

# KEARSAGA

## U.S.S. KEARSARGE ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 73

CV, CVA, CVS-33, LHD-3

SPRING 2020

### President's Message by C. V. Lindley



## MKE 2020 CANCELLATION! WORKING ON MKE 2021

Fellow KEARSARGE Association Members, Families and Friends, this is indeed a very saddened time in the history of our great USA. Covid 19 has definitely upset and changed all of our lives.

Regretfully, we had to cancel our Milwaukee (MKE) reunion and all those that were registered were notified via email (we hope) as soon as we made the decision. Please see my letter (contained here-in) that was sent (by VP Barry) to all reunion registrants. Everyone should have received their refunds from Sec/Tres Bill Hollywood already.

Our current plans are to reschedule with most all events and locations just the same as we had planned for this year. I say almost all the same because there will have to be new negotiations/ agreements reached with respective parties prior to final confirmation. I'm requesting any of your INPUTS ASAP CONCERNING THIS PLAN.

We will interpret "No replies" as that you're still in agreement to reschedule in MKE for 2021 (approximately the same time frame). Planning will begin in earnest by the end of this month (April) and I'm hopeful that we'll be able to make an announcement in the next KEARSAGA.

I have an important request for everyone, please. We only have a very limited number of your EMAIL ADDRESSES AND WE NEED THEM. There may be times that we only want to "PASS THE WORD" to the membership and email is by far the quickest/best method. This reunion cancellation illustrates vividly one of those times. YOU DO NOT HAVE TO RECEIVE THE KEARSAGA VIA EMAIL IF YOU DON'T REQUEST IT. Accordingly, please send an email to VP Barry Rittle, Sec/Tres. Bill Hollywood and Webmaster

Dale Maddy, their email addresses are all listed on the last KEARSAGA page. By doing that, we'll be able to automatically save your email info and it stays with the KEARSARGE Association only. I realize that some may not do email and we understand completely. Please see my cancellation letter herein. I sincerely wish good health to all and hope that you all "stay well" and avoid this Coronavirus." C.V. Lindley,

*Regretfully, we had to cancel our May reunion in Milwaukee (MKE), Wisconsin. Tentatively, we will try to reschedule very close to the same time period in Milwaukee for 2021. We will keep everyone informed as appropriate when confirmation is made.*

*KEARSARGE Association Treasurer, Bill Hollywood, will be reimbursing each of you for the amount paid for registration fees and all events.*

*The cancellation / postponement is made with disappointment, but in the best interest for the safety of all. I just received an email minutes ago stating that the Governor of Wisconsin also banned all meetings immediately of 10 or more people until further notice. (Your elected officers had already decided earlier today to cancel and that was just more confirmation.)*

*Cancel your hotel reservations at your earliest opportunity. Call (414) 273-2950 (hotel direct). If any difficulty is involved I will personally intervene on your behalf. Also, if you have already made flight/other transportation arrangements, cancel them please for this year. I understand that airlines are working with their customers for refunds or some type of credits for a future flight. Considering this "National Emergency" I'm hopeful and optimistic they will work with you.*

*I am sincerely sorry and truly regret this disappointment and inconvenience and trust you will understand the reason for this decision. Any and all comments concerning cancellation / reschedule are requested immediately as long term planning is essential.*

## MEMBERSHIP DUES NOTICE

All KEARSARGE Association Members, Please be attentive to your membership expiration date that's on the address label. We don't want to be forced to drop a single member for EXPIRED dues.

## Agent Orange Items As Of January 2020

The Updated List identifying Agent Orange sites omits 40 locations: VA released an updated Department of Defense list of locations outside of Vietnam where tactical herbicides were used, tested or stored by the U.S. military. The Military Times reported that the new list omits 40 previously identified locations, such as Thailand, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico. Veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange or other herbicides during service may be eligible for a variety of VA benefits, including an Agent Orange Registry health exam, health care, and disability compensation for diseases associated with such exposure. VFW National Veterans Service Director Ryan Gallucci indicated that “the new list was a result of a GAO report which compelled DOD to come up with a more comprehensive list, not go back and revise what they already confirmed. We’re more than half a century since many of these incidents occurred and the government keeps changing its story. We know these chemicals harmed our veterans and VA has the obligation to deliver care and benefits regardless of DOD’s ongoing revisions.” The VFW implores VA to “grant benefits if a veteran has any evidence demonstrating that spraying may have occurred, regardless if the veteran uses the new list or old list where DOD confirmed that there was storage or spraying,” Gallucci said. Learn more.

VA Delays New Presumptive Conditions Related to Agent Orange Exposure: On Monday, VA sent a report to the House and Senate Committees on Veterans’ Affairs detailing VA’s concern with the scientific evidence behind the link between bladder cancer, hypothyroidism, parkinsonism, and hypertension and exposure to Agent Orange. Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert Wilkie stated that the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine did not identify any “definitive causal links” between Agent Orange and the diseases. VA is now waiting on the results of its own study. “The National Academy of Medicine has already established an association between Agent Orange exposure and these four diseases,” said VFW National Legislative Service Associate Director Matthew Doyle. “There is no reason to wait for the results of a new study and delay providing care and benefits to veterans in need.”

*(The original ship’s list included the Kearsarge. Subsequent lists removed the Kearsarge with no explanation. If you file a claim, remember that we were sending planes and choppers in and out of Vietnam.)*

MAIL  
CALL



- New member, Joe Abousseleman received a phone call from a former crew member who is 95 years old and wants to become an Associate member. He served during the early part of the Korean War in the F4U Corsair Squadron. He does not have a computer or cell phone. I will give you his contact info.

