on smart phones, so we are updating our ways of doing business. Let us know if you would be interested in receiving a monthly NERA newsletter sent to your email. Check out nera.org for daily updates and don't forget to become a friend on NERA's Facebook page.

NERA Nick

“Who you are is not what you are but it is what you are that determines who you are.”

— William Ngwako Maphoto (NERA Life Benefactor)



LETTERS TO NERA

Thank You

Dear NERA:

While reading the 2012 Winter Edition of the Mariner I was intrigued by the Tips & Clips column. I specifically reference the Veterans Administration (VA) benefit Aid & Attendance (A&A) discussion. I desire to comment.

Several years ago my WWII Army combat veteran father was approached in his assisted living facility. The organization solicited his submission of an application for VA A&A benefits. He felt uncomfortable with their presentation and asked me to investigate.

I contacted the organization and scheduled a meeting. Their first question was regarding my father's net worth. Subsequent questions revealed they expected my father to liquidate his assets and give them his money for an annuity investment. They also stated they would prepare the necessary paperwork for VA review. Finally they guaranteed VA approval.

I felt extremely uncomfortable with this entire discussion. Next, I visited the Veterans of Foreign wars (VFW) representatives in the Detroit Federal Building. Their research

revealed this organization was not VA accredited. Further research indicated they were under VA investigation for submitting false A&A applications and hiding assets.

The VFW reps assisted my father in submitting a legitimate A&A application. After VA approval the monthly benefit was a financial life saver in paying assisted living expenses.

A&A is a fabulous benefit of which many veterans are unaware. As with other federal benefits there is a means test, a lengthy application process, and an annual review of assets.

For your records here is the four year old contact information on this fraudulent organization.

The American Association for Wartime Veterans//Roy J. Borek (Professional Member)
40522 Hayes, Suite 100
Clinton Township, MI 48038
Phone 800-850-4947 // rborek@usawarvet.com

Sincerely, Richard Kudrak



Joanne Elliott
Past National President

From Defense Finance and Accounting Service

The Department of the Treasury has announced that all payments from the federal government must be made electronically and not by paper check beginning March 1. This means most military retirees and annuitants receiving paper checks will be required to sign up for direct deposit. With direct deposit, the Defense

Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) sends your payment straight to your bank account. Direct deposit gives you immediate access to your money on pay day, and it eliminates the risk of lost or stolen checks, forged signatures and identity theft. Over 99 percent of military retirees and over 96 percent of annuitants already receive their payments through direct deposit. If you're one of the few still receiving a check in the mail, DFAS will send you a notice in the coming months. But you can get ahead of the rush by setting up direct deposit now. It's easy, it's safe and it gives you more control with less stress. There are three ways to start direct deposit. Before you enroll,

you'll need to gather information including your financial institution's routing transit number and account number. Then do one of the following:

Send a signed Fast Start Direct Deposit Form (<http://www.fms.treas.gov/eft/2231.pdf>) to Defense Finance and Accounting Service, U.S. Military Retired Pay, P.O. Box 7130, London, KY 40742-7130; * Use your myPay account to set up a direct deposit to your checking or savings account; * Or call the DFAS Retired and Annuitant Pay Customer Care Center at 800-321-1080. It can take 30 to 60 days from the day DFAS receives your enrollment for direct deposit to start. If after enrolling you receive a paper check, please cash or deposit it as you normally would. DFAS will send you a notification when they process your enrollment. There are many advantages to eliminating paper checks. No more trips to the bank to deposit your check, no risk of lost or stolen mail, no waiting for misrouted or delayed mail, and your money is available to you the day it is due. It also will save the American taxpayers about \$120 million every year. More information is available at www.dfas.mil/mandatoryeft.html.

Campaign Links Wounded Warriors With Federal Careers

From Civilian Human Resources Public Affairs, SHIFT COLORS, Spring 2013, Navy Personnel Command

The Department of the Navy announced a single system wounded warriors can use to apply for Department of Defense civilian jobs. Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Manpower and Reserve Affairs) Juan M. Garcia, III announced the Defense Outplace Referral System (DORS) at the third annual Wounded Warrior Hiring and Support Conference in San Diego. "In an effort to help connect our Wounded Warriors with available job opportunities, our commands and all three services have developed individual databases to capture the talent and skills of returning men and women--that process often required our Wounded Warriors, who were searching for jobs, to register in multiple systems," said Garcia. "Now we can direct them to one system." DORS is a cost-effective vehicle that is

compatible across all services, providing opportunities for a wide array of skills and locations across the country, ensuring wounded warriors receive priority placement for jobs. Registration is open to all services; however, in order to register in DORS, veterans must meet these qualifications: be ready to work within 30 days; be honorably discharged; and have a compensable service-connected disability of 30 percent or more. The disability must be a direct result of injury and/or disease received in the line of duty and a result of armed conflict or instrumentality of war.

"Wounded warriors have gained a myriad of skills and experience from their military service," said Garcia. "There are hundreds of civilian occupations and careers

that provide a fit for those skills - from supply sergeant to logistics specialist, corpsman to medical technician, cyber security operation to information technology manager, and many more.”

Three wounded warriors are now working in civilian careers and are helping promote the program by telling their stories of transition from military to civilian service. Matthew Sullivan, formerly in the infantry with the U.S. Army 82nd Airborne Division, is now a records room supervisor and was the first wounded warrior hired through DORS.

“DORS offers wounded warriors a great network and advantage to getting their information out,” said Sullivan. Sullivan says there are many resources available to wounded warriors, acknowledging the angst of preparing resumes on top of leaving the service. “There is support available to help veterans relate their military experience

and skills to civilian careers,” said Sullivan. Gabe Ledesma and Laura Langdeau, both former Marines and Purple Heart recipients, have also successfully transitioned to civilian careers. “Even though we are not on the ground, we are part of the big picture and we are supporting our Sailors and Marines,” said Langdeau, now a production controller at Naval Air Systems Command’s (NAVAIR) Lakehurst Division. More than 10,857 veterans were among the new hires for the DoN this past year, with 2,580 of the new hires being disabled veterans and 1,835 being wounded warriors with 30% or more disability. The Office of Civilian Human Resources is leading the execution of DORS for the DoN and in providing support to veterans interested in civilian careers. To explore civilian careers with the DoN and learn more about DORS and other support for veterans, visit www.donhr.navy.mil. For more information, visit www.navy.mil, www.facebook.com/usnavy, or www.twitter.com/usnavy.

