



NAVAL ENLISTED
RESERVE ASSOCIATION
WINDY CITY CHAPTER



July-August 2015 Edition
P.O. Box 4562 Rockford, IL 61110
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Steve Devereaux

N.E.R.A. Preamble

- The security and future of this great Republic, depend in part, on the maintenance of a strong and well trained Coast Guard, Marine Corps and Naval Reserve Forces.
- These forces consist primarily of enlisted personnel.
- It is essential to the strength, effectiveness, and direction of these forces, that the enlisted membership contain a nucleus of dedicated career personnel.
- In the interest of National Defense.
- A voluntary, nonprofit organization shall be formed, with active membership comprised exclusively of Enlisted Reservists.
- Dedicated and pledged to promote and maintain, by concerted mutual effort, career service in the United States Coast Guard, United States Marine Corps, and the United States Navy Reserve.

Presidents Notes:

Hello Windy City Chapter,
I heard that June was a good summer meeting. I wish I could have been there to see everyone. I'd like to remind everyone that the August meeting is on Tuesday, August 11. It will be held at: American Legion Post 888, 241 E. North Ave. Northlake, IL 60164
I hope to see everyone there. The main thing I'd like on the agenda is the National Conference. I'd also like to remind everybody that the picnic is Saturday, August 15. It will be held at the John and Darlene Nickelson's.
The address is:
4 DanMar Trail
Palos Park, IL 60464
Respectfully,
Edward Whiteside, President, NERA Windy City Chapter

Mark Your Calendar: August 11, 2015 Meeting!

Meetings are conducted at 2000 hours on the second Tuesday of even numbered months:
At the American Legion Post in Northlake, IL

List of Attendees:

Andy Anderson	Gene Koelker
Vicki Koehnke	Connie Koehnke
Alan Koehnke	Butch Michaelson
John Nickelson	Darlene Nickelson
Dennis Devitt	Larry Monroe
Verna Koelker	Paul Smurawski

Special guests: Penny Padour & Jerry Padour

W C Chapter meeting minutes – June 9, 2015

April 2015 newsletter was accepted as stated. MX-Gene Koelker, 2X-Darlene Nickelson.
Treasurer's Report: Accept the Treasure report as stated- MX-Butch Michaelson, 2 X- Alan Koehnke.
Sunshine Fund: No activity to report.
Executive Council: In June 2015, visited Great Lakes and at the present time there is no Master Chief at the Reserve Center. CPO selectee will be at the end of July 2015. The Next drill weekend will be July 11; will visit for search of new members.

Old Business:

-WILL TABLE THIS EVENT-JSOQ & SOQ at Great Lakes has multiple units, we need clarification from the NAS, what will be best of the Windy City Chapter to support for the JSOQ or should we present just for "Sailor of the Year".

New Business:

-2015 NERA National Conference, Steve Sandy is planning to run for National President. Windy City Chapter needs to send a letter of recommendation to Steve Sandy. Motion from Gene Koelker, 2X-John Nickelson, will present \$500.00 to our Chapter President or if the President cannot make the National Conference, his appointed chapter representative \$500.00 towards expenses to attend the National Conference. Amended motion from MX-John Nickelson, 2X-Dennis Devitt to reduce the amount to \$300.00, Show of hands YES-8, NO-3, then Amended motion by MX-Gene Koelker, 2X-Butch Michaelson to increase the amount to \$400.00. Show of hands were YES-4, NO-10. Approved was \$300.00 to the Chapter representative at the National Conference. MX-Gene Koelker, 2X-Darlene Nickelson Motion was made for Chapter Secretary to write a letter that the Chapter representative attending the Conference endorses/carries the Chapter vote for elections. MX-Gene Koelker, 2X-Butch Michaelson.

Good of the Chapter-

-Join the American Legion Post for 70th year of the Flag Day Event. For more information look at the American Legion Post website at www.1americanlegionpost888.com

-SAVE THE DATE for Annual Windy City Chapter Picnic/Fish Fry. Date: Saturday August 15 @ 14:00. Cost \$10.00, Bring a dish, appetizer and/or dessert to share.

Contact: John and Darlene Nickelson at 708-448-1300 or email address: bmcnick@sbcglobal.net.

