From the President’s desk...

Hello Windy City Chapter members,
07-03-08

This month we are gearing up for our recruiting drive. Today more than ever it is important to stay active in Military Organizations to protect our benefits. These benefits were not just given to us because they were there. It has been a long and winding road to acquire the portal-to-portal coverage on drill weekends, Commissary and Exchange privileges, Tricare Dental for Reservists, pay increases over the years, elimination of the Survivors Retirement Benefit Social Security offset, increase in the maximum number of annual drill points, disability rating overhaul just to name a few.

In the next few months, we will be contacting all of our shipmates whose membership has expired to let them know that we miss them and want them to come back home. If anyone knows one of these shipmates; talk to them about how important it is to support us as NERA supports them. Congress listens when votes are on the line.

Remember that “what Congress doth giveth, Congress can taketh away”.

Butch Michaelson
Chapter President

Mark Your Calendar:
Meetings are conducted at 2000 on the second Tuesdays of even numbered months at the VFW Post # Canfield at Higgins (alongside the Kennedy Expressway) : on the 2nd deck adjacent to the bar.

Planning Ahead!!!
Windy City Picnic is August 23 @ 1400 At John & Darlene Nicholson’s Home (Nicholson Woods), 4 Dan-Mar Trial, Palos Park, IL 60464 just west of Wolf Rd. just north of 131th. Exit Wolf on Partridge Lane.

RSVP Darlene Nicholson: 708-448-1300 bmncnick@yahoo.com

UPCOMING MEETING Tuesday, August 12th
Fall Fish Fry: Sept. 13th @ 1400 @ Nicholson’s

Windy City Chapter Meeting Minutes:
Naval Enlisted Reserve Association, Windy City Chapter, June 10, 2008
Roll Call was taken. President, Vice President, Treasurer, Master-at Arms, Executive Counselor, Secretary: Present
(1) Pledge of Allegiance
(2) Preamble
(3) moment of Silence
(4) Approval of the Minutes from April 8th Meeting: Mot x Jim Klocek, 2x Jim Edfors, Carried
(5) Approval of Treasurer’s Report: with analysis of Conference Expenses x Jerry Padour, Conference turned a profit of $1146 with some Candy still available for sale.
Treasurer’s Report: MxJim Edfors 2x George Pevitts; Motion Carried.

Audit Committee Report (headed by Jerry Padour) found zero discrepancies.

(6) Committee Reports:
Membership Committee Report: Paul Smurawski attended Family Day at Great Lakes. Welcome aboard to three new members: MA1 Kevin Worth in attendance. Mx Jerry Padour to get price estimate for professionally printed signs listing NERA goals. 2x Larry Monroe motion carried. Paul requested additional members for membership committee. Steve Devereaux and Andy Anderson volunteered.

Sunshine Committee: Spent $55 for shipping to Jon Burrows. Additional $10.95 shipping to be borne by sunshine.

Newsletter Committee and Webmaster: Continue promoting email subscriptions to newsletter. With discontinuation of chapter rebates, reducing newsletter expense is a must. Chapter website should be on recruiting posters.

2008 North Central Regional Conference Committee: Good job! Conference was very successful; cooperation of hotel staff was paramount. Mx Geno Kolker that certain member contributions to Regional Conference be reimbursed. 2x Jim Edfors, Discussion, Carried Windy City received a thank you card from Nat Exec. Director Steve Sandy.

Unfinished Business: President plans to get with recruiting and retention committee on a letter and boot camp company tee shirt arrangements. Windy City is considering a Company Guide-on pendant (the approx. size of our chapter flag).

WC has requested an accounting of the disposition of WC generated National Challenge coins.

Mariner managing editor Ron Nada is determining Mariner advertising rates.

Picnic to be held on Aug 23 @ 1400 @ Home of Darlene & John Nicholson. RSVP to Darlene @ 708- . Mot x Treasurer Geno Kolker for a free picnic this year. 2 x Andy Anderson. Amended x Jim Premeske to $5.00 RSVP, amended by Jim Klocek to refund fee to attendees. 2nd x Diana Premeske; carried.