From the NPC Customer Service Center: Info for Reserve Retirees

The Navy Personnel Command (NPC) Customer Service Center (CSC) fields many calls from retirees. Because of the volume of calls, *Shift Colors* will be periodically publishing some information based on the top calls they are receiving. The NPC CSC provides information and services to active, Reserve and retired Sailors and their families around the world. The CSC is prepared to answer a variety of questions on topics such as personnel policies, pay and benefits. The CSC can be reached by phone between 7 a.m. – 7 p.m. (Central) Monday – Friday at (866) U-ASK-NPC (827-5672), or 24 hours a day by e-mail at cscmailbox@navy.mil. This issue’s topic focuses on questions received from Reserve Retirees. **Address update.** Have you moved since you retired? If so, have you updated your address with the Reserve Personnel Service Branch (PERS-912)? Many reserve retirees fail to update their address when they move which causes a delay with correspondence being delivered from Navy Personnel Command. If you think your address may need to be updated, contact Navy Personnel Command Customer Service Center at 1-866-U-ASK-NPC. **Statement of Service.** PERS-912 receives many requests for Statements of Service, also known as “points

capture” each day. The Navy Personnel Command Customer Service Center can provide you a “verbal” point capture over the phone. If you would like a written Statement of Service, PERS-912 can assist you with that. Contact the Navy Personnel Command Customer Service Center at 1-866-U-ASK-NPC for more information. **Reserve Retirement with Pay.** Notification is forwarded approximately 6 months in advance to advise you how to submit your application for retired pay at age60. If you do not receive notification by 4 months prior to your 60th birthday, please contact PERS-912 by calling 1-866-827-5672. You may also download the required forms off the NPC website by clicking on Retirement Pay Application Forms. **Reserve Retirement without Pay (Grey Area Reserve).** Applications for retirement without pay should be submitted per the format and timeframes listed in Figure 20-4 of BUPERSINST 1001.39F. Note: Members not assigned to a drilling Reserve unit will not have “via” addresses. Their request should be submitted directly to PERS-912. For more information about the NPC CSC, visit the NPC website at www.npc.navy.mil and click on the on the CSC link on the upper-right corner of the page. ■



National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for FY 2013 (HR 4310) Overview

By Mike Hughes OSC, USNR (ret)

Below is a bulleted review of the key points of the NDAA for FY 2013 that impact NERA membership of enlisted reservists of the Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard. It was signed into law by the President on Jan. 2, 2013. Keep in mind that this is an “authorization” act and could change depending on adequate “appropriations” being enacted.

- End strength for Selected Reserves:
 - Navy Reserve — 62,500 (reduction of 3,700 from FY 2012)
 - Marine Corps Reserve — 39,600 (same as FY 2012)
 - Coast Guard Reserve — 9,000 (reduction of 1,000 from FY 2012)
- End strength for reserves on active duty in support of reserves (FTS):
 - Navy Reserve — 10,114 (reduction of 223 from FY 2012)
 - Marine Corps Reserve — 2,261 (same as FY 2012)
- Maximum number of reserve personnel authorized to be on active duty for Operational Support:
 - Navy Reserve — 6,200 (same as FY 2012)
 - Marine Corps Reserve — 3,000 (same as FY 2012)
- Authorizes a 1.7% base pay increase effective Jan. 1, 2013.
- Authorizes establishment of Transition Assistance Advisors in each State for Guard and Reserve component members who were on active duty for more than 180 consecutive days.
- Establishes a requirement for a quality review of Medical Evaluation Boards, Physical Evaluation Boards and Physical Evaluation Board Liaison Officers. Initial report on implementation is due within 180 days of enactment and annually thereafter.
- Authorizes retention or recall to active duty Reserve component members who are victims of sexual assault while on active duty.
- Requires the establishment of training for Guard and Reserve members and their families for suicide prevention and resilience, and community healing and responses to suicide.
- Mandates that rates of Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) for members performing active Guard and Reserve duty shall be based on the member's permanent duty station, even during instances of mobilization.
- Extends the Special Pay and Bonuses authorities for Reserve forces.
- Increases the maximum amount of incentive bonus for Reserve component members who convert military occupational specialty to ease personnel shortages to \$4,000 (previously \$2,000).
- Authorizes permanent change of station allowances for Selected Reserve members filling a vacancy in another unit more than 150 miles from their residence after being involuntarily separated.
- Mandates equal treatment for members of the Coast Guard Reserve called to active duty under Title 14 for reduction of eligibility age for receipt of retired pay.
- Requires a report within 60 days of enactment by the Secretary for Veterans Affairs on plans to reduce the backlog of claims for benefits.
- Extends coverage for 180 days for TRICARE Standard and TRICARE Dental to members of the Selected Reserve who are involuntarily separated.

- Allows certain over-the-counter drugs, to be designated by the TRICARE Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee, in the TRICARE Uniform Formulary.
- Authorizes a pilot program for Guard and Reserve components through community partnerships for mental health enhancements for mental health and substance abuse disorders and Traumatic Brain Injury.
- Cost sharing rates (co-pays) for TRICARE Pharmacy Benefits. Effective 45 days after enactment:
 - FY 2013 (30 day supply)
 - Generic agents \$5
 - Formulary \$17
 - Non-Formulary \$44
 - FY 2013 (up to 90 day supply under TRICARE Mail-Order Pharmacy Program)
 - Generic agents \$0
 - Formulary \$13
 - Non-Formulary \$43
 - Beginning Oct, 1, 2013 any increases are limited to the amount equal to the percentage by which retired pay is increased annually until Oct. 1, 2022.
- Requires a pilot program for prescription refills for TRICARE for Life beneficiaries. Mandates use of the TRICARE Mail-Order Pharmacy Program for one year, after which the beneficiary may opt out. TRICARE determines which medications are eligible for the pilot.
- Authorizes the Secretary of Defense, at his/her discretion, to establish/continue a space available air travel program. If established it mandates that it be budget neutral with no additional funds allocated. It specifies that any program include active duty, Selected Reserve, retired (including “grey area” reservists) and dependents of these personnel. The Secretary of Defense establishes the priority for space available flights of these personnel.
- Establishes a Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission to conduct a review of the military compensation and retirements systems, including those of other federal agencies, i.e. Defense, Veterans Affairs, Education, Labor, etc. The Commission will be composed of 9 members: one (1) appointed by the President; two (2) each appointed by the Senate Majority Leader, Minority Leader of the Senate, Speaker of the House, and Minority Leader of the House. The President selects one of the members to chair the Commission. Members are to be appointed by May 2, 2013 and the initial meeting is required within 30 days of all members being appointed and the Commission must submit a report within fifteen (15) months of the establishment date. Individuals who, within the preceding year, have been employed by a veterans’ service organization or a military-related advocacy group or association may not be appointed to the commission. Any recommendations require “grand-fathering” of retired pay for those members of the uniformed services who joined prior to Jan. 2, 2013 to not less than under the current system and the date of eligibility can not be adjusted to the financial detriment of the member, unless the member agrees. Those members retired as of Jan. 2, 2013 can not have their eligibility for and receipt of their retired pay adjusted unless the member voluntarily agrees. ■

There will be a lot more to follow on this Commission as members are appointed and meetings and hearings are scheduled. NERA will continue to actively fight and support continued fair compensation and benefits for our members and report on the progress through the Mariner and our web site.