-Windy City Chapter inventory of the NERA's NAVY Reserve 100 year Commemorative Coin is out of stock and we need to order more coins from Headquarters. A motion was made to order 20 more coins. MX-Butch Michaelson, 2X-Koelker. John Nickelson withdraws the original motion to add 25, amend vote of 30 coins needs to be ordered. Final motion MX-Butch Michaelson, 2X-

Gene Koelker.

-Guest Penny Padour talked about National Conference. Cutoff date for block of rooms at hotel is September 14, 2015. Make your reservation early. Check website/Marine for registration form.

-Alan Koehnke won 50/50 raffle.

-Motion to adjourn @ 21:22 MX-Butch Michaelson, 2X John Nickelson.

Retirement reform needs troops' input

Our country requires capable armed forces in defense of our security and interests abroad. As former service members, we understand how critical pay and benefits are to our troopers and their families. The military's compensation and retirement systems are integral to maintaining the most professional and competent all-volunteer force the world has ever seen.

While we applaud much of the thoughtful work of the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission, specifically "grand-fathering" any significant changes, we have serious concerns surrounding the retirement recommendation and its expedited implementation authorized in the Fiscal Year 2016 National Defense Authorization Act.

The commission's retirement recommendation replaces the current military retirement system which rewards and incentivizes 20 years or more of service with a 401(k)-style plan with vested benefits at three years of service. While the commission may well be right in this recommendation, we don't have the data nor the broad input from troops needed to back it up. All we have is one poll, completed by the commission, about its own recommendations. We need broader input from troops on the ground.

Without it, we won't know or be ready to deal with any consequences of changing the retirement system, which some have said could affect retention of the midgrade noncommissioned officer and officer corps, the military professionals who achieved an expert level of proficiency at their profession.

Reps. Chris Gibson, above, and Tim Walz say that military retirement reform's impact on retention of midcareer service members has to be fully explored. (Photo: Mike Groll /AP)

Very few Americans join the military knowing for certain it will be their career. Multiple moves, dangerous deployments and stress on families, including uprooting children from their schools, make the choice to stay in the military for 20 years a hard one.

The key issue at stake is retention of midcareer professionals, a central dimension in an all-volunteer force. We need seasoned military officers and noncommissioned officers now more than ever and one of the largest incentives for keeping these professionals on track to a 20-year (or longer) career is the current retirement system. Currently, the retirement compensation that a service member receives after 20 years of service is significantly greater than the benefits received by a service member who separates from service a day earlier than 20 years.

As many have argued, this type of retirement system may need tweaking, and certainly partial benefits to the 83 percent of troopers who depart from service before 20 years is welcomed by many. However, if we make changes, we must do so in a way that carefully considers the input from troops and their families, and works to mitigate negative impacts.

On recent visits with troops in several states, we heard anecdotally from many service members who had similar concerns. As a senior service member said, "These new changes [to the retirement system] de-incentivize senior members. They will change to civilian positions." Another soldier stated, "The fighting years are 18 to 38 years old. If you offer TSP [a 401(k)-style plan] with college benefits, I'm gone."

It is not our goal to prevent any policy changes, but rather to slow the process and allow time to talk with service members, building a consensus across the armed forces as to what is the best way forward and remain flexible and open to all modifications going forward. We encourage our colleagues in Congress to visit military bases and speak firsthand to service members, families and veterans about this and other proposals from the MCRMC. Be prepared to legislate fixes to these recommendations based on feedback that ensures the retention of midcareer professionals, so that the all-volunteer force remains viable in the 21st century.

NERA's 58th Annual Conference

Join us at the:

Holiday Inn Norfolk Airport

1570 N. Military Hwy., Norfolk, VA 23502

To reserve a room:

Phone: (757) 213-2231

Fax: (757) 213-2232

Go to: nera.org for more information.

The dates are: October 14 - 18, 2015

Commissary privatization

The uncertainty stems from a bit of confusion over two seemingly contradictory provisions in the Senate's draft version of the 2016 defense authorization bill.

Neither provision appears in the House's draft of the policy bill, which means lawmakers from both chambers will have to address the issue when they meet to iron out a single compromise version of the bill later this year.

And some sources are concerned that conferees could resuscitate the issue of commissary privatization at the negotiating table.

