



# NAVAL ENLISTED RESERVE ASSOCIATION

John D. Wood Chapter 201.066

P.O. Box 16932 • Mobile, Alabama • 36616

The Wood-Pile

December 2003/January 2004

## OFFICERS

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## Message from the Executive Committee

### Chapter Elections

Will be held at the January Chapter Meeting at the CG Base; running are:

<b>President</b>	Timothy Hennessey
<b>Vice-President</b>	Daniel Woodcock
<b>Secretary</b>	Neely Clinton
	David Couling
<b>Treasurer</b>	Fred Conklin

### Membership Dues

This year membership dues increased slightly. The increase is the first in many years and is necessary due to rising costs of running a national organization. The 35.00 for a yearly and 300.00 for Lifetime is a great deal.

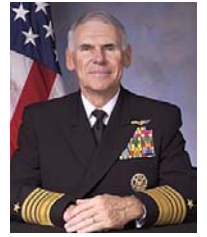
NERA Membership is the best investments you will ever make! Membership is a key element in NERA's success. Keep NERA strong. Join or renew today

## Reserve Force Integration

by VADM John G. Cotton



VADM Cotton  
COMNAVRESFOR



ADM Fallon  
COMUSFLTFORCOM

"Shipmate," Full Time Support (FTS) and Drilling Reservists (DRILRES) alike, has seen these words and had a chance to reflect on their meaning.

"Support to the fleet"—Naval Reserve Fighter Squadron 201's (VFA-201's) recent deployment with USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71), continued global security efforts by Naval Coastal Warfare units, and special operations support by Helicopter Combat Support Squadron 4 (HCS-4) and HCS-5, who both possess one of a kind capabilities that exist primarily in the Naval Reserve, and USS Stephen W. Groves' (FFG-29) counter-narcotics achievements, are just a few examples of the significant contributions Naval Reserve units are making towards the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT).

More than 22,000 Naval Reservists have been mobilized since 9/11, and more have been notified of upcoming recalls to active duty. Daily, our talented Reservists and their supported commands innovate ways to apply our Annual Training (AT), Active Duty for Training (ADT) and Flex Drill man days to continue to demonstrate the value of the Naval Reserve... capability and commitment, any-time, anywhere, "24/7/365."

"Fully integrated"—The Navy must take ownership of its Reserve force. Our military's current force structure was designed to combat a Cold War era enemy that no longer exists. Today's enemies are smaller, more difficult to identify, and aggressively apply asymmetric tactics. To win the Global War on Terrorism, we need to rapidly transform and become a more flexible service with surge capability.

We also need to recapitalize our fleet to take advantage of new technologies that will enable us to defeat our nation's enemies overseas, so we do not have to fight them at home. We can only accomplish this by utilizing all of the resources at our disposal in the most efficient and effective manner, which is best accomplished as one fully integrated force. To that end, Commander, Naval Reserve Force (CNRF) and Commander, Fleet Forces Command (CFFC) has engaged in an aggressive plan to rapidly integrate active and Reserve forces.

**Read the entire article-including CFFC ADM William J. Fallon's perspective on what the future may hold for the Navy's total force in the January 2004 "The Naval Reservist"**

## Upcoming Events Calendar

**January 1<sup>st</sup> Welcome 2004**  
**January 20<sup>th</sup> 1830, Chapter Meeting, Anchor & Shield Club**  
**January 19<sup>th</sup> Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Observance**

## Upcoming Meeting Agenda

**1830** Call to Order/Colors/Roll Call  
**1835** Minutes/Treasurer's Report  
**1900** Chapter Elections  
**1930** Installation New Officers  
**1945** Introduction of New Officers  
**2000** Unfinished/New Business  
**2010** Good & Welfare  
**2015** Adjournment/Fellowship

## Congratulations

**Bill Norris**

Appointed National Deputy Executive Director

**Gene Brown**

Appointed as National Scholarship Director and Alabama State Director

## Don't Gamble with Your Future!

by Nick DeFeis

NERA National President

I am not addressing our NERA members, but the friends and associates of NERA members, who are Reservists – but who are not yet members of NERA. PLEASE, help them to see the benefits in becoming a member.

More than a hundred reasons have been given for not joining the Naval Enlisted Reserve Association. **What is your reason?** Failing to join may end up being the most expensive \$25.00 you ever saved...