Stephen Sandy
NERA
Executive Director

Sequestration: What it means for Reservists

By Executive Director Stephen Sandy

Dear NERA members,

You have probably heard about sequestration for over a year now. As you know, sequestration is across the board spending cuts for the Department of Defense. The media has portrayed the military as alarmist and claimed the doom and gloom was just hype. While these budget cuts may not be the end of the world, they are affecting every facet of the military by denying training, by denying flying time and not allowing our military to prepare accordingly. Former Defense Secretary Leon Panetta had it right when he said "But I have to tell you it is irresponsible for it to happen. I mean, why in God's name would members of Congress, elected by the American people, take a step that would badly damage our national defense, but more importantly undermine the support for our men and women in uniform?"

So, we are now over a month into the sequester and the sky did not fall. However, this sequestration act is death by a thousand cuts. The specific language of the sequestration does not allow rational decisions on which cuts to make. Rather, every single program, project, and activity has to be reduced by 9 percent, whether it is shipbuilding projects, nuclear weapons, the painting of ship or training. Military paychecks are still protected from the cuts, but the new Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel did confirm what I suspected: benefits are next on the chopping block. When questioned, Hagel said "If you play this out over a 10-, 20-year period, we're not going to be able to sustain the current personnel costs and retirement benefits. There will be no money in the budget for anything else."

NERA has been monitoring all these sequestration activities. We are keeping on top of what is happening in Washington and what benefits cuts are in the works. Check out the updated website, nera.org, for daily updates, hot topic blogs and the new Forum Link to discuss the latest news. If you prefer face to face interactions, note we are hosting our annual conference in Chicago on October 16-19, 2013. This is a great opportunity to discuss issues you are experiencing, sequestration budgetary cuts and anything else that is affecting Reservists. We look forward to seeing you in Chicago, so visit nera.org for more conference information. Call or email me directly with any concerns at neraexec@nera.org or (800)-776-9020.

See you in Chicago.

—Steve

One last note, I wanted to thank Chapter officers and members for their patience during our database upgrade. It is fully updated and corrected.

Check out the updated website, nera.org, for daily updates, hot topic blogs and the new Forum Link to discuss the latest news.



Eugene “Geno” Koekler, Candidate for President of NERA

Dear Friends,

This letter is to announce my intention to run for the office of President of NERA. Some of you may remember me as your NERA vice-president from 2009-2011. President Marine decided to run for a second term, and I supported his decision but decided not to run again as vice president. In the meantime, I have been active in my local chapter. However, I feel now is the time to run for office and ask for your support as NERA president.

History: I joined NERA in 1987 and was affiliated with the Windy City Chapter while I was a drilling reservist with VP-90 at NAS Glenview, Illinois. I am both a NERA life member and a sustaining life member. After serving 4 years active duty ('65-'69), I drilled for 22 years at VP-90 until the squadron was decommissioned and Glenview was closed. During that time, I was elected as the CPOA's mess treasurer and held that office until the mess was closed.

This experience as mess treasurer led to my position as NERA's Windy City treasurer in the early 1990's. This is a position that I still currently hold. The Chapter's books have always been open to the executive staff and have been audited, in accordance with the Chapter's by-laws. No discrepancies over funds or financial records have ever been found and full reports were consistently presented at Chapter meetings.

I have served on several NERA committees for regional and national conventions and participated in numerous chapter events and programs. I supported Past President Padour during her bid for the Presidency and during her term of office. While serving as your VP, I also continued serving at the chapter level. During this period, I traveled to the Falls Church HQ several times and participated in the HQ remodeling working group. I traveled throughout the country visiting many reserve centers, recruiting members for NERA, during their yellow ribbon days (or pre-deployment weekends). During my travels, I utilized personal funds as much as possible instead of using critical National funds. I even paid my entire expenses for the National Convention in Sacramento, CA. I estimate my personal costs were over 50 percent of my entire expenses during my term as vice president.

While serving as your VP, I worked with Executive

Director Steve Sandy and President Marine in developing and implementing NERA's Coast Guard DEPOT graduation award program honoring Coast Guard Petty Officers Palazzo and Danz. These two New York City Coast Guard reservists lost their lives on 911 (refer to the fall 2011 edition of the Mariner for more information). Additionally, I was instrumental in the development and production of NERA's national challenge coin.

Value and experience: I have established both a professional and personal relationship with Commander Naval Reserve Forces Vice-Admiral Braun. I recently spoke to her in Washington D.C. at the Navy's Recruiter of the Year ceremony at the Navy Memorial, in January of this year. Her husband was a VP-90 shipmate of mine. During this trip, I met Mike Stevens, MCPON 13, and was able to speak with him and develop a working dialogue.

In addition, I belong to other veteran groups and associations which have given me valuable insights of different programs and initiatives that NERA might consider. These organizations include the Navy League, the American Legion, VietNow, Winnebago County Veterans Association (local) and the Navy Club of the USA. In the last two years, I have served as the National Commandant of the Navy Club USA. In this position, I have developed a working knowledge of membership database administration, website management, directing national staff officers, holding national staff meetings and the developing/producing of the QuarterDeck magazine (the Navy Club's version of our Mariner.)

I am pleased to have a good working relationship with Great Lakes Admirals, Rear Admiral Mewbourne, Rear Admiral Williamson and their staff, Recruit Training (boot camp), Training Services Commands, Commander, Navy Recruiting Command Rear Admiral Earl Gay and his staff at Millington, Tennessee.

With my knowledge, experience and numerous working relationships, I feel I can bring to NERA an established and working environment which will be of great value to this organization and its members. I am committed to NERA and ask for your vote as the National President of NERA.

Thank you,
Geno



Deborah “Debbie” Fallon, Candidate for National Counselor

To my fellow NERA Members,

My name is Deborah “Debbie” Fallon and I am submitting my nomination for the position of National Counselor.

I have been a NERA member as part of the USS Constitution “Old Ironsides” chapter since 1998. During that time, I have held various elected chapter offices, including President, Vice President and Newsletter Editor/Producer. I have also served as NERA National Chaplin from 2003 to 2005.

My US Navy career began when I enlisted in February 1978. After boot camp, I was assigned as a fireman recruit at the Naval Ocean Systems Center, San Diego. By June 1981, I had advanced to Engineman Second Class. I left active duty March 1982 and enlisted in the reserves at the Naval & Marine Corps Reserve Center, Lawrence, MA. In July 1984, I made a lateral conversion from Engineman to Yeoman with a goal to become Chief Petty Officer. This became a reality in September 2000 when I advanced to Chief Petty Officer and became Admin Chief of the Nuclear Submarine Support Facility (NSSF), Headquarters Det 101, New London, CT. In 2002 - 2003, I assumed the responsibilities of the Senior Enlisted Advisor (SEA) at NSSF with over 230 enlisted personnel across five units. I retired from active reserve drilling on November 1, 2004.

In my civilian life, I decided to change my career from mechanical to administrative. To achieve this, I enrolled in a typing and word processing class. After completing the classes, I became a customer service representative for a large company in Massachusetts. Within a few years, I was promoted to Supervisor of Customer Service overseeing a twenty-four hour a day, 7 day a week operation.

From there I changed gears and became Claims Manager responsible for financial control of over 30 major nationwide accounts.

