



NAVAL ENLISTED  
RESERVE ASSOCIATION  
WINDY CITY CHAPTER



Jul-Aug 2014 Edition  
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Volume 14 Edition 2

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***From The WCC Newsletter Editor***

Aug 2014

Shipmates:

Jim Premeske, WCC

Windy City Chapter has endured more than an acceptable share of turmoil in recent months. Personnel transfers, serious illnesses and treatments, substitution of officers.

Just when it seemed issues might straighten out, came the last minute revelation that our long term arrangement with the Park Ridge VFW was being unilaterally rescinded by their management. Determining a new location necessitates several criteria: a central, readily interstate accessible geographical location, a tolerable rent policy, and the assurance that there will be some degree of permanency.

It's appropriate to review the amalgamated nature of the current Windy City. Our backbone group derives from Great Lakes, Glenview, Forest Park and of course the Randolph St. Naval Armory. Today the only functional Chicago area NERA group is Windy City Chapter, and those responsible for its success have every reason to be proud of their accomplishment.

In addition to the now defunct military facilities, WCC met for ten years at CPO-1 Club, while it operated at the Chicago Avenue National Guard Armory, moved to the O'Hare Com Club with the Chiefs for about three years, before relocating to the Park Ridge VFW about nineteen years ago. We are grateful to each of our hosts for their hospitality.

HENCEFORTH, WCC will meet at the Northlake American Legion Post on the 2nd Tuesday of even numbered months. Windy City Chapter is welcome to hold our meetings there every other month, at no cost to the chapter. **The Post is located in Northlake on the South side of North Ave. (RT 64), West of Mannheim (RT 12/45) and East of Wolf RD.**

Butch, Kathleen, Ed, Paul, Anthony (Lewandowski) and Andy are all both Nera and Members of this Post. Ed Whiteside is the Adjutant at the Post and has been for several years.

Editor

See you at WCC's meeting: **@ 2000 August 12<sup>th</sup> @ our new meeting site the Northlake American Legion Post.**

**Mark Your Calendar:**

Meetings are conducted at 2000 on the second Tuesdays of even numbered months at the Northlake American Legion Post.

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

**Windy City Chapter meeting minutes** – June meeting lacked a quorum. Camaraderie and socializing ensued. No business conducted.

Annual NERA WC Chapter picnic/fish fry will be held at Nickelson's house (as usual). 4 DanMar Trail, Tinley Park, IL  
Date: **23 August 2014**

Time: 1400hours(2:00pm) until????

Cost: \$10.00/person(covers main entrees and beverages)

Guests Bring: appetizers, snacks, salads, side dishes, or desserts...**And Bug spray; the bugs are bringing their appetites also**

**RSVP: by 16 August 2014 (please respond with either yes or no) Please adhere to the deadline- we need time to shop for the food**

**Featured Story: Could this spell the end of a 130 year old navy Tradition?** The rate name Chief has come under fire by native American groups who insist it is past time for Government entities such as the military to dismiss these "racial stereotypes", including not only the Navy enlisted rate but also the way some military aircraft are named, such as: Apache, Kiowa Tomahawk, etc. The DOD is considering the merit (if any) of these complaints, and possible alternatives: Navy Sergeant First, Sergeant Second and even Sergeant Elitist (E-9). A DOD spokesman has stated that no matter what alternative is selected, the terms Navy Chief, Senior Chief and Master Chief can no longer be tolerated as they are racially offensive. **EDITOR'S NOTE: WHAT CAN THESE PEOPLE BE THINKING!! LEAVE OUR LONG STANDING TRADITIONS INTACT.**

In the news

## Enlisted Women to Join Sub Crews Starting in 2016



The Department of the Navy plans to add enlisted women crewmembers to seven Ohio-class submarines starting in 2016 and to four Virginia-class attack submarines beginning in 2020.

The Navy's most recent integration plan was given to Congress on July 18 and likely won't be released to the general public until the end of the year because Congress must have 30 days of continuous session -- days when both chambers are in session -- to review the plan.

The costs of providing separate sleeping quarters for women and adding lavatory signs are minimal compared to shipbuilding costs in general. "This plan does not affect the existing Los Angeles-class submarines," he said. "If they had to modify that, that would cost money because they weren't built for gender class separation. But the Ohio-class subs were so big that it really wasn't that difficult to set up sleeping quarters for women only and make sure lavatories have proper signage."