Windy City Fall Fish Fry is scheduled for Sept 13th. Fish by Larry Monroe (or a more successful angler)

New Business: The USS Freedom, first of a new class of littoral combat ships, built in Marinette, Wisc. Crew being hosted to a reception at Fairbanks Morse in Beloit by Madison Navy League Council on June 12. Mot x Geno Kolker to authorize distribution of up to 10 WC challenge coins at reception. 2nd x R. Robertson Carried.

Paul Smurawski moved to purchase a full page National Conference Add (~$85). 2nd x Geno, carried.

Mot x Allen Koneke to adjourn. 2nd x Richard Koneke Adjournment at 2150.

***Better Pay and Benefits in ‘09***

Active duty and reserve component members can bank on a 3.9 percent pay raise next January as the House Armed Services Committee joined their Senate colleagues in approving a military pay increase that will exceed private sector wage growth by a half of a percentage point. In addition, both the House and Senate panels also agreed to block TRICARE fee increases for working-age retirees and to lower TRICARE premium paid by drilling reservists and their families who enroll in the TRICARE Reserve Select program. (Source Military.com 20 May 2008)

***Rules for Rendering Hand Salute of U.S. Flag***

The National Defense Authorization Act of 2008 contained an amendment to allow military members, retirees and veterans to render a hand salute during the hoisting, lowering or passing of the US Flag. It does not address saluting the flag during the playing of the national anthem, pledge of allegiance, honors (i.e. Taps) or any other saluting situations. Here is the excerpt from the legislation (H.R. 4986): SEC. 594. CONDUCT BY MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES AND VETERANS OUT OF UNIFORM DURING HOISTING, LOWERING, OR PASSING OF UNITES STATES FLAG. Section 9 of Title 4, United States Code, is amended by striking “all persons present” and in uniform should render the military salute. Members of the armed forces and veterans who are present but not in uniform may render the military salute. All other persons present should face the flag and stand at attention with their right hand over heart or if applicable, remove their headdress with their right hand and hold it at the left shoulder, the hand being over the heart. Citizens of other countries present should stand at attention. All such conduct toward the flag in a moving column should be rendered at the moment the flag passes.”

***Sweeping New GI Bill plan gets final approval***

Sweeping new veterans’ education package has been approved as part of the 2008 war budget. The package is designed to fully cover the cost of completing four years of college—including tuition and fees, books and living expenses—and to let career troops share those benefits with dependents. The new “GI Bill for the 21st Century” will offer a benefit worth an average of $80,000, double the GI Bills current value. The new benefit would pay up
to the in-state rate for tuition and fees for the most expensive four-year public college or university in the state where a veteran attends school. The package also includes a monthly living stipend, an annual book allowance, and money for tutorial assistance, along with many other features.

The House of Representatives passed the war funding bill last June. The Senate was expected to follow suit the following week. Benefits increases take effect as soon as the war funding bill is signed into law by President Bush. But veterans now in school will not get the higher amounts following week. Benefits increases take effect as soon as last June. The Senate was expected to follow suit the House of Representatives passed the war funding bill many other features.

The package’s new family transfer option will give active-duty, National Guard and reserve members the right to transfer benefits to spouses or children after meeting certain time-in-service milestones. No transfer rights would be available until August 1st, 2009 to collect any payments.

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“Retroactive payments will have to be made. Also, anyone who had not previously enrolled in the GI Bill will have to wait until August 1st 2009 to collect any payments.

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Update—The new “Post 9/11 GI Bill will soon be heading for the President’s desk. This new benefit will give service members and veterans who have served on active-duty since 9/11, 2001 a new education benefits package worth up to roughly $3,000 a month. The same legislation includes a change to the current Montgomery GI Bill that will increase the monthly payment to $1321 a month—a total benefit of more than $47,000. The new law will enable service members to transfer their GI Bill benefit to their dependents. (Source Navy Times of 24 June 2008)

**Bill to Help VA refinance homes**

Legislation has been introduced that would improve veterans’ ability to refinance their mortgages. The bill would increase the refinance cap. Under this legislation, the maximum guaranty for refinance loans would move to the same level as conventional loans—a 25 per cent limit for single family homes. This would nearly triple the current standard cap, and make the cap four-and-a-half times higher for Alaska, Hawaii, Guam, and the US Virgin Islands. The bill will also cut the equity requirement in half and reduce the 10 per cent equity requirement to 5 per cent, enabling VA to provide regular loans for up to 95 per cent of the reasonable value of the welling. (Source Military.com 13 May 2008)

**New evals for chiefs***

CPON unveils the 7 new ways chiefs will be graded, and why. In the fall of 2006, the Navy’s top sailor issued a set of “guiding principles” to chiefs to correct what he viewed as a disconnect between senior sailors and the blue shirts they were leading. The principles were a kick in the pants, directing chiefs to get out from behind their computers, speak their minds, quit focusing on getting college degrees and become active leaders of their sailors. And now, almost two years later, the grading is about to start.

Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (SWFMF) Joe Campa is rolling out a new evaluation form chiefs and senior chiefs. It no longer will be called a “fitness report,” which chiefs along with officers, have been getting. Instead, chiefs will be getting “evals”, a term that, of late, applied to sailors only up to first class.

The hallmark of the new evals—which will be used starting September 15, 2008, will be seven new performance traits that mirror Campa’s guiding principles. Evaluations for master chiefs won’t be put into use until April. “The mission, vision and guiding principals and the blueprint for what every chief should be doing,” Campa said. “Now if we are saying that, then we need to be evaluated on those things, too.” In addition, Campa said he wants commands to change the way chiefs are ranked. He said he considers it a problem that boards have ranked chiefs in a command, then written their performance reviews to reflect the rank they’ve been assigned. That creates situations in which a perfectly capable chief gets a bad review merely because other chiefs were slightly better. Now he wants the evaluations written first, with rankings to follow. The result is a tougher standard for chiefs—grading on specific standards that are discussed and reinforced by regular training. “There is little room for ambiguity here,” said Command Master Chief (AW/SW) Chuck Clarke, the senior enlisted sailorman aboard the carrier Kittyhawk. “You are either doing these things or you are not. It is that simple.” Campa considers this the final step in a nearly two-year process, one that he believes could define his time as the Navy’s senior enlisted sailor. Two months into his tour, he rolled out his “Mission, Vision and Guiding Principals” in an effort to be described as “resetting the mess.” It was focused on deck-plate leadership and accountability, spelled in terms that translate to chiefs’ day to day lives.

In 2007, the guiding principles were briefed to all chief selection boards and became primary criteria for advancement. They are now part of the curriculum at the Navy’s Senior Enlisted Academy and Command Master
Chief/Chief of the Boat Course in Newport, RI. But until the evaluations mirror what is being taught to chiefs, Campa said, the final piece of the puzzle is missing “It becomes clear that unless commanding officers were asked to use these standards when they graded their own chiefs—and not the fitness report traits—they would continue to be a misalignment of the expectations we have of our chiefs and how we rate their performance,” he said. Chief of Naval Operations Adm Gary Roughhead said the evals reflect the new emphasis. “The change to the performance traits aligns our evaluation with our expectations,” he said in a written statement. (For further information on the change in the new forms see Navy Times of 7 July 2008. This article is reprinted from the publication of the same date.)

Editor’s Note: It’s about time: an example of “fixing” something that was not broken.

And Yet more on Uniforms:
Service Dress Khaki

Ear testing for the proposed Service Dress Khaki uniform commenced in six major Navy communities on 11 June 2008. Cities where wear testing has started include: Washington, D.C; Norfolk, Va; Millington, Tenn; Newport, Rhode Island; Yokosuka, Japan; and Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Wear testing of the new uniforms for chiefs and officers was officially authorized in October 2007, and is in progress now. The style of the Service Dress Khaki is reminiscent of the uniform worn during World War II and Vietnam. The wear test is tentatively scheduled to end in August of this year. For more details see the article at Military.com. (Source: Military.com, 11 June 2008)

***Amid Complaints, PT uniform fixes on the way***

Navy officials have announced they are reworking the recently introduced physical training uniform’s design because of a fleet of complaints. Officials confirmed the rework in a naval administrative message released Thursday that also detailed the official manner of wear for the PT gear. Separate messages announced the rollout and wear details for the new khaki-and-black service uniform for E-6’s and below, as well as new optional components that have been approved with camouflage utility uniforms.