After relocating to New Hampshire, I became employed at a municipal water/wastewater department as a clerk. Within a few years, I became an Executive Administrative Assistant. This role requires me to interact with various levels of government and management officials, municipal workers and the general public.

As National Counselor, I will utilize my strong organizational, administrative and computer skills to:

- Contact and work with each chapter to find out what tools and support are needed to help chapter growth and stability, especially recruitment and retention.
- Work with and supervise chapter representatives and regional/state membership directors in leadership training development activities and monitor their progress.
- Assist interested parties with formation of new chapters.
- Maintain close contact with the National Office to set up and follow through with regularly scheduled reporting and the utilization of these membership reports.
- Address the MAL issue according to our National C&BLs.

I believe in a strong and independent NERA and will be committed to moving us forward. I am asking for your vote to be the next National Counselor.

Thank you,
Debbie Fallon

**To vote for NERA National Officers come
to NERA’s 56th National Conference,
October 16–19, 2013, in Chicago.
(Use the form on page 15 to register today.)**



Charles “Chuck” Cox, Candidate for Vice President of NERA

Dear NERA Friends,

I am Charles “Chuck” Cox and I am submitting my nomination for Vice President of NERA. I have been a NERA member since 1988 and a life member since 1995. I have been active on the Garden State Chapter level, serving as Secretary from 2004-2005, Vice President 2008-2009 and Chapter President 2006-2007 and 2010-present. I began my military career in December 1969 and my military career is listed below.

IC1/ET1 (SS) Charles (Chuck) Cox’s Military Service:
December 1969- April 1974
Served onboard USS Ethan Allen SSBN 608 Blue Crew
Reenlisted in Naval Reserves August 1986
Served onboard USS Clark FFG 11 5 years
Naval Submarine Support Facility 8 years
Det 404 Weapon Station Earle New Jersey 3 years
Served 1 year Force Protection Wep Sta after 911

I have been employed at the Irvington Board of Education since 2004. I am a certified teacher in the Applied Technology Department teaching Introduction to Computers and Computer Repair at the Irvington High School, with additional duties of coaching the bowling team and Robotic Club Mentor. I am a member of the Knights of Columbus, Catholic War Vets and the American Legion. I am presently living in Monroe Township, New Jersey with my wife Marielise. We have three children Alicia, Samantha and Darin.

I believe my military career, my non-military employment and my active participation in my civil memberships have prepared me to lead NERA as the Vice President. I look forward to serving and thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Chuck Cox



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 or (703) 534-1329.



What can you do for NERA?

NERA Executive Director Steve Sandy takes calls daily from members inquiring how they can help NERA-- his favorite part of the day. It was suggested that Steve compile a list of FAQs about how you can help NERA.

1. Apply for and use a USAA/NERA Credit Card.

USAA provides great terms and low interest rates, and NERA receives cash back. Just using this card is a very easy way to support NERA.

2. Become a Lifetime Benefactor.

By upgrading to Lifetime Benefactor status, you will become part of an elite group of over 200 members. It is just a one time fee of \$250 for current life members.

3. Recruit a New Member.

4. Postage Donation.

\$15 a year can help offset our mailing costs for our free quarterly magazine, The Mariner. US Postage rates continue to increase and the cost to mail The Mariner this year alone will account for over \$13,000.

5. Buy a Brick.

Memorial Bricks can be used to celebrate your military career or honor the life of a loved one. The bricks will be strategically placed at NERA headquarters. For more information, visit nera.org.

6. Contribute to the Building Fund.

NERA Headquarters is in need of a new roof and gutters. The most recent bid on the project was \$12,451.50. To contribute to this fund, contact Penny Padour, Chairman of the Building Repair Fund. (Phone: 815 322-6277 Email: nerawindycity@hotmail.com)

7. Make a Donation.

Make a general donation to NERA. Any amount is greatly appreciated and will be put to good use. Use the Donation button at nera.org.

Any further questions should be directed to Steve Sandy (703) 534-1329.

Join at nera.org or use this form and mail it to NERA Headquarters at:

Naval Enlisted Reserve Association, Attn: Membership, 6703 Farragut Avenue, Falls Church, VA 22042-2189

Information

NAME _____

RATE/RANK _____ DATE OF BIRTH _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

TELEPHONE _____

E-MAIL _____

SPONSOR _____

Branch of Service

- Navy
- Marine Corps
- Coast Guard
- Other
- Civilian

Duty Status

- A - Active Duty
- I - Inactive Duty (SELRES, IRR, VTU)
- R - Retired

Membership Type

- Active
- Associate

Dues Payment Amount

- \$30 - 1 Year
- \$57 - 2 Years
- \$84 - 3 Years
- \$300 - Life
- \$100 - Life (Payplan)*
- \$250 - Life Benefactor

** Partial Pay to be paid within six months*

Payment Information

- CHECK (enclosed)
- CREDIT CARD
- Visa
- MasterCard

CREDIT CARD NUMBER _____

EXP. DATE _____

SIGNATURE _____



REGISTER TODAY!

NERA'S 56TH National Conference

October 16-19, 2013, Chicago



Name _____
FIRST LAST RANK

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone () _____ Phone () _____

E-Mail _____ I need a map Y N

Number of People attending: _____ Date & Time: of Arrival _____ / _____ of Departure _____ / _____

Airline _____ Flight # _____

Special Needs Requirements: _____

Chapter _____ Office _____ 1st Conf? Y N

Hotel Room: Fee has been contracted at \$85.00 Max. /Room /Night (plus 11% room tax).

Spouse/Guest name: _____
FIRST LAST RANK

Please NOTE: These SPECIAL rates are available for any night before and after the conference.

REGISTRATION

	Cost	X	# Attending	=	\$ Total
Before October 2, 2013	\$35.00	X	_____	=	\$ _____
After October 2, 2013	\$45.00	X	_____	=	\$ _____
!!! LATE FEE WAIVED – COME JOIN US !!!!					
Taxi / Bus Service to Hotel	\$38.00	X	_____	=	\$ _____
Taxi / Bus Service to O'Hare	\$38.00	X	_____	=	\$ _____

EVENTS

Wed, Oct 16	Mixer	FREE	X	_____	=	\$ <u>FREE</u>
Thrs, Oct. 17	Awards Luncheon	\$30.00	X	_____	=	\$ _____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Turkey <input type="checkbox"/> Orange Roughy <input type="checkbox"/> Beef					
	Base Tour / Burkey NEX (AM)	FREE	X	_____	=	\$ <u>FREE</u>
	(Intended for spouses)					
	Rivers Casino (PM)	\$21.00	X	_____	=	\$ _____
Fri, Oct. 18	RTC Graduation (AM)	\$11.00	X	_____	=	\$ _____
	Navy Pier (PM)	\$21.00	X	_____	=	\$ _____
Sat, Oct. 19	Installation/Dinner Dance	\$45.00	X	_____	=	\$ _____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Prime Rib <input type="checkbox"/> Chicken					
Registration/Events Total:						\$ _____

CONFERENCE PAYMENT INFORMATION

Send registration form with payment directly to:
SKC (Ret.) Penny Padour, 1010 Darlington Lane, Crystal Lake, IL 60014
Make checks payable to: **Windy City Chapter 313.098**
www.wcchapter.org

ROOM RESERVATIONS (visit or call):

Ramada Waukegan-Gurnee
Group Code - Mention NERA
ph: 847 244-2400 • fax: 847 249-9716
www.ramadinwaukegan-gurnee.com

Make 2013 your lucky year



Unlucky 13? Not on our watch. Although this number drums up all sorts of negative connotations, we'd like to reverse that trend. How about you create your own luck? Here are 13 tips to make 2013 a year during which financial luck has nothing to do with horseshoes or four-leaf clovers.

