



NAVAL ENLISTED
RESERVE ASSOCIATION
WINDY CITY CHAPTER



March-April 2016 Edition
P.O. Box 4562 Rockford, IL 61110
Volume 16, Edition 1

From the President's desk...

PRESIDENT

Edward Whiteside
ewhiteside@yahoo.com

VICE-PRESIDENT

Andy Anderson

SECRETARY

Vicki Koehnke

TREASURER

Eugene Koelker
genokoelker@yahoo.com

EXECUTIVE COUNSELOR

Paul Smurawski

MASTER-AT-ARMS

Steve Devereaux

Hello Windy City Chapter,

It finally feels like spring is here.

I'd like to remind everyone that our next meeting is Tuesday, April 12, 2016. We're meeting at the Howard H. Rohde American Legion Post located at 241 E. North Ave in Northlake.

We should have all gotten an email from Jennifer Abbott and Steve Sandy. It's about the national website. The site has been newly updated and we all have to change our passwords for the member's only sections.

I hope to see everyone soon,
Ed Whiteside

Mark Your Calendar:

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:

Ed Whiteside	Andy Anderson	Gene Koelker
Paul Smurawski	Vicki Koehnke	Connie Koehnke
Mike Brock	Alan Koehnke	Darlene Nickelson
John Nickelson	Dennis Devitt	Steve Devereaux
Larry Monroe	Dennis Devitt	Butch Michaelson
	Guenter Kleinmaier	

Windy City Chapter Meeting Minutes-
February 9, 2016

Meeting of the Windy City Chapter convened at 20:05. President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary present. A quorum exists.

December 2015 newsletter was accepted as stated. MX-Mike Brock, 2X-Andy Anderson.

Treasurer's Report: Accept the Treasure report as stated-MX-John Nickelson, 2X- Mike Brock.

Sunshine Fund: Darlene Nickelson sent out 2 cards-to the family of Verna Koelker and get well to Jim Premeski.

Executive Council: No activity to report.

Old Business:

-Chapter Holiday Party was enjoyed by all. Thank you John and Darlene for hosting the party again at your house.

- For all Windy City Chapter events (picnic and holiday party) the chapter will be providing the beer, soda for the events. MX-Butch Michaelson, 2X-Mike Brock.

-Windy City Chapter member Jim Premeske health condition still on the road to recovery. Keep Jim in your thoughts and prayers.

-Last month, American Legion Post had a raffle going on, 31 days/31 ways raffle, Windy City Chapter member Darlene Nickelson purchased tickets and her ticket was a winner. Congratulations Darlene.

New Business:

-American Legion Post will be hosting their 1st Fish Fry starting Friday, February 12 from 5 pm to 8pm. Cost will be \$10.00 per person. All you can eat.

-Windy City Chapter store has items available-Shirts, T-shirts. The store keeper will be bringing the remaining items to the next chapter meeting. Make sure to stop by at the April meeting to see what is available. MX-Mike Brock, 2X-Butch Michaelson.

-Windy City Chapter, MA3 Richard Koehnke (active Navy) just became qualified expert shorter in pistol and expert shooter in rifle. MA3 Koehnke also became Jr. Sailor of the quarter for his command. Bravo Zulu.

Good of the Chapter-

-VP90 shipmates-Master Chief grandson graduated from boot camp, February 5, 2016 and his twin brother graduated last year.

-Windy City Chapter has a fallen member, Verna Koelker, wife of Gene Koelker. Gene brought and share with the chapter members' photos of Verna and honor plaque that she received at the last NERA conference. Verna will be missed deeply. She and Gene are in our prayers and thoughts.

Also was mention during the Sunshine Fund activity until the final decision is made by the family of Verna Koelker on their wishes in lieu of flowers, this is will tabled.

