



NAVAL ENLISTED  
RESERVE ASSOCIATION  
WINDY CITY CHAPTER



Mar-Apr 2013 Edition  
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*From The WCC President*

April, 2013

Shipmates:  
We are just six months away from the 2013 National Conference. Things are getting so exciting! Let me update you:

**Fundraiser 31 DAYS 39 WAYS:** A big thank you to the following people for helping with this fundraiser: Andy A., John and Darlene N., Alan and Vicki K., Paul S., Jerry and Frank P., and all of those that sold tickets, taught others about NERA and kept us going. Also, a big thanks to those that went above and beyond donations to our chapter's conference funds: Bill P., Ed S. and others. (Sorry: Lost all data due to computer virus). You know who you are; Our deepest thanks. Our winners were: Butch M., Gene H., Bill P., Forrest G., Deborah R., Ed S., F. N., Bill R., Mark T., L. H., Mike T., Jim S., Kent G., SCPO., Tony M., Ed W., Bob H. CONGRATULATIONS!!

Moving on; we are working on passing the word about the conference. Some of you have received email, mail and have visited our [www.wcchapter.org](http://www.wcchapter.org) website. We will be also manning a table at Great Lakes every drill weekend until the conference with registration forms, etc. for our conference.

Go ahead and reserve your room at the Ramada Inn, 847 244-2400. Be sure to mention NERA. Remember, our conference will occur 16 – 19 OCT. If you want to help in any way, please feel free to call 815 893-4444 or email [nerawindycity@hotmail.com](mailto:nerawindycity@hotmail.com). Penny Padour, WCC President

See you at our meeting: @ 2000 April 9<sup>th</sup> at the 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 2013 is as follows: April 9<sup>th</sup>, June 11<sup>th</sup>, Aug 13<sup>th</sup>, Oct 15<sup>th</sup>, and Dec 3<sup>rd</sup>

**Planning Ahead!**

2013 NERA National Conference- Oct 16-19

**Windy City Chapter meeting minutes –2-12-2013**

Meeting of the Windy City Chapter convened at 20:00. Pres., Treas, Exec. Coun. & Sec. present.

**Nominating Committee Report:** 2013-2014 Officers sworn in. Due to Vice President's absence he was not sworn in.

**Newsletter & website reports:** Due to webmaster's computer operating system upgrade most members did not receive their copy of the newsletter. Approved Gene Koelker, 2x Andy Anderson.  
**Treas. Report:** Approved Vicki Koehnke, 2x John Nickelson  
**New Business:** Since we are still short in fund raising dollars, Andy suggested selling candy from fundraiser resource Bob Berg. Motion to accept selling candy-X Andy, 2x Anthony. We are going to purchase 2 cases at \$288.00 to bring extra fund raising dollars in to help with the conference. **Good of the Chapter-** Gene Koelker suggested inviting Vadm Robin Braun to our 2013 conference. She is a Glenview reservist. See website [www.ausn.org](http://www.ausn.org). Gene Koelker won 50/50-\$35.00 went to the winner & 34.00 to the chapter. Motion to **adjourn** @ 21:10 X Darlene Nickelson, 2X Gene Koelker

### **Navy Lays Keel for PCU John Warner**

The Navy celebrated the keel laying of Pre-Commissioning Unit (PCU) John Warner (SSN 785) at Huntington Ingalls Industries - Newport News Shipbuilding (HII -NNS) in Newport News, Va., March 16. The submarine is named for former five-term U.S. Senator from Virginia and Secretary of the Navy John Warner.

In a time-honored Navy tradition, the initials of Warner's wife Jeanne, the submarine's sponsor, were welded onto a steel plate that will be permanently affixed to the submarine's hull. Mrs. Warner is a long-time supporter of military families and is active in many Virginia-based charities. Making the ceremony unique, the submarine's namesake also had his initials welded onto the plate.

"The Navy and the submarine force are honored to have Mrs. Warner serve as the sponsor for the future USS John Warner," said class program manager Capt. David Goggins.

The keel laying is the submarine's first major event since it began construction in March 2010. The submarine is on track to continue the Virginia-class program's trend of delivering submarines early to their contract delivery dates and meeting the incredibly stringent standards expected of U.S. submarines.