1. See where you stand.

Review your net worth (assets and liabilities), cash flow (income and expenses) and insurance coverage. Map out your financial goals for the year and reconfirm your longer-term goals. Write down your goals and prominently post them to keep them front and center. For a free financial assessment, visit usaa.com.

2. Know where it goes.

Get a handle on your money by recording everything you spend, every day. Categorize expenses and total them up weekly. Put pen to paper or use online tools such as USAA® Money Manager¹ to help you do the tracking. After a couple of months, scrutinize each category for places to cut back or cut

out altogether. Finally, save what you've cut each month.

3. Incorporate new cash.

A pay raise, inheritance or tax refund can make you feel like you just hit the jackpot. Make that feeling last by incorporating that extra money into your savings and debt elimination strategy before you fritter it away or blow it on a big-screen TV. Consider increasing your retirement plan contributions, accelerating payments to your credit cards or other debt, or setting up an emergency savings account. For help, check out usaa.com/goals.

4. Attack debt.

First, make a commitment to not add debt. Then put a plan in place to pay down the

debt you have. To get a bigger emotional lift, start with the smallest balances. To get a bigger financial lift, start with the highest interest rates.

5. Check your credit.

A credit score of 760 or higher will help you save big with low interest loans and make you look good in the eyes of landlords, insurers and prospective employers. Check your credit report for accuracy at annualcreditreport.com. Or stay in the know year-round with a service like USAA Credit Check Monitoring®.

6. Consolidate and simplify.

It's very difficult to manage your portfolio or spending when your money is strewn across too many accounts and institutions. Come up

with an investment plan and consolidate your holdings² into no more than a few baskets. Use online bill pay and automatic monthly investments³ to help do things on time.

7. Protect your family.

A shocking 35 million U.S. households have no life insurance. Without life insurance coverage, an already bad situation can get a lot worse in a big hurry. Protect your family and make sure you have adequate life insurance coverage to replace income, pay off debts and take care of them if you're not around. Not sure where you stand? Visit usaa.com/lifeinsurance, check out the life insurance needs calculator and quickly get a free quote.

8. Protect your stuff.

Lucky or not, stuff happens. Cars get wrecked. Storms and fires destroy houses. Things get stolen. To decrease the financial impact of unexpected events, make sure you have adequate homeowners/renters, valuable personal property and auto insurance coverage in place.

9. Look at liability.

If you're found legally responsible following an incident or accident, you could find yourself at the wrong end of a costly lawsuit. Protect yourself by making sure you have adequate levels of liability insurance on your property and auto policies. For additional coverage, you may choose to add affordable

liability protection with an umbrella policy. Visit usaa.com/tools for free help calculating your personal insurance needs.

10. Create an estate plan.

Wealthy or not, most people need at least a will and/or trust, a durable power of attorney, a health-care power of attorney and a living will. Many families should also discuss guardianship arrangements for young children. Preparing these documents is far from pleasant, but the pain of getting them done is usually far less than the pain your survivors will feel if you pass away without an estate plan.

11. Initiate a retirement savings plan.

It's never too early (or too late) to start preparations for the golden years. Stashing a little money in your 401(k) or Thrift Savings Plan can go a long way. Starting a Roth IRA, an employer plan, a savings annuity or even a non-retirement account are other great ways to start saving today. Use USAA's free online retirement calculators to find out how much you need to save.

12. Save now for near-term goals.

"Plan and save" is a much better financial strategy than "don't plan and borrow." Big recurring expenses like holiday shopping, vacations and back-to-school shopping provide the perfect opportunity to develop a monthly savings plan. Would you rather



make high-interest payments each month to a credit card company, or make payments to yourself that earn interest for you? To set a goal and start tracking your progress, visit usaa.com/goals.

13. Shop smart.

Consumer spending makes up roughly two-thirds of the U.S. economy, so there's no denying we're all spending a fair amount of time shopping and buying. Implement a cooling-off period before big-ticket buys. Comparison shop and commit to cash purchases (yes, you can save *and* buy).

By J.J. Montanaro, CFP® and Scott Halliwell, CFP® from USAA



We know what it means to serve.®

Talk to an advisor today.

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Insurance Banking Investments Retirement Advice

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¹USAA Money Manager is not an investment advisory service of USAA. ²There may be tax consequences associated with the transfer of assets. Indirect transfers may be subject to taxation and penalties. Consult with your own advisors regarding your particular situation. ³Automatic investment plans do not assure a profit or protect against loss in declining markets.

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NERA — Gold Country Chapter 7th Annual Military Children Christmas Event

by NORMA von DOHREN, President, Gold Country Chapter

We have been sponsoring this holiday event for the past seven years and each time, I feel like I am “mobilizing” a section of the Sacramento, California population. **Lynn Johnson**, our Special Events Coordinator has been responsible for the most difficult job of fundraising and buying presents for the 150+ children from all branches of the military, ages infant to 17 years old. I refer to her as our “fabulous fundraiser.” Because of her efforts, we were able to give more than \$5,000.00 worth of Christmas presents to the children this past year. **Julie Baumgartner**, of Military One Source, has been helpful in getting the Army to let us use their drill hall, and getting Army personnel to help us set up the tables and chairs for the expected 200+ guests. Without her help, we would not have been able to have a party.

The active duty **Inspector-Instructor Staff** of the USMC at the RESCEN Sacramento has been supporting us for

the past seven years. I refer to them as the “ever loyal Marines.” We will stop holding this event if they stop supporting us. My other Chapter Officers, **Bobby Aglubat**, **Ramon Nazareno**, and **Howard George** are also kept busy before and after this event. Bobby and Ramon are involved in the decorations and set up, and making sure the decorations are taken down and stored after the event. Howard is responsible for taking and publishing the pictures of the more than 150 children that sit on Santa’s lap. Fred Schoppet, our dear “**Santa**” travels 250 miles (500 miles round trip) to bring joy to this party.

A lot of other people have been involved in making this a happy occasion. The Managers of Tiger Self Storage, **Dianna Lowe** and **Larry Goodenough**, in Sacramento, have been loaning us their moving van, so that **William Mullett** could transport the wrapped presents from Lynn Johnson’s house to the BT Collins Army RESCEN. His



wife **Sandra** has also been one of our regular helpers. **Sandra and Ramon Nazareno** created that lighted “Candy Canes” path to Santa (shown on picture Number 1).