-Need to find ways to utilized our funds. i.e. new member drive gathering at Great Lakes Naval Base, possibly talking to MWR reserving the beach house for cookout, etc. This event will be great on a Reserved drilled weekend. Post flyers prior to the event at the Reserve center. Also maybe an event at the Goat Locker and other chapter events.

-VP90 reunion is scheduled for July 2016 in Dayton, Ohio.

Guenter Kleinmaier won 50/50 raffle.

-Motion to adjourn @ 20:55 MX-Gene Koelker,
2X Butch Michaelson.

The U.S. military is moving into these 5 bases in the Philippines

Andrew Tilghman, Military Times March 24, 2016



(Photo: Lance Cpl. RyanMains/MarineCorps)

A new agreement between the United States and the Philippines clears the way for a new permanent American military presence across five bases that will support rotational deployments near the contested South China Sea.

The bases include:

Antonio Bautista Air Base. Located near the capital of the island province of Palawan, which is strategically located near the contested Spratly Islands in the South China Sea.

Basa Air Base. Located about 40 miles northwest of the Philippines' capital, Manila, the air base was originally constructed by the U.S. Army Air Corps before the Second World War.

Fort Magsaysay. Located on the northern Island of Luzon, Fort Magsaysay is the largest military installation in the Philippines, and is one of the primary training areas of the Philippine Army.

Lumbia Air Base. Located on the southern island of Mindanao, the air base is connected to a civilian airport. Local media reports say construction of a new U.S. facility will begin soon.

Mactan-Benito Ebuena Air Base. Located on Mactan Island of the coast of Cebu in the central Philippines. It was originally built by the U.S. Air Force before the American pullout in the early 1990s.

The U.S. will be setting up "permanent logistics facilities to support rotational deployments," said one defense official familiar with the agreement. The Pentagon is likely to invest heavily on construction projects to enhance capacity at those five bases. The agreement was finalized Friday. The rotational presence could, in effect, leave U.S. military assets and personnel on the ground in the Philippines for long periods if the missions are approved by the government in Manila.

The U.S. military presence in the Philippines, a former American colony, was once fiercely opposed by many Filipinos, partly because of notorious rowdy behavior and misconduct that was common among troops during the Vietnam era when the Philippines offered war fighters a respite from the combat zone. That led to the complete withdrawal of U.S. forces in the early 1990s.

But the Filipino government has recently sought new support from the United States as China has grown more aggressive in asserting territorial claims and conducting military-style operations near Filipino shores.

The list of bases surprised many analysts who expected it to include some of the former U.S. military outposts such as Naval Station Subic Bay and Naval Air Station Cubi Point, both strategically located on the northwest coast, or Clark Air Base near Manila. Those facilities were a backbone of logistics support during the Vietnam War.

China has stepped up its military activity in the region by claiming small uninhabited islands and

even building new ones in the South China Sea off the western shores of the Philippines.

It's likely that the American presence there will grow slowly because China's activities have threatened the stability of the region, which includes vital trade routes for global economy.

"I suspect that it will ramp up slowly," said Jan van Tol, a retired U.S. Navy captain and senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments in Washington. "A suddenly much larger U.S. presence, even if just a rotational presence, that can be seen, certainty in Beijing, that this is a ratcheting up of a U.S.- Chinese competition in the South China Sea."

Van Tol noted the Antonio Bautista Air Base on Palawan is very close to the Spratly Islands where China has made its controversial territorial claims. "That puts them much closer to the scene where the Chinese are using what we consider to be illegitimate activities," he said.

The announcement of the five bases comes almost two years after President Obama visited the Philippines in 2014 and signed a new 10-year agreement with the former U.S colony. The future U.S. activity in the Philippines may include Marine Corps units rotating through the country like the ongoing mission in Darwin, Australia. CNO Releases 'A Design for Maintaining Maritime Superiority'

After U.S. show of force, China takes hard line on South China Sea

[David Larter](#), Navy Times 2016



(Photo: MC2 Andrew P. Holmes/Navy)

The four-ship U.S. strike group that patrolled the disputed South China Sea was followed by Chinese warships, a show of force that prompted a hard line response from China doubling down on its claim to nearly all of the resource-rich sea.