John Warner is the 12th submarine of the Virginia class and the second of the block III construction contract. Virginia-class submarines are built under a unique construction contract between Ingalls-Newport News and General Dynamics- Electric Boat.

Prospective Crew Unit Minnesota's (SSN 783) commissioning is scheduled for Sept. 7 and PCU North Dakota's (SSN 784) christening is expected this fall. PCU Delaware (SSN 791) will begin construction Sept. 2.

Virginia Class submarines are designed to dominate the world's littoral and deep waters while conducting anti-submarine warfare; anti-surface ship warfare; strike warfare (cruise missiles); special operation forces support; intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance; irregular warfare; and mine warfare missions. Their inherent stealth, endurance, mobility, and firepower directly enable them to support five of the six Maritime Strategy Core Capabilities - sea control, power projection, forward presence, maritime security, and deterrence. *Editor's note: To you WWII & Diesel Boats Forever shipmates: 'we've come a long way baby'.*

### **USS Ronald Reagan Heads Back To San Diego**



USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76) wrapped up more than a year's worth of maintenance and overhaul March 18 and headed back to her traditional homeport of San Diego.

In January 2012, Reagan executed an administrative homeport change to Bremerton, Wash., where it underwent multiple preservation and system upgrade projects at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard (PSNS) and Intermediate Maintenance Facility (IMF).

During the Docked Planned Incremental Availability (DPIA), the ship's force completed nearly 600,000 man hours of work on projects ranging from preservation of the ship's exterior and island structure to a complete overhaul of the ship's internal computer network.

More than 400 Ronald Reagan Sailors worked outside of their normal ratings and contributed to 14 DPIA teams that completed a variety of tasks. Cable, paint, deck, fire watch, valve, tank, and calibration teams were just some of the contributing forces that led to the ship's successful year.

In addition to the scheduled maintenance work, Reagan encountered unexpected challenges throughout the process which included work on the ship's main engines and rudders.

Reagan's successes, however, stretched far beyond the DPIA itself. Sailors from all of the ship's departments initiated more than 30 community service projects through the Kitsap County community.

"The Bremerton area and surrounding communities opened their arms to us the moment we arrived," said CO Burke. "From the time and effort our Chiefs' Mess spent helping to revitalize the Tomb of the Unknown at Ivy Green Cemetery to the weekends our junior Sailors volunteered at the local Veteran's Homes, we made it a point to serve those around us. It was a great pleasure to become a part of Bremerton, and we can't thank you enough for allowing us that opportunity."

Now, as Reagan wraps up a year of hard work and heads back to San Diego, the mission of operating at sea once again becomes the focus.

"Completing an availability like this ensures that Ronald Reagan reaches her 50-year life span," said Burke. "I'm confident that the last 14 months have put us in the perfect condition to do our nation's work."

## **Military Misconduct-**

### **USS Miami Arsonist sentenced to 17 years**

A shipyard worker who set fire to rags aboard a nuclear submarine because he wanted to go home was sentenced to a little more than 17 years in federal prison Friday for the blaze that transformed the vessel into a fiery furnace, injured seven people and caused about \$450 million in damage.

Casey James Fury also was ordered to pay \$400 million in restitution by a judge who weighed his lack of criminal record and the severity of the fire before imposing a 205-month prison sentence.

The 25-year-old Fury, formerly of Portsmouth, N.H., pleaded guilty to setting the May 23 fire while the USS Miami was undergoing a 20-month dry dock overhaul at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery.

The civilian painter and sand blaster told authorities that he wanted to go home because he was suffering from an anxiety attack. He told them he never envisioned such extensive damage when he used a lighter to set fire to a plastic bag of rags that he left on a bunk in a state room.

The blaze quickly grew into an inferno spewing superheated smoke that billowed from hatches. It took 12 hours and the efforts of more than 100 firefighters to save the submarine. Seven people were hurt.

Eric Hardy, a shipyard firefighter who suffered back and shoulder injuries fighting the blaze, called it the worst fire he had ever seen. "The best way I could describe it, sir, is fighting a fire in a wood stove and climbing down a chimney," Hardy told the judge.

Fury, who had been working in the torpedo room, fled to the safety of the pier, prosecutors said, and watched as firefighters went down hatches and into the burning Los Angeles class-attack submarine, staying inside for only minutes at a time because of smoke and blistering heat.

