



NAVAL ENLISTED
RESERVE ASSOCIATION
WINDY CITY CHAPTER



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From The WCC Newsletter Editor

Jan 2014

Shipmates:

We have much to report on concerning staffing changes within Windy City Chapter.

As Windy City Chapter proudly hosted the 2013 NERA National Conference, and reveled in Geno Koelker's election as National President, WCC President Penny Padour dropped a bombshell on our delegates. Penny's husband Jerry, who has been considering other career opportunities for the past few years had a promising prospect in Maryland that he would be interviewing for within days of the Conference. Well, those of us close to Jerry, who know his competency in engineering, operations management and computers were not surprised to hear that they pretty much hired him on the spot.

Of course, when Jerry relocates so does his lovely wife, Penny! This left WCC jockeying for reorganization. If there is a good side of this story, it's that WCC meetings has sufficient attendees with superb leadership skills. The downside (from a submariner's viewpoint) is that the solution puts two Senior Chief Airdales in charge. Not to worry though, we've been successful under Airdales Penny, Ed Whiteside and Butch Michelson since skimmer Bill Markvart was transferred to Heaven's Quarterdeck.

We will miss Penny, I hope to visit Penny and Jerry every time I journey to D.C. which will happen often since our daughter and her family will transfer to Ft. Meade in June.

Instead of a bottom line, here's a bottom paragraph: To fill the remaining year of Penny's term Andy Anderson will step up to President, Past President Butch Michelson will assume VP duties. All other assignments will remain as elected or appointed.
Jim Premeske, WCC Editor

See you at WCC's meeting: @ 2000 February at 11th @VFW Post 3579, 10 Higgins Rd., Park Ridge, IL 60068

Mark Your Calendar:

Meetings are conducted at 2000 on the second Tuesdays of even numbered months at the VFW Post #3579, Canfield at Higgins (alongside the Kennedy Expressway).

The WCC meeting schedule for 2014 is as follows: 2/11, 4/8, 6/10, 8/11, 10/14, 12/9

Windy City Chapter meeting minutes – Windy City Chapter meeting minutes- WCC's October meeting was canceled due to conflict with the National Conference. The December meeting was canceled when it was determined a quorum of officers was unavailable due to reorganization.

SEA SERVICE NEWS

**Navy, Electric Boat
Finishing Designs for Ohio
Replacement Program**



The U.S. Navy and General Dynamics' Electric Boat are close to finishing specifications and designs for the country's next-generation ballistic nuclear submarine, the Ohio Replacement Program, or ORP.

The Ohio Replacement Program team is poised this year to finish up a 600-page ship specification document detailing designs and plans for the submarine, Navy and Electric Boat officials said.

"This spring, the Ohio Replacement Program will finalize the remaining few of the 161 Ship Specifications. These specifications establish the requirements the numerous ship systems must adhere to in order to meet defined warfighting requirements," Capt. William Brougham, ORP program manager told Military.com in a written statement.

Slated to enter service in 2031 and serve through 2085, ORP, a so-called SSBN, is scheduled to begin construction by 2021. Requirements work, technical specifications and early prototyping are already underway at Electric Boat locations in New London, Ct. and Quonset Point, R.I.

Consisting of three volumes, each with hundreds of pages, the ship specification documents are designed to detail the configurations, designs and technical requirements for the boat, said Brian Wilson, ORP director, Electric Boat.

"We are very much in the technology and getting the requirements set phase. We'll finish the ship specs this year, multi-volume documents that tell you everything about how you're going to manage the design," said Wilson.

The ship-specifications detail the systems, technologies and electronics as well as crew plans, design intentions and overall integration, Navy officials said.

Designed to be 560-feet-long and house 16 Trident II D5 missiles fired from 44-foot-long missile tubes, ORP will be engineered as a stealthy, high-tech nuclear deterrent able to quietly patrol the global undersea domain.

"The key thing about the SSBN is that it is out there maintaining a constant strategic deterrence," said Wilson. The rationale for these submarines is to guarantee a nuclear response capability in the event that an adversary launches a first attack.

Electric Boat and the Navy are also already progressing on early prototype work connecting missile tubes to portions of the hull, Wilson said. Called integrated tube and hull forging, the effort is designed to weld parts of the boat together and assess the ability to manufacture key parts of the submarine before final integration.

"The key here is reconstituting the vendor base for missile tubes, which are 45-foot-long and weigh about 50 tons. We integrated these tubes into two large welds at the top of the hull to produce what we call a 4-pack. In 2017 and 2018, we will build a first-article quad pack," said Wilson.

