FROM THE BRANCH PRESIDENT

Shipmates,

Happy New Year to all of you in Annapolis Branch 24. I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday season.

To recap some of the highlights of 2019, we celebrated the Past Branch Presidents at the annual dinner held in February. In March, we sponsored the Annual Las Vegas Night fund raiser, which brought in stellar crowds of Shipmates, Auxiliary and Club Associate members who played games of chance. We held a raffle drawing for three winners. This fundraiser supports several of our community outreach events such as youth programs, student Americanism and Patriotism Essay contest and making donations to organizations supporting veterans.

We had a very successful Veteran’s Open House in August at the Fleet Reserve Club. A total of 57 combined new members were added to the Branch, Auxiliary, and Club Associate membership groups. In September the annual Branch picnic was held at the Rotelle Room, Naval Station in Annapolis. Many members and their families attended and they had fun. At the September meeting, Shipmate Porsche Williams gave a presentation on Suicide and It’s Prevention. Volunteers participated in an Adopt-A-Highway Clean Up and we held our First Annual Firearms Safety Workshop at the Fleet Club.

The month of November brought in our annual Veterans Day Observance with the Fifth Master Chief of the Coast Guard Reserve, Mark H. Allen, serving as the Keynote Speaker. To wrap up the year in December we held the Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day on December 7, Children’s Christmas Party on December 15 and participated in the annual Military Bowl Parade riding the Trolley, which was full of Shipmates and their families.

On page four (4) of this newsletter see the 2020 advanced schedule of activities and save the dates on your calendar.

Thank you for your support and participation. Let’s have a grand year!

I remain in Loyalty, Protection, and Service,

Valerie Toulotte, President
Annapolis Branch 24
valerie2lotte@gmail.com
Pictures of Shipmates at Branch Activities (Sept – Dec)

Shipmates Penny Collins, Branch 24, Ray Martin, Member-At-Large, Lee Newton, Branch 301, FRA East Coast Region attending the Veterans Resource Fair- Cary, North Carolina

Shipmates Richard Bonnett receiving Vietnam Commemorative Certificate for service in Vietnam from PRPEC Penny Collins

Toys donated to the USMC Toys for Tots Program by members of Branch and Unit 24.

Shipmates Ryan Wallace, Brittany Lavan, Troy W. Brown, and Lora J. Andersen being initiated into Branch 24 as new members.

Santa distributing gifts at the children’s Christmas party.

Shipmate Jimmy Becket, 2nd Vice President assisting Santa at the children’s Christmas party

PRPEC Don Hoover receiving a membership award from Branch President Valerie Toulotte

Shipmates preparing to ride the Trolley in the Military Bowl Parade

MAY THEY REST IN PEACE

Robert Gray
Charles O’Connell
Jeter Battley
Richard Oliver
Walter Paroby
Kenneth Cole
William Pinkerton
Lannie Conn
John Wolfe, Jr.
Donald Stephenson
William Waslylk
Francis Eickhoff
Jens Henriksen
Donald Olson
James Greer
Michael Mooney
Nelson C. Denison
Matthias L. Hynes
Charles J. Schaus
Frank M. Koch, Jr.
Shipmate Profile

I had the pleasure of visiting BMC Ismael Torres, USCG (ret) at his home in Arnold, MD. Shipmate Torres contacted me and wanted to chat about his military service. Specifically, he knew I served in the Coast Guard as a Chief Petty Officer so Chief Torres and I could talk shop.

Born in Yauco, Puerto Rico in 1932, Shipmate Torres started his military career in the Puerto Rico Army National Guard at age 17. After completing basic training in 1952, Shipmate Torres was deployed to South Korea and served in combat as an infantryman. After his tour of duty in Korea, Shipmate Torres was reassigned to the 33rd Infantry Regiment in Ft. Kobee, Canal Zone, Panama until the expiration of his enlistment in 1955. After discharge from the Army, Shipmate Torres joined the U.S. Coast Guard and served until his retirement in 1975. He was the Executive Chief Petty Officer at U.S. Coast Guard Station Annapolis, MD. BMC Torres was bestowed various military awards including Korea Service Medal, United Nations Medal, National Defense Service Medal, just to name a few. Joining the FRA in 1973, Shipmate Torres is a Life Member. He lives with his wife, Luz, and children. (Submitted by Penny Collins)

At the home of Shipmate Torres with his wife, Luz, on the left and PRPEC Penny Collins on the right.