Hardy said the smoke inside the sub was so thick he couldn't see more than a foot and his flashlight was virtually useless. Firefighters had 20-minute air packs, but

it was so hard to get aboard the sub and move around inside that they were limited to two to three minutes of actual firefighting.

About three weeks later, Fury set a second fire outside the crippled sub, again because of anxiety. That fire caused no damage. He pleaded guilty to two counts of arson in November.

U.S. District Judge George J. Singal weighed the extreme damage caused by the fire against Fury's lack of criminal record, which consisted of one drunken driving arrest, in finding a sentence in the middle of the 235 months sought by prosecutors and 18 months sought by the defense. He said he was troubled that Fury set the second fire.

"One of the lessons is that a small fire can cause tremendous damage," Singal said. "Yet within a month he starts another one."

The first blaze damaged forward compartments including living quarters, a command and control center and the torpedo room. It did not reach the rear of the Groton, Conn.-based submarine, where the nuclear propulsion components are located.

Metallurgists who examined the hull found no major damage and the Navy determined it was cost-effective to repair the vessel with a goal of returning it to service in the middle of 2015. But its future is now uncertain. Repairs have been postponed under mandatory budget cuts known as sequestration.

A submarine group commander, said the ship's extensive damage had ripple effects around the Navy, delaying repairs on other vessels and leading to longer deployments for thousands of sailors.

### **USS Tortuga Cmd Master Chief relieved**



The command master chief (CMC) of USS Tortuga (LSD 46) was relieved of his duties on March 25 after a loss of confidence due to substandard performance.

CMDMCM(SW) Bryant Rice was relieved by Commander, Expeditionary Strike Group (ESG) 7, Rear Adm. Jeffrey Harley.

CMDMCM Donald Davis, currently assigned as CMC for ESG 7, will be acting CMC of USS Tortuga. Rice, who reported to Tortuga in 2011, has been temporarily reassigned to the staff of ESG 7. Tortuga is a Whidbey Island-class dock landing ship currently forward deployed to Sasebo, Japan as part of ESG 7.

### *In the news*

## **US, South Korea Agree on Plan if North Attacks**

The U.S. and South Korea signed a contingency plan Friday that gives South Korea both U.S. support and the lead in responding to future North Korea provocations.

The plan is apparently meant to address what one South Korean official described as small "local" North Korean attacks such as the November 2010 shelling of Yeonpyeong Island, which prompted defense officials to begin developing a Counter-Provocation Plan. That attack on the South Korean border island left four people, including two civilians, dead.

However, a statement released by U.S. Forces Korea offered little information about the contingency plan, including what constitutes a "provocation." The definition is important because the top U.S. general in South Korea currently would lead allied operations should war break out with North Korea.

"By completing this plan, we improved our combined readiness posture to allow us to immediately and decisively respond to any North Korean provocation," . .

A spokesman for South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said the contingency plan does not affect U.S. wartime operational control, although it was not specified when an attack will be considered local and when it will rise to a war threshold.

The Korean JCSs spokesman asserted "On our end, if there is a local provocation on our land, we have to respond to it."

He said the increasing seriousness of North Korean attacks prompted the chairmen of both countries' Joint Chiefs of Staffs to begin considering how to respond to other acts of aggression following Yeonpyeong. North Korea is believed to have torpedoed a South Korean warship in March 2010, killing 46 sailors on board, though Pyongyang denies involvement in the incident.

North Korea in recent weeks has increased its rhetoric against Washington and Seoul, threatening to turn both into a "sea of fire" following its third nuclear weapons test and the launch of a three-stage rocket.

Speculation has been widespread that the North may undertake some kind of provocation after the current exercises end as a test for South Korea's new president. However, the JCS spokesman said his country believes the prospect of a joint U.S.-South Korean response to a localized attack will be a deterrent to the North.

The two countries just completed ended the joint Key Resolve exercise, which was the first to be led by the South Korean Joint Chiefs of Staff and not the U.S.-led Combined Forces Command. The two-week exercise was essentially a dry run for the planned transfer of wartime operation control from the U.S. to South Korea, now scheduled for 2015.

The planned OPCON transfer has been a hot topic of debate in Washington and Seoul for years, given the threat posed by North Korea and varying opinions about whether the South's military is up to the task of leading the fight should hostilities resume on the peninsula.

The JCS spokesman said the Counter-Provocation Plan signed on Friday was not releasable because of ongoing security concerns with North Korea.