Lynn Johnson’s family has been heavily involved with this event. For several days and nights before the party, **Lynn, her family members and I** wrap presents, label them and make sure that no child is left out. The presents





FACES OF NERA, continued

we give are specific to each child's age and gender. They ranged in price from \$10 to \$50 each. On the Navy side, we have two regular volunteers: ITC Diane Diaz (Ret.) and YNC Caryn Dejong.

Without this party, a lot of these kids would feel left out of the spirit of Christmas. Some of the parents have expressed this to us. If and when we find out that some of them also need food and other things, in addition to their XMAS presents, Lynn Johnson works hard to find people from her company to sponsor them.

We enlist the support of the Navy, Marines, Army, and Coast Guard Commanding Officers to help us spread the word about this event to their people. With the exception of the last two (the Marines and Tiger Self Storage) these individuals/companies have been providing financial support to our Christmas events for the past several years. ■





New Lt. Michael Murphy Sea Cadet Division: “Lead the Fight”

By Ray Tomich

Gary Vertichio, Commander of the American Legion Post in Sayville, N.Y., was looking for a way the post might support a newly formed Naval Sea Cadet Division. He was unsure how far his combat experience in Vietnam (82nd Airborne Unit) would get him in helping a naval organization. That was when Vertichio called on BMCS Bryan Mastrangelo, Senior Enlisted Reserve Advisor, USCG Station Shinnecock, N.Y. “I knew having a salty Boatswain Mate Chief involved would be good for the cadets,” stated Vertichio.

On August 25, 2012, the new Lt. Michael Murphy Naval Sea Cadet Division, named for local hero Lt. Michael Patrick Murphy, was officially formed at the Long Island Maritime Museum (<http://www.limaritime.org>) in West Sayville. Lt. Murphy, a decorated Navy Seal and Medal of Honor recipient, gave his life leading his four-man SEAL Team on June 28, 2005 in the Hindu Kush of Afghanistan, when they came under intense enemy fire.

Vertichio and Mastrangelo were installed as the division’s first Commanding Officer and Executive Officer. They were honored to have U.S. Congressman Peter K. King (NY-3) attend the ceremony. The crew of the USS Michael Murphy DDG-112 is also co-sponsoring this new Sea Cadet Division. “Lead the Fight” is the ship’s motto.

The United States Naval Sea Cadet Corps (USNSCC) is a congressionally chartered, U.S. Navy-based organization that serves to teach individuals 13 to 17 years old about the sea-going military services, community service, citizenship, and an understanding of discipline and teamwork. The U.S. Coast Guard, through COMDTINST 5728.2C, USCG Public Affairs Manual, has designated the USNSCC as one of the Coast Guard’s primary youth programs. ■





The Naval Enlisted Reserve Association (NERA) offers college scholarship program for NERA members and their family. Applications due June 7, 2013

General Information

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) and additional donations from NERA and its members. The application is available at www.nera.org. (*NERA reserves the right to modify or discontinue the scholarship program at any future date should funding not be available.*)

Scholarship Amounts

- Two \$3,000 scholarships for Regular NERA Members.
- 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 7, 2013.

In order to qualify for the scholarship, the applicant or sponsor must be a member in good standing by the scholarship deadline: June 7, 2013. All Member dues must be paid in full by June 7, 2013. If you have any questions regarding your eligibility, please contact NERA at 800-776-9020 or members@nera.org.

Eligible students must attend undergraduate level studies at a college, university or junior/community college that confers a bachelor's or associate's degree, on a full or part-time status as established by the school accepting the scholarship funds. Academic programs involving a second undergraduate or graduate school degree are not eligible.

Scholarship Use Requirements

Scholarship applicants may be either graduating high school seniors or students already attending a college, university or junior/community college. 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.

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

One 500 word essay chosen from one of the two topics listed below.

FIRST ESSAY CHOICE:

Personal Goals and Objectives

In 500 words, state your career goals and objectives for your education. Focus on how your college education will benefit you and/or others and how that corresponds with your career goals and objectives.

SECOND ESSAY CHOICE:

"Why Are Reservists Important to America?"

In 500 words, explain how reservists are significant to America.

The application and additional instructions are available online at nera.org.

Military Tuition Assistance Uncertainty: Apply for the USAA/NERA Scholarship

By Yvette Purtil

Sequestration slashed the military tuition assistance programs. Then Congress restored the funding for the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps, but not the Coast Guard. With all this uncertainty surrounding these tuition assistance programs, NERA wanted to remind you about the USAA/NERA College Scholarship Program.

NERA is offering two \$3,000 scholarships for NERA Members, and four \$2,500 scholarships for any regular or associate NERA member, spouse, son, daughter or grandchild of a regular NERA member. An application with a short essay is all that is needed and full or part-time

students are encouraged to apply (only one class per semester is required). These scholarships can be awarded in addition to any other partial scholarship, including a ROTC Scholarship.

NERA and USAA honors your service and wants to help Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard Reserve members, retirees and families further your education. For more information about these scholarships, visit nera.org or contact jabbott@nera.org.

Deadline for application is June 7th, 2013.

**Recycle...
TURN TRASH
INTO CASH!**

**Help us earn free equipment
and cash by turning in...**

For more information, contact our “National Recycle Coordinator” Debbie Fallon at (603) 858-4144 or debbiefallon@msn.com. Or contact headquarters via the new NERArecycles@nera.org.

(Please see page 24 for detailed instructions.)



FundingFactory
fundingfactory.com



The New NERA National Recycle Program

I am pleased to announce the new NERA National Recycle Program. Debbie Fallon, President of the USS Constitution Chapter, who has been successfully participating in this effort on behalf of her Chapter, has graciously accepted my request to oversee this program.

I encourage all chapters and members to help NERA in this “Nationwide” Recycling Program. It is quick and easy, and will not only help the environment, but help NERA raise funds to continue to protect the rights and benefits of all Reservists.



How can you help?

Just recycle your **Inkjet Cartridges, printer cartridges, toner cartridges, cell phones, and small electronics** such as **iPods/MP3 Players, Digital Cameras and GPS Devices** from your homes, jobs, local businesses and around your community (See the Qualifying List at nera.org for all acceptable items). Get a pre-paid shipping label, package them and ship them off. And the best part of this program is it will not cost your chapter any out-of-pocket expenses.

If you are interested in supporting our new program or if you have any questions, contact “National Recycle Coordinator” Debbie Fallon at (603) 858-4144 or debbiefallon@msn.com. Or contact headquarters via the new NERArecycles@nera.org or call (800) 776-9020, or (703) 534-1329.

Please review the guidelines below and check out our ad on page 23. Thanks for your support.

How the Recycling Fundraiser works

Simple Shipping Guidelines

1. CONTACT HEADQUARTERS or DEBBIE FALLON FOR SHIPPING LABEL:

A few items you might need:

Shipping box	Pre-paid shipping label (one per box)	Newspaper or bubble wrap	Sealable plastic bags	Packing Tape
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2. USE YOUR OWN BOXES:

Find a large, sturdy box no larger than 20” Wx20H x 24” D and able to hold a maximum of 40 lbs. when full.