Building the new Virginia-class attack submarines to accommodate women's quarters shouldn't require large design or construction changes.

The integration plan calls for women to make up 20 percent of the enlisted crew of submarines on which female officers are already serving. More than 60 women officers are serving on 14 ballistic-missile and guided-missile submarine crews.

Female officers began integrating into the submarine force in 2011 after the Navy lifted its ban on women serving aboard submarines in 2010. Female officers will be arriving at the Naval Submarine Base in Groton by January 2015 to join the crews of the attack submarines USS Virginia (SSN 774) and the USS Minnesota (SSN 783).

The USS Michigan (SSGN 727) is the first submarine that enlisted women would report to in 2016, according to integration plan. Women would be able to serve in all job positions on submarines formerly closed to enlisted women.

Opportunities for enlisted women are changing because in 2013 the DoD retracted the 1994 Direct Ground Combat Definition and Assignment Rule, which excluded women from being assigned "to units below the brigade level whose primary mission was to engage in direct combat on the ground."

"The Navy, we are very excited to roll out this plan because we believe, and again we have been very persistent about this, that there are very capable women who have the talent and desire to succeed in the submarine force," said Timothy Hawkins, a spokesman for Submarine Group 2. "Drawing from this talent helps us maintain the world's best force."

The integration plan released to Congress is the result of a 60-person task force led by Rear Adm. Kenneth M. Perry.

*Editor's Note: I do not believe that I may comment on every article; but this one I cannot pass up. Yes the 110+*

year tradition of the "silent service" will no longer be silent; on the other hand, submariners have long been denied the "hands on" experience to be experienced from serving with our female counterparts. I suppose I could get accustomed to serving under a female; how can we traditionalists complain of "don't ask, don't tell" or same sex marriages if we fail to accept the inevitability of the male/female relationship...I guess I'm just jealous it didn't happen on my watch!

## SECNAV Mabus: Stealth DD's, LCS Headed to Pacific



The [Navy](#) will send new [stealth destroyers](#), [littoral combat ships](#) and an amphibious ready group to the Pacific, Navy Secretary Ray Mabus said Monday, reiterating the U.S. commitment to its military "pivot" to the region. "The rebalance to the Pacific is real," Mabus told sailors gathered at Yokosuka's Fleet Theater for an all-hands call.

President Barack Obama announced plans for the Pacific pivot as the interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan were winding down. But conflicts in Syria, Ukraine and Gaza have since heated up, raising questions about the best use of forces amid dwindling military budgets. Obama reassured Pacific allies of his support during a recent visit against a backdrop of Chinese expansionism and North Korean threats.

"We are sending our newest and most modern platforms to the Pacific," Mabus said. "What the Navy and [Marine Corps](#) give is presence ... to reassure allies, deter potential adversaries and be ready for whatever comes over the horizon."

The first of three new stealth destroyers — the \$3.3 billion USS Zumwalt — is under construction, and two more ships in its class will follow, Mabus told the sailors, "We don't know exactly where we are going to put them," he said, but added: "at least some of these will come to the Pacific."

Mabus arrived in Japan fresh from a visit last Thursday to the USS Independence, the second littoral combat ship to

be commissioned, while it participated in exercises off Hawaii.

The ships, designed to operate in shallow waters, can be configured for a range of missions such as mine clearing, anti-submarine warfare and surface combat.

Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel said in February that the Navy would not contract for any more than 32 littoral combat ships, 20 less than the Navy planned for. The LCS has come under criticism in recent years for its lighter armament and lower survivability standard than some of the larger ships currently in the fleet.

However, Mabus told the sailors: "The LCS is going to be one of the most crucial ships we have."

Four of the ships will deploy to Singapore, he said, noting that the ships can travel "way faster than 40 knots" and access more places in the Pacific than other vessels.

The \$800 million cost for each of the first experimental versions of the LCS has dropped drastically to about \$350 million each, he said.

"We can afford these and we can buy a lot of them," he said.

The next LCS to deploy to Singapore will be the USS Fort Worth, which is the same type of vessel as the Freedom. It's expected to deploy later this year for 16 months after it completes operational tests.