**Read all the reasons to join in the NOV/DEC "The Mariner" and share with a perspective member!**

## NERA Notes (November 2003)

The death gratuity was raised from \$6,000 to \$12,000 and is tax free. G/R members traveling over 100 miles to drill will be allowed to an "above-the-line" itemized deduction for transportation, meals and lodging. TRICARE extended to G/R under a payment plan. Extended VA Home Loan Guar. for G/R increased funding for the CG. CG Commandant put on equal level with other Chiefs when testifying before Congress.

Sen. John McCain's office was instrumental for the Tax Fairness Act to aide the G/R...we sent a note of thanks. I have joined the MILPERS Compensation/Commissaries Committee in addition to the G/R Committee.

Dr. Chu, Defense Under, has issued a policy memo requiring returning personnel to be medically screened and to receive care necessary and required. There are significant numbers of personnel on medical hold. Now we will work on getting them out of the conditions at Ft. Stewart.

At the G/R meeting we were briefed by the GAO who has been tasked to review and analyze the proposals for changing the G/R organizations, benefits, pay, etc. We loaded them with problems that need to be considered and urged that they get busy sooner rather than later. They had anticipated a 3 year study. We impressed upon them that in 5 years the G/R could be decimated by personnel leaving. This is already becoming a problem.

The 38 day drilling proposal has been taken off the table by DOD as a result of the complete backlash from TMC members (us included) and Congress.

Returning Vets who spend time in our medical facilities will not have to pay for their stay.

The Department of Defense announced today (11/25) that with the president's signing of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2004, effective immediately, the following members and their dependents will be permitted unlimited access to commissary stores: Members of the Ready Reserve (which includes members of the Selected Reserve, Individual Ready Reserve and Inactive National Guard) and members of the Retired Reserve who possess a Uniformed Services Identification Card.

[www.nera.org](http://www.nera.org)

## National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA)–FY 04

The following bills recently passed, and have provisions that are important to all members:

[www.navy-reserve.org](http://www.navy-reserve.org)

1. National Defense Authorization Act – FY 04
  2. Military Family Tax Fairness Act (HR 3365)
  3. Iraqi Supplemental – TRICARE for Guard and Reserve
1. The FY 04 NDAA; the following are provisions that are important to all Guard and Reserve components.
    - a. Federal Long-Term Care Insurance Program. Gray area Reservists (who have completed 20 years of service but have not attained age 60 and retired pay eligibility) will be eligible to enroll in the program
    - b. Concurrent Receipt of Retired Pay and VA Disability Compensation. On January 1, 2004, all military retirees with at least 20 years of service and VA disability ratings of 50% or higher will see their military retired pay offsets phased out over a ten-year period. Combat Related Special Compensation (CRSC) will be expanded to include all combat- or operations-related disabilities—from 10% to 100% ratings, also effective January 1, 2004. Currently, only those with qualifying disabilities rated 60% or higher or who have a disability associated with a Purple Heart are eligible. In both cases, Guard and Reserve retirees with 20 qualifying years of service (including those with less than 7,200 retirement points) will be eligible.
    - c. Reimbursement for Household Goods. A new provision authorizes the Pentagon to enter contracts with moving companies that require the companies to reimburse military families the full cost of replacing any items lost or damaged during the move
    - d. Military Pay and Allowances. An average pay raise of 4.15%. Military Pay Raise Comparability Process. A permanent law change tying future military pay raises directly to private sector pay growth, as measured by the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Employment Cost Index (ECI). Current law specifies that raises for active duty, Guard and Reserve members after 2006 would otherwise be capped one-half percentage point below the average American's pay raise every year.
    - e. SBP Changes. Survivors of service members killed on active duty will have the option to elect "child only" Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) coverage. This will help many surviving spouses who now see their SBP coverage reduced by the amount of any VA survivor benefit. In addition, the new law tasks DOD and the GAO to conduct a study of military death benefits to include a comparison with private sector death benefits. Additional, Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) Program, Equitable SBP coverage for survivors of active duty deaths regardless of the circumstances of the death. SBP annuities for survivors of reservists who die in the line-of-duty while performing inactive duty.
    - f. Housing Allowance. Service members will see an average housing allowance increase of about 6.5% in January. That will reduce median out-of-pocket housing expenses for each grade to 3.5% of housing costs in 2004, with target of out of pocket expenses to zero in 2005.
    - g. Commissaries. Unlimited commissary access for National Guard and Reserve service members. Another provision restricts Pentagon authority to contract out certain commissary functions and requires congressional notification of planned changes affecting more than 10 commissary employees.
    - h. Reserve Health Care. The bill directs a report on health care needs of the Reserve component, to include whether benefits need to be expanded beyond the limited new measures in this legislation.
    - i. Enhanced TRICARE Coverage for the National Guard and Reserve. Cost-share access to TRICARE for non-mobilized, uninsured / unemployed members of the Guard and Reserve and expanded TRICARE coverage prior to and following a mobilization. Also, immediate dental and medical screening for Selected Reservists (primarily, drilling members of the Guard and Reserve) alerted for activation.
    - j. TRICARE Standard Information Outreach. DOD is directed to develop and implement a plan for information outreach to assist beneficiaries in obtaining access to TRICARE services. Health Protection and Surveillance. The Secretary of Defense must establish a quality control program to ensure compliance with pre- and post- deployment medical evaluations for service members. (Continued on next column)