Membership in the FRA

Annapolis Branch 24 is the largest branch in the FRA. Our average headcount is about 2,000 members located throughout the Maryland area and the United States. Our partners include the Auxiliary Unit 24 and Fleet Reserve Club Associate Members. For 2020, we will set a proposed membership goal of recruiting and/or sponsoring 100 new or returning members. Our continuing focus will be to retain members by communicating our programs and projects as well as maintaining contact by email and/or phone. We offer a variety of programs for the shipmates and their families. Eligibility for membership is serving as an enlisted personnel in the US Navy, Marine Corps or Coast Guard for a minimum of one day. Current or former active duty, reserves, veteran or retired in the Sea Services are eligible to join the FRA for one, two or five years or become a Life Member. Go to www.fra.org for detailed membership information.

Veterans Information Corner

BLUE WATER NAVY VETERANS

On January 1, 2020 the Blue Water Navy (BWN) Act of 2019 went into effect. This Act was signed into law on June 25, 2019, and extends the presumption of herbicide exposure, such as Agent Orange, to BWN veterans who served as far as 12 nautical miles from the shore of Vietnam and have since developed one of 14 conditions related to exposure. Some of these conditions include Type 2 diabetes, Parkinson’s disease, many forms of cancer and others. You may now be eligible for disability compensation and other benefits. In addition, if you are a veteran who served in Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) between September 1, 1967 and August 31, 1971 you may also qualify for compensation and other benefits for yourself and your family members. Contact a Veterans Service Organization to request assistance with your eligibility.

Exchange and Commissary Access Expanded

Effective January 1, 2020, eligible veterans and caregivers can use retail facilities, in-person and online. Eligible Veterans are Purple Heart recipients, former prisoners of war, and veterans with 0-90% service-connected disability ratings.

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2020 Calendar of Events

**Save the Dates!!!!**

**Saturday, January 25, 2020—2:00—4:00 pm (Hosted by Branch and Unit 24)**
Central Liaison Committee Meeting for local area FRA Branches

**Tuesday, February 11, 2020—6:00—8:00 pm**
Dinner Honoring our Past Branch Presidents (Estimated Cost: $30 per person)

**Saturday, March 28, 2020—5:00—10:00 pm**
Annual Las Vegas Night Fundraiser (Tickets: $15.00 per person; includes buffet and raffle drawing for first ($300), second ($200), and third ($100) place winners

**Monday, May 25, 2020— Memorial Day Observance**
City of Annapolis Memorial Day Parade, Guest Speaker and Complimentary Lite Lunch at the Fleet Reserve Club for Shipmates and Families

**Tuesday, June 9, 2020—Joint Officer Installation Dinner**
Annapolis Branch and Unit 24 will host their annual recognition dinner for outgoing and incoming officers. (Estimated Cost : $30 per person)

**Friday, July 17—Sunday, July 19—FRA East Coast Region Convention**
Branch and Unit 24 will host the 76th Annual East Coast Region Convention at the Annapolis Doubletree Hotel.

**Saturday, August 22, 2020 (Tentative Date)- 10:00 am — 3:00 pm**
Combined Annual Open House and Veteran’s Appreciation Day for Branch, Unit, and Club Members

**Saturday, September 12, 2020 (Tentative Date)—11:00 am—5:00 pm**
Annual Branch 24 Picnic for Shipmates and Families

**Wednesday, November 11, 2020—11:00 am (Memorial Circle in Downtown)**
City of Annapolis Veterans Day Program and FRA 95th Birthday

**Monday, December 7, 2020—11:00 am**
Annul Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day

**Sunday, December 13, 2020—2:00—4:00 pm**
Annual Children’s Christmas Party

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**Branch Meeting Dates**
At 7:00 pm on the second Tuesday of each month unless otherwise noted, the Branch meets on the following dates:

January 14, 2020
February 11, 2020
March 10, 2020
April 14, 2020
May 12, 2020
June 9, 2020
July 14, 2020
August 11, 2020
September 8, 2020
October 13, 2020
November 10, 2020
December 8, 2020

You are encouraged to invite a prospective member to our meetings so they can meet other shipmates and think about becoming a part of Team Annapolis.