Mabus said also that the Navy will send an additional amphibious ready group to the Pacific.

**Benes** This column used to be called benies but, given the recent tempo of uniform changes, and the presence of chronic benefit reductions, a return to a favored, logical policy is a benefit.

### Sailors Happy to Wear Baseball Caps Again



NORFOLK -- Sailors stationed in [Norfolk](#) and across the country rejoiced this month when the [Navy](#) announced

plans to rework a few paragraphs in its nearly 400-page uniform policy.

Beginning later this year, the sea service will once again allow sailors to wear their official command baseball caps with the Navy's standard working uniform -- the digitized blue camouflage they wear most days while in port.

The sailors shared their opinions aboard the guided missile destroyer Winston S. Churchill on Thursday at Norfolk Naval Station. While they talked in the chiefs' mess, multicolored baseball caps embroidered with the ship's logo hung overhead. That's where the hats stay most of the time under the Navy's uniform code.

Bringing the caps down more often "will be a big boost to morale," said Command Master Chief Myla Presco, the top enlisted sailor aboard the Churchill. "It's a return to a great tradition." The sailors spoke passionately about the uniform rule change, but they acknowledged that most civilians probably wouldn't understand. What's the big deal about ball caps? Sailors collected ball caps from each ship or command where they served. Baseball hats lined shelves in the work spaces or staterooms of senior officers. Sailors proudly wore their ball caps around town while in uniform

Turns out, sailors have been wearing hats marked with the names of their ships since at least 1869, according to records on file at the Navy Heritage and History Command in Washington. Back then, sailors wore a visorless cloth cap with the ship's name painted on a white band draped over top. The Navy began allowing service members to wear baseball caps embroidered with their command's logo in the 1970s, cementing the tradition in the modern era.

.Five years ago, the Navy rolled out its new blue camouflage working uniforms. They came with a matching eight-point cover modeled after a Marine Corps cap. The change also came with a few new pages in the Navy's voluminous uniform code. Command baseball caps could still be paired with the less formal coveralls worn by sailors at sea, but they were no longer acceptable in most work settings at shore-based commands or while ships were in port.

The message from the sailors to senior naval leaders has been consistent since the change: Bring back the ball caps. That message finally got through. Beginning this fall, commanding officers at individual commands will have the authority to decide whether their sailors can wear command ball caps with Navy working uniforms. Sailors are optimistic most skippers will sign off.

Presco, whose job description includes building camaraderie among the enlisted crew aboard the

Churchill, said the return of ball caps will make that part of her job easier.

## VA reform bill still provides for excessive bonuses

Despite public outrage over dysfunctional and dangerously run hospitals, a landmark VA reform bill to be signed This week by President Barack Obama will retain some department perks: Hefty bonuses for executives and other employees.

The bill includes a compromise by House and Senate lawmakers allowing the Department of Veterans Affairs to continue handing out up to \$360 million in employee performance awards each year as it attempts to overhaul its health care system and ease chronically long patient wait times.

Obama has announced he will sign the legislation Thursday during a ceremony at Fort Belvoir, Va., after overwhelming votes of support in Congress. It will begin the most comprehensive VA reform in decades by expanding access to private care, hiring more medical staff, and streamlining how executives are fired.

The cap on employee performance awards, which totaled \$278 million across the department in 2013, was a product of fractious House and Senate negotiations in late July.

House lawmakers led by Rep. Jeff Miller, R-Fla., chairman of the chamber's Veterans Affairs Committee, wanted to completely eliminate VA bonuses due to gross mismanagement, according to committee staff.

In one case, the VA awarded a nearly \$63,000 bonus to a Pittsburgh hospital administrator after an investigation in April found his facility failed to prevent a deadly outbreak of legionnaires disease among veterans.

The committee reported in June that about 65 percent of the department's senior executives received bonuses specifically for high performance -- ranging between about \$7,000 and \$12,000 -- and all were given fully successful performance reviews during last year, even as staff across the country used secret lists to hide the fact hundreds of thousands of vets wait weeks or months for treatment.

But the Democrats in the Senate opposed the elimination of bonuses when Congress called a conference committee in June to hammer out a compromise bill to fix the VA.

In a final joint statement, lawmakers said the VA should ensure annual performance bonuses are not disproportionately spent on upper management.