TIP: Use old newspaper or bubble wrap as filler in boxes to protect items during shipment.

3. PACK BOXES USING THE 20/20 MINIMUM:

20 acceptable items. **or** 20 lbs. of items.
(i.e. 10 laser cartridges + 5 inkjet cartridges + 3 cell phones + 2 iPods = 20 items)

4. Attach one pre-paid shipping label to a box and seal shut. Leave it for the UPS driver or take it to any UPS drop-off location.

NOTE: Do not call UPS for a pick up. If called for pick-up, UPS will charge a mandatory fee that cannot be waived or reimbursed. Call 1-800-742-5877 or visit ups.com for the drop-off locations nearest you.



2012 Navy Reserve Sailor of the Year

By Yvette Purtill

NERA was a proud sponsor of the 2012 Navy Reserve Sailor of the Year Recognition Ceremony on April 11, 2013. This ceremony was held on a beautiful spring day in Arlington, VA at Fort Meyers. Vice Admiral Robin Braun, Chief of the Navy Reserve and Force Master Chief Christopher Wheeler, Navy Reserve expressed their pride in these exemplary sailors.

Five sailors were nominated for this honor, however the Sailor of the Year award went to AWS1 (NAC/AW) Brian W. DeNike. DeNike was born in Poughkeepsie, NY and began his Basic Training at Recruit Training Center in San Diego, CA. After Boot Camp, DeNike finished Aviation Structural Mechanic Hydraulics "A" School in Millington, TN before transferring to NAS Dallas Aviation Intermediate Maintenance Department.

In 1998, Petty Officer DeNike was selected for Aircrew Candidate School, then transferred to Firehawks of Helicopter Combat Support Special Squadron Five. DeNike completed Survival Evasion Resistance and Escape School before earning his Bachelor's Degree from Columbia College. In October 2000, Petty Officer DeNike completed his active duty service. In February 2001, he completed the California Highway Patrol Academy and joined the Navy Reserve as a Selected Reservist. DeNike advanced to First Class Petty Officer in 2002. In 2004, Petty Officer DeNike was forward deployed to Iraq. While deployed, he qualified as an Enlisted Aviation Warfare Specialist. In January 2005, DeNike was transferred to NAS North Island to Helicopter

Sea Combat Squadron Three and was assigned as the SAU Operations LPO and Aircrew Training Petty Officer. He earned a Master's in Business Administration and a second Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice from California Coast University in Santa Ana, CA.



VADM Braun pinning Reserve Sailor of the Year 2012 AWS1 (NAC/AW) Brian W. DeNike

DeNike's personal awards include the Air Medal with Special "V" for valor, Navy Achievement Medal (five awards), Combat Action Ribbon, Iraqi Campaign Medal, Overseas Service Ribbon and various unit and service awards. NERA congratulates Petty Officer DeNike for this proud achievement and was hon-

ored to be part of this ceremony. Congratulations to the other nominees: VT1(SCW) Richard Bloomberg, Petty Officer Lisa A. Dalhouse, Petty Officer James H. Moss, and SO1 Dan R Smith.

WASHINGTON (April 11, 2013) Force Master Chief of the Navy Reserve Christopher Wheeler stands with Reserve Sailors of the Year selectees, from left, Boatswain's Mate 1st Class Lisa A. Dalhouse, Utilitiesman 1st Class Richard Bloomberg, Special Warfare Operator 1st Class Dan R. Smith, Naval Air Crewman (Helicopter) 1st Class Brian W. DeNike, and Master-at-Arms 1st Class James H. Moss at the U.S. Navy Museum at the Washington Navy Yard. The Sailor of the Year program annually provides recognition to the Navy's outstanding Sailors through presentations, awards, and meritorious advancement to the next pay grade. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist First Class Patrick Gordon/Released) ■



Force Master Chief of the Navy Reserve Christopher Wheeler stands with Reserve Sailors of the Year selectees, from left, Boatswain's Mate 1st Class Lisa A. Dalhouse, Utilitiesman 1st Class Richard Bloomberg, Special Warfare Operator 1st Class Dan R. Smith, Naval Air Crewman (Helicopter) 1st Class Brian W. DeNike, and Master-at-Arms 1st Class James H. Moss.



California Montford Point Marines Awarded Congressional Gold Medal

By Sgt. Ray Lewis

Think fighting one war is tough? Try fighting two — at the same time. These men did.

The Marines of Montford Point not only fought in foreign wars but fought a war for civil rights every day. They were no different from any other Marine. They had honor, courage and commitment. The only thing was — they were black, in the 1940s.

“They said, ‘They’re black, they can’t do that, they can’t do this,’” said Riley McCray, 87, a former Montford Point Marine corporal who lives in Oakland, Calif. “We had to prove that we’re just like anybody else if given the chance.” It was a time of segregation and discrimination. Blacks

couldn’t eat, drink or sit near whites, let alone serve their country with everyone else. “The nation only wanted blacks to be nothing but slaves and servants,” said Lynn L. Williams, 87, a former Montford Point Marine sergeant from Berkeley, Calif. “They kept us at the bottom, as janitors or servants and this is what it was. You couldn’t get a job doing anything during those days.” That was until President Franklin D. Roosevelt, the 32nd president of the United States, issued a directive that allowed more than 22,000 blacks to enlist into the Marines. “It was out of necessity,” Williams said. “Folks were getting killed.”

However, these Marines still underwent a separate recruit training at Montford Point, a training facility near Camp



Lejeune, N.C. “I was 18,” said Rueben Smartt, 87, a former Marine corporal from Harlan County, Kentucky. “I ain’t even know that we was at the place. We were supposed to be at Camp Lejeune and they put us there.”

The Montford Point Marines were trained by other black Marines who were put in meritorious leadership positions. That only made the training harder, McCray said. “That was the worst thing that I have experienced in my life,” said McCray, who was from then-violent west Philadelphia. “It was worse than my neighborhood at the time.” He said he thought his fists could get him through anything. So he consequently got into tiffs with his martial arts instructor. “The judo instructor and I bumped heads,” laughed McCray, who later boxed for the Marines. “I was the ‘King of the Neighborhood’ cause I could fight. So the judo didn’t work there.”

The training was rough, required a lot of discipline, but was informative. There was no fighting allowed between the recruits. “If they did fight, they would receive a very severe punishment because Marines are supposed to depend on each other,” Williams recalled. “We would have to duck walk and hold the rifle over our heads,” he

said. “If you dropped the rifle you would have to sleep with it. If you made someone else drop their rifle, you would have to sleep with their rifle, and yours.” Despite those circumstances, these men rose above their adversity to earn the title of United States Marine. “It physically blows your mind,” McCray said. “But we survived.” Some stayed in for many years and some just completed their two-year term of obligated service.