China's foreign minister said his country's sovereignty claims are supported by history and made a veiled reference to the 5-day patrol by the Stennis Carrier Strike Group, as well as recent passes by China's man-made islands by destroyers Lassen and Curtis Wilbur in recent months.

"The South China Sea has been subject to colonial invasion and illegal occupation and now some people are trying to stir up waves, while some others are showing off forces," Wang Yi said, according to an Associated Press report, a day after the Stennis CSG departed the South China Sea. "However, like the tide that comes and goes, none of these attempts will have any impact. History will prove who is merely the guest and who is the real host." Yi also batted away suggestions that China was militarizing the region, a charge levied last month by U.S. Pacific Command head Adm. Harry Harris at a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing.

"China cannot be labeled as the most militaristic. This label is more suited to other countries," Wang said. Aircraft carrier John C. Stennis, cruiser Mobile Bay, and destroyers Chung-Hoon and Stockdale, left the South China Sea after five days in the region. Two ships are still operating in the South China Sea: the command ship Blue Ridge and the cruiser Antietam, which stopped for a port visit in Manila, the Philippines.

"People's Liberation Army (Navy) ships remained in the vicinity of Stennis during its time in the South China Sea," the U.S. Navy said in its Monday press release.

An F/A-18E Super Hornet performs a flyby on March 7, 2016, during an aerial change of command ceremony above USS John C. Stennis (CVN 74) in the Philippine Sea. (Photo: MC Seaman Tomas Compian /Navy)

Experts say Stennis' patrol of the South China Sea was a deliberate show of force by the U.S. Navy in the wake of heightened tensions with China. Indeed, the Washington State-based carrier is on the way to joint exercises with South Korea, which means the group had to bypass the Korean Peninsula to enter the South China Sea then double back.

The Stennis group's said the interactions with the Chinese navy were professional and non-threatening.

"Based on the bridge-to-bridge communications USS Chung-Hoon had with the [People's Liberation Army-Navy] ships, it is clear that the Chinese Navy prides itself on professional communications and interactions," said Cmdr. Tom Ogden, commanding officer of destroyer Chung-Hoon, in a press release.

The U.S. Navy has characterized the patrol through the South China Sea as a "routine" operation, similar to its

closely-watched freedom of navigation patrols near China's recently built islands. In October, before the Lassen's patrol within 12 miles of the Spratly Islands, the chief of naval operations called the mission non-provocative, adding that it was "part of routine navigation in international waters."

NAVY TIMES

U.S. Navy sends destroyer by man-made islands in challenge to China's claims

Patrols such as the one made by the Stennis Carrier Strike Group are intended to assure allies and regional partners that the U.S. is committed to their interests in the region, said Bryan Clark, a retired submarine officer and analyst with the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments. "Nobody in Beijing thinks that the United States doesn't care about what's happening in the South China Sea, but they might tell our allies that," he said. "They might say, 'Hey, you say the U.S. has your back but we don't ever see them around here.'"

While tensions remain high in the South China Sea, China's navy and the U.S. Navy have continued to talk and have sought to head off any unnecessary hostilities, which has come in the wake of high-level run-ins.

The command ship Blue Ridge is slated to make a visit to China later this spring, during which the sailors are going to play sports with their Chinese counterparts while 7th Fleet head Vice Adm. Joseph Aucoin will be holding talks with his counterparts about steps to increase communication and prevent confrontations at sea.

The U.S. just sent a carrier strike group to confront China

By David Larter, Navy Times 6:43 a.m. EST March 4, 2016



(Photo: MCSA Justin Rayburn/Navy)

This article first appeared March 3 at 4:15 p.m. and has been updated

The U.S. Navy has dispatched a small armada to the South China Sea.