“We’re improving the fit of the liner,” said LCDR William Marks, spokesman for the Navy’s chief of personnel in Arlington, VA., of the proposed fixes to the PT uniform. “The modest liner in the shorts did not allow for all builds, so we have recrafted the specs to fit a broader range of sailors in each size category.” The changes are necessary because the shorts currently available in exchanges are uncomfortable to many. There are reports from reliable sources that even Navy Exchange employees are advising sailors they tear out the built-in liner and instead wear an authorized but optional “compression short” instead. In addition, there have been some complaints about the T-shirts. It was noted that the shirts can become slightly transparent, or see-through, when sailors sweat during a hard workout. The opacity of the T-shirt has been increased to add an additional level of modesty for sailors desiring it, but at the same time will not compromise the weight and performance of the fabric. In addition, the new version of the shirt will be longer for everyone, and a “tall” size will be added. The changes are expected to be incorporated quickly into the next production run and are expected to be available by early fall according the Navy sources. All sailors must have the PT uniform beginning October first, so they likely won’t be able to wait to buy the modified T-shirts and shorts as their first set. The expected service life of the uniform is about 12 months. This means the replacement costs will be factored into enlisted sailor’s annual clothing maintenance allowances, allowing them to purchase a new set each year as necessary.

The PT uniform will be required for command or group PT, as well as for both parts of the semi-annual physical fitness assessments: the physical fitness test and the body composition assessment. When worn for command functions, the rules state that the shirt must be tucked into the shorts, and the shorts must be worn “fully around the waist,” and not extend below the knee. Athletic socks must be worn with running shoes that “support the planned exercise,” the message states. The socks cannot extend above the mid-calf level, and low cut socks are authorized as well.

Women are required to wear “a sport or dress” bra. Other undergarments are authorized—but not required—for men and women. These include optional items such as compression shorts, which must be black or dark blue and not be visible when standing up. (Source Navy-Times of 10 July 2008)
As the first decade of the 21st Century draws to a close, the United States faces a new myriad of threats and challenges in which both the landscape and operating environment of the world continues to undergo dynamic and dramatic upheavals, claims Marine Corps Vision and Strategy 2025. How the Marine Corps can best be employed and the Corps' contributions to national defense in the coming years and decades is outlined in the Vision and Strategy document, which was signed June 18 by Gen. James T. Conway, commandant of the Marine Corps. Important as well is The Capstone Operational Concept, signed June 25, which will act as the first chapter in the forthcoming Marine Corps Operating Concept for a Changing Security Environment, 3rd Edition, scheduled to be published early next year, which serves as a bridge from vision and strategy to operating concepts and capabilities.

According to Col. Steve Zotti, director, Strategic Vision Group, Headquarters Marine Corps, both these documents should be read by every Marine in order to understand the future of the Marine Corps and how it will maintain its role as our nation’s expeditionary force-in-readiness.

“This is who we are and where we’re going to be in 2025 in order to meet the country’s expectations,” explained Zotti. “The difference in this vision as compared to previous Marine Corps statements – is that it calls for a more multi-capable, expeditionary and culturally adept Marine Air Ground Task Force. It reaffirms the nation’s need for an expeditionary force able to operate from the sea.”

The Vision and Strategy document has been in development since the fall of 2007 and used, according to Zotti, “Lessons learned, intelligence estimates, experts assessments and numerous detailed studies” to craft an assessment of potential future conflicts and how the Marine Corps can best counter and diffuse conflicts. It will further communicate what the special core competencies of the Marine Corps are to the American public, whom Zotti described as the ultimate shapers of foreign policy.

“We can better serve the nation by clearly communicating who we are, what we believe, what we do, and what our role is in addressing the challenges of the future security environment” Zotti said.

According to both the Marine Corps Vision and Strategy 2025 and The Capstone Operational Concept, global changes, especially within the “Arc of Instability” – an area including parts of South America, Africa, the Middle East and South Asia, where weaker states are vulnerable to extremist dominance – will blur notions of conflict between state and non-state actors, conventional and irregular forms of war, and combatants and non-combatants, into what could be termed hybrid conflicts that will not be easily solved by conventional military power alone.
“In order to understand how valuable we (the Marine Corps) are to the nation’s defense,” Zotti explained, “we have to define the future: Who are the potential adversaries and competitors? What are the challenges?”