This manufacturing strategy is intended to be a modular, more efficient and lower cost effort compared to the previous class of Ohio submarines. The Navy is hoping to keep the cost of each ORP to below \$5 billion in 2010 dollars for boats 2 through 12, service officials said.

"The early investment in development and rapid prototype and testing the integrated tube and hull is essential to reduce construction costs and to shorten the overall construction time span for both the U.S. and UK SSBN programs," Brougham said.

In 2012, General Dynamics Electric Boat was awarded a five-year research and development deal for the ORP with a value up to \$1.85 billion. The contract contains specific incentives for lowering cost and increasing manufacturing efficiency, Navy and Electric Boat officials said. The first ORP boat is slated to be operational by 2031.

With the prior Ohio-class, the manufacturing technique first worked from an empty hull cylinder and then cut holes for missile tubes, Wilson added. The new strategy is designed to maximize efficiency and construct key elements before they are connected to an integrated boat.

The U.S. and U.K. are together immersed in a common missile compartment effort for ORP. In fact, the U.S. and U.K. are buying parts together for the common missile compartment and working on a \$770 million contract with General Dynamics' Electric Boat. The U.S. plans to build 12 ORPs, each with 16 missile tubes, and the U.K. plans to build four nuclear-armed ballistic submarines, each with 12 missile tubes.

The ORP is being designed with a series of next-generation technologies, many of them from the Virginia-Class attack submarine. In particular, the ORP will utilize Virginia-class's fly-by-wire joystick control system and large-aperture bow array sonar.

The ORP will also use Virginia-class's next-generation communications system, antennas and mast. For instance, what used to be a periscope is now a camera mast connected to fiber-optic cable, enabling crew members in the submarine to see images without needing to stand beneath the periscope. This allows designers to move command and control areas to larger

parts of the ship and still have access to images from the camera mast, Electric Boat and Navy officials said.

ORP is also being engineered with a new, more powerful nuclear reactor core compared with existing Ohio-class submarines, Navy and Electric Boat officials explained. This will enable a submarine to serve for as long as 42 years without needing what's called mid-life refueling of its nuclear reactor. This is part of the reason the Navy believes it can effectively complete its mission requirements with twelve SSBN boats, Navy officials said.

In the news

Pentagon to allow religion based grooming standards

A clean shave and a boot-camp buzz cut are no longer mandatory for adherents of religions whose grooming practices differ from those traditionally required by the U.S. military.

The Pentagon has announced that beards, turbans, religious body art and other previously off-limits manifestations of spiritual devotion can now be allowed throughout the military. The policy also OKs other religious practices not related to appearance.

The requests for religious accommodation should "reflect sincerely held beliefs" and not damage military readiness, unit cohesion or good order and discipline, according to a revised Defense Department instruction on accommodation of religious practices.

The policy has its limits, but is designed to allow troops free expression of their religion, as required by Congress in the 2013 National Defense Authorization act, a spokesman said. Jews, Sikhs and Muslims in the military are among those who in recent years have sought greater latitude in order to comply with their beliefs.

Congress to Hagel: Keep 11 Aircraft Carriers

Eleven members of Congress have signed a letter to Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel asking that he make sure the Navy retains its current fleet-size of 11 aircraft carriers.

The group of lawmakers expressed concern about a fast-changing global threat environment and strongly cautioned against reducing the number of carriers in the Navy. The letter was written out of concern that ongoing budget deliberations regarding the upcoming 2015 defense budget submission might shrink the carrier fleet to 10.

The Pentagon is expected to present their budget request on March 4. Cuts across all services are expected to make up for sequestration reductions that will reduce the military's budget by \$500 billion over the next 10 years.

The letter emphasizes the need for 11 carriers for the purpose of forward presence and an ever-widening range of global missions.

"The Secretary of the Navy was right this past fall when he noted that a smaller aircraft carrier fleet would be unable to execute the missions described in the Defense Strategic Guidance," Rep. Randy Forbes, Chairman of the House Armed Services Seapower and Projection Forces Subcommittee, said in a statement.

The congressman went on to say that a cut to the 11-carrier fleet would limit the Navy's ability to "deter aggression" and "respond to crises in a timely manner."

"It is unacceptable to pretend that the United States lives in anything less than an 11 carrier world given China's growing assertiveness in the Asia-Pacific, rising instability in the Middle East and the persistent danger of global terrorism," he said.

The letter was signed by a bipartisan group of lawmakers, including Rep. Howard "Buck" McKeon, R-Calif., Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, and Rep. Mike McIntyre, D.-N.C.