### **MOVING TOWARD A 'GENDER-NEUTRAL' MILITARY**

During the Iraq War Cassie Partee was driving back from an 11-hour patrol. She scanned the road as a Humvee up ahead swept the area with floodlights. Then came something that wasn't supposed to be there, something attached to a guardrail.

"At that point, there's really nothing you can do about it, just pray," Cassie said. "So I stepped on the gas and prayed. The bomb went off on my truck."

The blast injured Partee and her commander, also a woman. It was the kind of potentially hazardous duty that women in Iraq and Afghanistan routinely performed. Partee, who received a Purple Heart for her injuries, had trained in field artillery before her first deployment. But once in Iraq, she did whatever she was called upon to do.

She drove trucks. She went with combat patrols on house-to-house raids because the U.S. wanted female troops to search Iraqi women civilians.

Earlier this year, Partee was back at Fort Eustis in Newport News when outgoing Defense Secretary Leon Panetta decided to lift restrictions that would open up infantry positions to women, moving them closer. Partee,

who is now a staff sergeant, accepted the headlines with a shrug.

"I was like, 'Oh, that's nice.' I don't have a problem with it, but that's because that is what I've known. It just seems normal to me."

Panetta's decision rescinds a 1994 rule that blocked women from serving in smaller ground combat units below the brigade level. Generally, brigades are based farther from the front lines and number between 3,000 and 5,000 people.

Women already serve as combat pilots in the Navy and Air Force. The Navy recently opened up the submarine service to female sailors. The 1994 barrier was seen as one of the last gender barriers in the military.

Panetta and other military leaders said the policy was outdated, meant for a time when wars were fought by conventional, standing armies with clearly defined front lines. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan were nothing like that. Women -- and men, for that matter -- could easily be in harm's way while driving in a convoy or searching civilians.

Others are not nearly as comfortable with Panetta's decision. Critics fear the military will lower its standards to admit women to the new positions or that commanders will be pressured to push women into these jobs in the name of diversity, or to meet quotas.

**Two-pronged approach-** The first is a scientific review all jobs and career paths for enlisted personnel and officers. The study is being conducted in conjunction with U.S. Army Medical Command, U.S. Army Research Institute for Environmental Medicine and Army Research Institute.

The idea, Project leader Kubick said, is to develop gender-neutral standards for jobs and careers in the Army, by studying the knowledge, skills, abilities and other characteristics required for these jobs. Some critics have called attention to the physical differences between men and women -- the ability to lift heavy loads or march with a full backpack. Kubick doesn't buy the emphasis. "Most people believe it's the physical aspects of being in the infantry that would disqualify most women," he said. I'm not sure that's true."

The Army will also focus on matching a person's temperament and personality with the right job. For example, a combat medic might require more empathy than brute strength. And who is to say only women will face challenges in meeting new physical requirements?

"Once we establish those physical standards, it will eliminate some men from being infantrymen," Kubick said. "It's meant to match up the right talent with the right position." Kubick said gender isn't the point. "We don't need to figure out gender standards," he said. "We need to figure out gender-neutral standards."

A December report from the Congressional Research Service noted the military has different standards for men and women on fitness tests and that could lead to different standards for jobs. "Gender neutral" could mean that men and women have to exert the same amount of energy -- theoretically, a man would have to carry a 90-pound artillery shell while a woman could handle smaller ordnance because she would exert the same effort. "We reject that notion," Kubick said. "That is not going to play when we talk about MOS (military occupational specialty) standards. You either meet the standard or you don't."

The second TRADOC effort will focus on institutional and cultural barriers toward integrating women. Kubick said his own attitudes toward women have changed during his career. Early on, he was a military police officer in an all-male unit. His second unit, where he served as squad leader, included a woman.

"We went out on a ruck march, and it was difficult," he recalled. "She ended up leading it while I had some of the guys falling out." It was a mind-changing moment for him. "She was a Cajun from Louisiana," he said, laughing. "I'm not sure if that was relevant or not, but she was very tough and she proved herself, and that made a lasting impression on me. Women can be just as strong, or stronger than men. Before when I was in an all-male unit, I probably had a different attitude."

### ***Benes- -Retiree's Retreat***

The days of benefits growth are behind us. We will need to fight to keep what we have previously gained!!!