Challenges, according to Vision and Strategy, will include global changes brought upon by population shifts to urban areas, globalization and increased competition for resources, climate change, terrorism, the increased speed of communication, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

While the Marine Corps has always excelled in conventional maneuver warfare, it is clear that hybrid forms of conflict will require a more hybrid approach to operations across a spectrum of military operations, from training host nation soldiers, to support of civil authorities, to noncombatant evacuations, to prolonged counterinsurgency operations. These concepts embody the “no better friend, no worse enemy” approach, which will serve, according to The Capstone Operational Concept, to ideologically defeat our nation’s enemies, deny them the hearts and minds of susceptible populations, and prevent conflicts before they happen.

“This long war will be a generational one that requires fostering relationships and rooting out extremists,” said Col. Doug King, Capstone Concept author and director of Marine Corps Combat Development Command. “We need to be in a position where we can help build partners’ capacities in order to enable them to better prevent regional conflict. This is done by increasing our forward presence in vulnerable places.”

The forward projection of U.S. power to provide both military assistance and humanitarian aid will be accomplished most directly through the use of Seabasing, which ties directly to the Marine Corps’ maritime and expeditionary nature and abilities, abilities that haven’t seen much demonstration recently due to the protracted ground war in Iraq. Most of the world’s hotspots within the “Arc of Instability” are accessible from the sea, the Marine Corps’ backyard.

“Seabasing enables regional partnership, both political and military, a port and airfield at sea,” King said. “This enabling concept will allow us to close, assemble, employ, sustain and redeploy joint forces from a protected, highly maneuverable sea base thereby giving us tremendous advantage when responding to crisis, alleviating suffering, or defeating adversaries.”

According to The Capstone Operational Concept, being supplied and being based from the sea will keep the Corps flexible and decrease it’s heavy footprint onshore, while still providing a persistent presence to deter extremist enemies from operating within the range of the Corps’ projected power.

This projected power ashore would include not only the ability to conduct major combat operations if needed, but
also civil affairs and humanitarian missions to improve the quality of life for allied or host-nation populations.

“In order to help nations prevent problems in their own back yard before they occur, we have to go out and help these people,” King said. “Helping other nations provide better security and infrastructure to their people will take a bite out of the extremists’ ability to set up shop and spread their radical influence.”

Assisting in these humanitarian efforts would potentially be several new units called Security Cooperation MAGTFs, which would build partnerships with host nations, through military to military training, include native-language speakers, and conduct civil affairs operations, such as improving host nation agriculture and access to water and electrical power. It is the intent of these units to increase both the security and domestic strengths of their host nations, creating better economic and social opportunities for the indigenous population so they would be less prone to either support or join extremist groups.

Indeed, all units, not only the special Security Cooperation MAGTFs, must be prepared to embrace the flexibility inherent in Seabasing and being multi-capable across the range of conflict down to the smallest unit level. Therefore, force structure implications will stress decentralized operations, adaptability to more austere environmental conditions, and the establishment of compact and separate command elements with their own geographic focus. This increased flexibility will be designed allow units to respond quicker and with more initiative to regionalized threats and activities.


Sunken Russian Submarine Raised
July 28, 2008
U.S. Coast Guard|by SC Richard Uronis
PROVIDENCE, RI - The U.S. Navy Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit Two, and the U.S. Army Dive Company were successful today in bringing a sunken Russian submarine to the surface of the Providence River, after it sank at its mooring during a storm in April 2007. The Coast Guard responded when the submarine, known as the Juliet 484, initially sank to assess any possible pollution or navigational hazard and ensure the vessel did not block the channel.

The Coast Guard will continue monitoring the situation while the owners, the Saratoga Museum Foundation, decide on the next course of action. The foundation is required to provide a safety plan to the Coast Guard that addresses matters of safety related to people working on and around the submarine, and a tow plan if the owners wish to move the submarine from its present position.

The Navy and Army used the raising of the sub as a training opportunity, and have been working on site since late May of this year.

"We are very fortunate that the Navy took on this salvage operation," Perry said. "Salvage of this type requires a lot of resources and a high level of expertise. The Navy not only provided what was needed, they have passed on much of what they have learned to the local Coast Guard and the Coast Guard's Shipboard Emergency Response Team (SERT), a component of the Coast Guard that specializes in supporting vessel casualty mitigation."