The lawmakers make the point that the demand upon the Navy for the technologies and capabilities provided by carriers is likely to keep increasing, therefore underscoring the need to maintain a fleet of 11.

"With the United States entering an era where our sea-services are likely to be called on to provide more presence, deterrence, and engagement throughout the Indo-Pacific littoral and across the globe, we believe now is the time to reinvest in our fleet, not look for ways to reduce its size and accept greater risk," the letter states.

Benes

Senators Vow COLA Cap Repeal

Democrats and Republicans on the Senate Armed Services Committee have vowed Tuesday to pass with unusual speed a bill to roll back the cap on cost-of-living adjustments for military retirees under age 62, long before it can ding anyone's retired pay or cause more damage to troop morale.

"You guys have already won," Sen. James Inhofe (Okla.), ranking Republican, assured military association leaders who testified against the recent devaluation of military retirement as part of the Bipartisan Budget Act.

At the same hearing, senior Defense officials said for the first time since the COLA cap became law that they too want all retirees and the current force protected from it and any future changes to retirement.

Christine H. Fox, acting deputy defense secretary, and Navy Adm. James A. Winnefeld, vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs, clarified DoD support for full repeal of the cap. Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel had not yet done so, telling journalists and troops only that the cap should be modified to protect medically retired and survivors, which Congress has done.

But Fox said if Congress elects to retain the COLA cap for other younger military retirees, "we strongly recommend it be modified to include grandfathering."

Winnefeld said COLA caps one percent below inflation, set to start January 2016, have caused "considerable and understandable anxiety" among retirees and careerists. It also ignores past guidance from military leaders who have said current retirees and members already in service should be protected from any changes to retirement.

Though not mentioning Congressman Ryan(R-Wis) by name, several senators asked Fox and Winnefeld whether they or anyone in DoD had proposed, consulted on or supported the COLA cap. Both answered no.

"To my knowledge," Winnefeld said, "there were no DoD officials consulted. We heard about it in the end game, as other people did."

Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) gave the budget committee a verbal slap for the cap, suggesting members are "not known for their expertise on military personnel issues."

"This didn't come out of the budget committee," Sen. Roger F. Wicker (R-Miss.), who serves on that committee, shot back. "It came from behind closed doors and was authored by two individuals and presented to us as a package, take it or leave it."

Wicker also rejected Fox's recommendation that Congress delay repealing the COLA cap until after the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission delivers its report next February.

That "doesn't make any sense if we're all in agreement" on repeal, Wicker told her. "Unless you want to hold out the possibility that we may stick with this."

Wicker reminded any colleagues inclined to delay COLA cap repeal, perhaps to avoid a near-term fight over how to pay for it, that Defense officials gave assurances over and over for more than a year that budget sequestration wouldn't happen. And it did.

The COLA cap represents a broken promise, Wicker said.

"And now we are being told, 'Let's just wait 13 months before we fix that.' I can't go along with that," he said. Committee colleagues soon became a chorus for swift repeal.

The next panel of witnesses added to it. Retired Gen. Gordon Sullivan, former Army chief of staff and president of the Association of the U.S. Army, told senators that in 36 years of service he never had to worry about the safety of his retirement. The COLA cap, however, has this force worried.

Sullivan urged swift repeal too so soldiers "sitting around a stove in Afghanistan in the middle of the night will not be talking about this issue."

ARE COMMISSARY PRICES AT RISK?

The Department of Defense is considering alternatives to lower the \$1.4 billion subsidy for base commissaries.

The proposals, if adopted, would reduce savings for patrons, which average 30 percent for comparable products compared to prices in civilian stores, and perhaps over time put some stateside stores at risk.

For the fiscal 2015 defense budget request to be delivered to Congress in early March, he said, Defense officials are weighing a plan to make graduated cuts in the commissary subsidy so deep it falls to \$400 million by fiscal 2017.

Tools sought from Congress to achieve such dramatic budget cuts, and still preserve attractive grocery discounts on base, include:

-- Lifting the ceiling of five percent on the surcharge patrons pay at checkout. Allowing the Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA) authority to raise the surcharge would help it meet lowered budget targets.

-- Passing on to suppliers more than \$150 million in transportation costs now paid by DeCA. Suppliers could be expected to pass some of their added costs on to patrons in form of higher product prices.

-- Authorize "variable pricing" in commissaries to level out and lower overall patron savings. The business model would shift from selling groceries at cost plus a surcharge to cost plus a variable margin and a surcharge.

A decade ago, the Bush administration ordered a \$500,000 study of variable pricing for commissaries. It found the complexity of such a move likely would lead to higher operating costs and so advised against it.