The carrier John C. Stennis, two destroyers, two cruisers and the 7th Fleet flagship have sailed into the disputed waters in recent days, according to military officials. The carrier strike group is the latest show of force in the tense region, with the U.S. asserting that China is militarizing the region to guard its excessive territorial claims. Stennis is joined in the region by the cruisers Antietam and Mobile Bay, and the destroyers Chung-Hoon and Stockdale. The command ship Blue Ridge, the floating headquarters of the Japan-based 7th Fleet, is also in the area, en route to a port visit in the Philippines. Stennis deployed from Washington state on Jan. 15.

The Japan-based Antietam, officials said, was conducting a "routine patrol" separate from the Stennis, following up patrols conducted by the destroyer McCambell and the dock landing ship Ashland in late February.

The stand-off has been heating up on both sides. After news in February that the Chinese deployed an advanced surface-to-air missile battery to the Paracel Islands, U.S. Pacific Command head Adm. Harry Harris told lawmakers that China was militarizing the South China Sea.

"In my opinion China is clearly militarizing the South China Sea," Harris testified on Feb. 24. "You'd have to believe in a flat Earth to believe otherwise."

Overnight, Chinese officials dismissed claims that China was militarizing the region, pointing to the Stennis's patrol as evidence that the U.S. was to blame for the increased military tensions.

"The accusation [that China is militarizing the region] can lead to a miscalculation of the situation," said Fu Ying, a spokeswoman for China's National People's Congress. "If you take a look at the matter closely, it's the US sending the most advanced aircraft and military vessels to the South China Sea."

A Pacific Fleet spokesman downplayed the heavy U.S. presence in the region.

"Our ships and aircraft operate routinely throughout the Western Pacific — including the South China Sea — and have for decades," Cmdr. Clay Doss said in a statement. "In 2015 alone, Pacific Fleet ships sailed about 700 combined days in the South China Sea."

However, experts say sending Stennis and its air wing to the South China Sea is a clear signal to China and the region.

"Clearly the Navy and DoD is demonstrating its full commitment to presence and freedom of navigation in the region," said Jerry Hendrix, a retired Navy captain and analyst with the Center for a New American Security in Washington, D.C. "With the full carrier strike group and the command ship, the Navy is showing the scope of its interests and ability to project presence and power around world."

The destroyer Lassen's vaunted October patrol within the 12-mile limit of China's man-made South China Sea islands was the first challenge of China's sovereignty over the Spratly Islands since Chinese land-reclamation projects began there.

On Jan. 30, the destroyer Curtis Wilbur patrolled near Triton Island, part of the Paracel Islands chain China also claims.

Six nations in the region lay claim to parts or all of the disputed islands chains. The Spratly Islands, a collection of reefs, rocks and other natural features, have been the site of extensive Chinese land reclamation projects. In the last two years, China has begun constructing islands on top of reefs and claiming territorial seas around them to gain exclusive fishing and resource rights to most of the South China Sea.

These disputes have led to violence in the past. In 1974, a conflict between South Vietnam and China led to a shootout in the Paracel Islands, located between Vietnam and China's Hainan Island. That dispute continues. sea.

Tips and Tricks to Accessing VA Health Care



Week of March 28, 2016

Here are several tips one veteran uses to have a good experience with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA): (1) schedule your appointments first thing in the morning or right after lunch so you will be seen on time; (2) have a referral to a specialty clinic? Call that clinic yourself to schedule an appointment; (3) ask for an appointment tomorrow and see if it works; (4) use My Health eVet secure messenger to talk with your physician; (5) choose a different VA if necessary; (6) if you need to be seen sooner than your appointment, use the VA medical center emergency room; (7) use the kiosks, and avoid the lines; and (8) prepare and double-check your list of needs with your physician. For more on veteran benefits, visit the [Military.com Benefits Center](#).

About the only thing that comes to us without effort is OLD AGE.