Nearly seven decades later, the Montford Point Marines were presented the highest civilian award, the Congressional Gold Medal, by Gen. James. F. Amos, Commandant of the Marine Corps. More than 400 Marines were symbolically presented the medal at Emancipation Hall in the U.S. Capitol during a ceremony June 27. They later received a bronze replica that represents the original gold medal that is displayed at the Marine Corps Museum in Quantico, Va.

Unfortunately, many Montford Point Marines were unable to attend the ceremony in Washington, D.C. Most living Montford Point Marines are in their 80s, so Marine Reserve units from 22 states have set out to distribute 78 bronze replicas to the Montford Point Marines.





MARINE MARQUEE, continued

One of the units responsible for reaching out to the Montford Point Marines was Detachment 2, Beach and Terminal Operations Company A, 4th Landing Support Battalion, 4th Marine Logistics Group, in Concord, Calif. They initially thought that it would be possible to have the ceremony near their headquarters, but that changed when they found out Riley McCray couldn't travel too far from his Lafayette, Calif. home.

"We wanted to have it closer ... but Mr. McCray is on an oxygen tank so we had to find a location closer to his home," said 1st Sgt. Simon L. Sandoval, first sergeant for Detachment 2. They located a spot fitting for the medal ceremony in the nearby federal building. However, there was trouble getting the venue reserved without funding. Williams suggested contacting a local government official. "I'm glad that Mr. Williams brought up Congresswoman Barbara Lee," Sandoval said. "She helped us get the location."

Sandoval and about a dozen Marines from the local area, carried chairs and 50 state flags up three floors to prepare for the event. That was the least they could do, Sandoval said. "I thought the ceremony was one of the greatest things in my career and something that I was proud to be a part of," Sandoval said. "I'm happy I got to coordinate presenting this medal from the President to Mr. McCray and Mr. Williams. Can you image presenting a medal to gentleman that set the history for our Corps? You can't ask for anything better than that."

Williams and McCray arrived at the Ron Dellums Federal Building and were thoroughly pleased at how the Reserve unit went out of their way to accommodate them. "They did a beautiful presentation," Williams said. "They had a color guard, flags and they had young Marines as escorts. I liked their politeness and their demeanor. They helped us old folks get in and find our way into the auditorium. I thought it was one of the best things that had ever happened to me," Williams said. "I have never been honored like that before. To have the Marines come around here and do that really made me proud."

When the ceremony started, the men stood tall. Regardless of their past, they knew who they were above all else. "I'm



a Devil Dog," Williams said. "I'm a Marine and I'm proud to be one." Chills shot down Sandoval's back. "You got two men who fought overseas and for their civil rights," he said. "That made me feel damn good."

Traditional Marine Corps songs such as Anchors Aweigh and the Marines' Hymn were played at the end of the ceremony. For many, the music was reminiscent of their time in the military. McCray's eyes watered thinking of how proud his spouse was to see him after he completed Marine Corps training. "I sort of cried because my wife loved the transformation because I had made something of myself," said McCray, as he choked on his words. Unfortunately, his sweetheart of 33 years had passed away just one month before he was to receive the medal. So the ceremony was bittersweet for McCray. Williams did his best to console McCray. "Don't worry about it, she's smiling down on you," Williams said. "I felt proud for her, not me," McCray said.

Capt. Caitlin T. Ferrarell, the Inspector-Instructor for Detachment 2, said that the ceremony evoked gratitude for those who have served before her. These men changed the face of the Marine Corps, and it was an incredibly humbling experience to have a part in formally acknowledging that. It was a privilege to honor them with a ceremony filled with the traditions we all share as Marines, regardless of the era in which we served," Ferrarell said. ■



NERA Endorses Letter to President Obama

By Yvette Purtill

The Center for Investigative Reporting determined that it takes over a year for a veteran's medical claim to go through the system before any benefits are received. According to the report and the VA's internal records, more than 600,000 veterans are waiting for their benefit claims to be processed. Congressional hearings on the backlog are planned but rumors of mismanagement and a culture of complacency have plagued the VA for years. The agency supposedly spent four years and \$537 million on a new computer system, yet 97 percent of all veterans' claims remain on paper. Transparency, in addition to setting and meeting milestones, should be the focus moving forward in fixing this enormous backlog.

NERA agrees with the Veteran of Foreign Wars (VFW) that high level firings and creating commissions to investigate this backlog issue will accomplish NOTHING. Waiting for new leadership will just delay the backlog further and demoralize veterans and the VA staff. This backlog is from previous years of neglect and cannot be fixed overnight. We are encouraged at some signs of change, however any backlog is unacceptable. NERA has proudly teamed up with other military organizations to endorse the following letter being sent to President Obama.

Mr. President,

We, the undersigned, stand together in calling on you to end the VA backlog.

After a decade of war, and despite the Department of Veterans' Affairs efforts to modernize, more than 600,000 veterans are still stuck in the VA's disability claims backlog. While the average wait time for first time disability claims currently ranges between 316 and 327 days, veterans in certain parts of the country are waiting even longer – 619 days in Los Angeles, 612 in Indianapolis, 586 in Houston, 642 in New York, and 681 in Reno. And these are only averages. In the worst cases, veterans have waited and continue to wait 800 days, 900 days, and even more than 1000 days for a disability claims decision from the VA.

In the last four years, claims pending over a year have grown by over 2000%, despite a 40% increase in the VA's budget. Solving this problem is critical for veterans of all generations. We need direct and public involvement from you to establish a clear plan to end the backlog once and for all.

We stand together with veterans of all generations to ask you and your administration to find a solution that ensures that no veteran is stuck in the VA backlog.

They fought for us. They shouldn't have to fight for benefits. ■

For updates on the VA backlog,
visit nera.org.



Help Secure the Future of the Naval Enlisted Reserve Association

Suggested Language for Making a Bequest to the Naval Enlisted Reserve Association (NERA)

You may include a bequest to support NERA when preparing your will or by adding a codicil to your present will. Bequests may be of cash, securities, real estate or other property. Bequests of all sizes are welcome, whether they are outright, contingent or residual.

If you are considering designating how your bequest will be used by NERA or establishing an endowed fund through your estate plans, please contact (or have your professional advisor contact) Stephen R. Sandy, Executive Director of NERA, at 800-776-9020 or neraexec@nera.org.

Please note: This information is not intended to be legal or tax advice. We recommend that you consult with a qualified estate planning attorney when drafting your will.

Your request should be directed to The Naval Enlisted Reserve Association. The following language may be useful to your attorney:

Specific Bequest

“I give The Naval Enlisted Reserve Association, Falls Church, Virginia, 22042, the sum of \$_____ to be used for the general support of NERA.”

Residual Bequest

“I give The Naval Enlisted Reserve Association, Falls Church, Virginia, 22042, ___ percent of the residue of my estate to be used for the general support of NERA.”

Contingent Bequest

“In the event that _____ predeceases me, I give The Naval Enlisted Reserve Association, Falls Church, Virginia, 22042, the sum of \$_____ (or, alternatively, ___ percent of the residue of my estate) to be used for the general support of NERA.” ■



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.

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“A Tribute to HMCM Manny Ratner”

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