## A Few Minutes

(Partial meeting notes-Chapter Meeting December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2003)

Motion passed-Acting President to present CDR Riehm, Chapter Spark Plug Award during January drill weekend

Motion passed-Chapter Elections to be held, January 20th

The Salvation Army sent Chapter thank you note for donating \$100.00 to the Angel Tree

Discussion held on proper procedures for Chapter authorization to incur and pay expenses

## Binnacle List

Get well soon to members

**Grady Kersh, Joe Corbin, Tom Christian**

You are in our thoughts and prayers

## (NDAA)–FY 04 Continued

- k. Imminent Danger Pay (IDP) and Family Separation Allowance (FSA). An increase in the worldwide use of IDP from \$150 to \$225 per month and FSA from \$100 to \$250 for 15 months beginning 1 October 2003.
  1. Reserve Mobilization Reports. The President must provide a report to Congress within six months on the numbers, duration, and skills of activated reservists since 2002; the Secretary of Defense must report within a year on the effects of the call-ups on reserve recruitment and retention and assess what changes may be needed in active and reserve component roles, missions, force structure, and capabilities.
2. Military Family Tax Fairness Act (HR 3365)– This was passed and signed by the President on Veterans Day, provides for:
  - a. Guardsman and Reservist can now deduct travel expenses to and from drill sites
  - b. Restores capital gains tax equity for military homeowners by exempting up to 10 years away from home, on military orders, from counting against the requirement to have lived in a primary residence for at least 2 of the 5 years preceding sale of the home. This is retroactive to 1997.
  - c. Death Gratuity was increased from 6K to 12K and is tax free, and this went back retroactive to 9/11/01 for Guard and Reserve also.
3. An Iraqi Supplemental provisions:
  - a. TRICARE for Guard and Reserve;
    - i. Drilling Reservist are now eligible for TRICARE, they can buy into the program, and includes certain members of IRR subject to Code 12304.
    - ii. Activated Guard and Reserve members that keep civilian health care can have some parts of premiums repaid
    - iii. This program is good for one year at this time – December 2004 until December 2005, but all associations are going to push hard to make it permanent.

## ITc Said

The turn out last meeting was outstanding just the right mix we need to keep moving in all the right directions. I encourage all members to participate in Chapter meetings. The big focus this year

### **RECRUITING NEW MEMBERS.**

We need to work harder than ever before in recruiting new members especially from the drill deck.

The recruiting slide show created by GMC Jon Burrow (Windy City Chapter) is an excellent tool and our Chapter should consider creating our own for use at the INDOC at the Reserve Centers and other activities when we are encouraging membership.

For those who have not seen it visit the member's only home [www.nera.org](http://www.nera.org) go to the library and click the recruiting tools button. It is an excellent presentation for us to use in creating a John D Wood version in our recruiting efforts. Anyone who would like me to email the presentation directly please let me know at [ITCDiemert@aol.com](mailto:ITCDiemert@aol.com)

**Please attend this months meeting & support those who will guide the chapter in 2004!**