The original provision passed by the Senate Armed Services Committee required the Defense Department to develop a plan for private companies to operate commissaries, and test the plan for two years in at least five of the largest U.S. commissary markets. That original privatization plan was rendered "null and void" after an amendment to block it was approved on the Senate floor by voice vote.

Yet in a classic example of how arcane legislative procedures can be, both the original plan and the amendment to kill it were passed by the full Senate as part of its draft bill.

Two Capitol Hill staffers told Military Times that the original privatization provision stayed in the bill because of technicalities related to how it was passed in the Senate, attached to another amendment.

The subsequent provision, while blocking that privatization plan, requires DoD to assess the idea and the effects of privatizing before developing any plans to privatize commissaries, or conducting any privatization test.

The two provisions will have to be discussed in the House-Senate conference, since the House version of the bill contains neither provision, said Dustin

Walker, spokesman for the Senate Armed Services Committee.

There is a chance lawmakers could choose to go with the original privatization plan in the Senate bill, said another source who is familiar with the process.

But the source said considerable confusion seems to reign over this issue at the moment: "Didn't the Senate throw out the implementation plan? ... I've never seen anything like it. When something is voted out, it's voted out."

The House and Senate versions of the defense policy bill have other major differences concerning commissaries.

A Senate proposal would eliminate the law that requires commissaries to sell all items at cost, which has been the rule for nearly 150 years. Instead, stores would have to mark up prices to cover operating expenses. Among other things, the Senate bill includes a provision that would allow the costs of overseas transportation of groceries to be factored into the prices charged to commissary customers worldwide.

"These actions will destroy the commissary benefit by changing the guiding principle for commissary operations from providing savings of over 30 percent, to an emphasis on recovering costs as the primary factor for their existence," wrote the Coalition to Save our Military Shopping Benefits in a July 9 letter to the leaders of the House and Senate Armed Services committees. The coalition is comprised of 18 organizations, most of them military and veterans service organizations." Pentagon leaders have presented these measures as 'efficiencies,' when in fact they transfer costs from appropriations to the patron," the coalition stated.

Today, the commissary system's annual \$1.4 billion budget covers all operating expenses so that groceries can be sold at cost, plus a 5 percent surcharge at the register that goes to fund commissary construction and repair costs.

Stateside Travel: On the Go with TRICARE

Whether you travel for business or pleasure, it's important to know that TRICARE is portable and travels with you wherever you go. You should receive all routine care and get your prescriptions filled before traveling. If you have a medication that you take regularly, get enough to take with you and be sure to pack your medication in your carry-on luggage.

With routine care complete, your only health care concern

should be urgent or emergency care. Your first line of defense when deciding what kind of care you need is TRICARE's Nurse Advice Line (NAL) at 1-800-TRICARE (874-2273). A registered nurse can answer your urgent care questions and schedule next-day appointments at military hospitals and clinics if necessary. Best of all, the NAL is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, so there is no need to worry about availability as you travel between time zones.

In the event of an emergency, you should seek care at an [emergency](#) facility. If you use TRICARE Prime and need emergency care, be sure to notify your primary care manager (PCM) or regional contractor within 24 hours or the next business day. If you think you only need urgent care, get a referral from your primary care manager or call the NAL to get advice on when and how to seek care for an urgent problem.

Standard beneficiaries can visit any TRICARE-authorized, network or non-network provider; simply call the doctor to schedule an appointment. Referrals are not required, but you may need prior authorization from your [regional contractor](#) for some services. If you use a non-network provider, you may have to file your own claim. You may also have to pay up front for your care, so look for a network provider for treatment and save your receipts to file a claim later. Using a network provider exercises the TRICARE Extra option giving you a five percent cost-share discount. US Family Health plan participants should call customer service 1-800-748-7347 for care. Be sure to save all your health care receipts. Beneficiaries enrolled in the US Family Health Plan cannot use the Nurse Advice Line. TRICARE Overseas Program (TOP) beneficiaries traveling in the United States can call the Nurse Advice Line for health care advice, but if they ultimately seek care from a provider, they will need to call their [TOP Regional Call Center](#) to coordinate care. TRICARE covers services that are medically necessary and proven safe and effective. For information about your health plan, visit the [TRICARE](#) website.

"Originality is the fine art of remembering what you hear but forgetting where you heard it."