- From Jacqueline Hibbard: My father, Benjamin L. Winslow passed away. in November of 2017. He is still on your mailing list. Please remove him. It should save you some money.

- From Marvin Schindler: Keep the Kearsagas coming. I am thankful and appreciate news about our shipmates.

- From Eugene Feit: I have been getting two copies of the Kearsaga. One to my new address and one forwarded from the old address. Please remove the old address.

- From Mrs. James Harper: I am enclosing a check for his dues from 2017 to 2020. He passed away from Mesothelioma in Sept. 2018. He served from 1964 to 1970 in Vietnam and enjoyed reading the Kearsaga.

- From the daughter of Charles Dockendorf: Please cancel his membership. He is 98 and now in a nursing Home. He can no longer hear or see.

- From Gino Tebaldi: I hope all the members can keep the Association going. I enjoy all the news and stories.

- From Captain Frank L. Davis, Jr. To Bill Hollywood, Have enclosed my dues fro 2019 and 2020. Thanks for all that you do for the Association.

- From Terry Hill: Bill, one of these times I hope to be able to catch up on my dues without apologizing for its tardiness. Next July we will be visiting Alaska aboard a cruise ship. I am sending you a check for two years. Thank you for all your hard work.

## WELCOME ABOARD

### New Members!

Richard Appell	1510
Irwin Martin	1511
Danny Busch	1512
Joseph Abousseleman	1513
Richard P. Slavik	1514



## Senators Urge VA to Expand List of Medical Conditions for Agent Orange Exposure

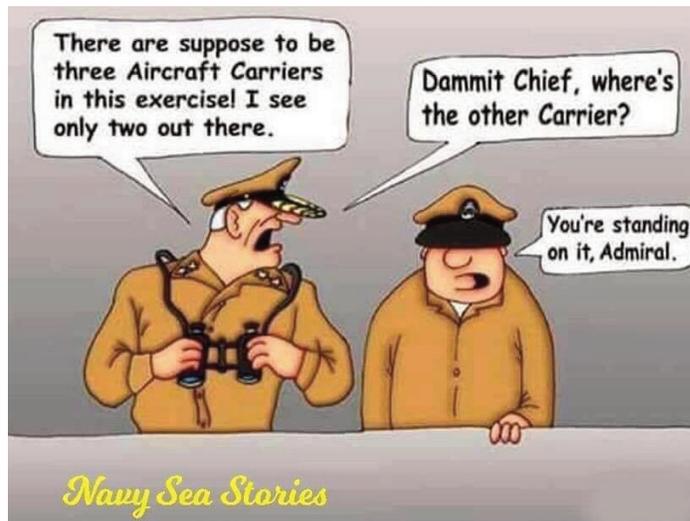
Ranking Member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee Jon Tester and six Senate colleagues dispatched a letter to Secretary Robert Wilkie, urging the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to take action on behalf of thousands of veterans across the country living with chronic health conditions, by expanding the VA's list of medical conditions associated with exposure to Agent Orange.

"Mr. Secretary, thousands of veterans - many of whom are aging and in urgent need of critical health care and other benefits - have waited far too long for a final decision that should have been made by the VA in 2016," wrote the Senators. "We therefore urge you to add Parkinsonism, Bladder Cancer, Hypertension and Hyperthyroidism to the list of presumptive health outcomes for service-connected exposure to Agent Orange without further delay."

The Senators also called into question the Department's delay in adding Parkinsonism to the list of conditions: "It seems arbitrary to make a distinction between Parkinson's and Parkinsonism as both severely affect the health and

quality of life for veterans. We owe it to our veterans to lift the burden of proving their symptoms are the nexus for service-connected herbicide exposure."

Earlier last year, President Donald Trump signed the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act into law.



## U.S.S. KEARSARGE ASSOCIATION SHIP'S STORE



### Ship's Crest



Cloth CV, CVA,  
CVS 33 - \$5.00

Magnetic - CV, CVA,  
CVS 33 - \$5.00



### Golf Shirts

CV, CVA, CVS 33 - Navy  
Med, Large, X-Large, 2X Large-\$29.00



### Sweat Shirts

CV, CVA, CVS 33 - Navy  
Med, Large, X-Large, 2X Large-\$36.00



### Dress Shirts

CV, CVA, CVS 33  
Short Sleeve Navy  
Med, Large, X-Large, 2X Large-\$29.00

### Hat

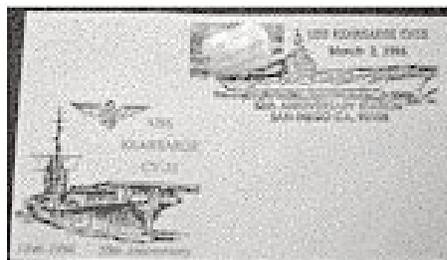


CV, CVA, CVS 33  
NAVY - \$16.00

### Watch Caps



Navy - CV, CVA, CVS 33  
\$11.00



**50th  
Anniversary  
1st Day  
Cover  
Envelope  
\$1.50**

### Jackets



The Port Authority Challenger jacket has a Tekon nylon durable, water repellent outside with a poly-filled body with heavyweight fleece lining. It has rib knit cuffs and waistband, zippered pockets outside and a zippered inside pocket. We are offering it in Navy with a Navy lining with USS Kearsarge, CV, CVA, CVS and ship's silhouette on the back. Small, Medium, Large & 1X Large for \$57.00  
2X Large for \$61.00 - 3X Large for \$65.00



A light weight nylon jacket with mesh lining is also available in Navy with the same stitching on back. Small, Medium, Large & 1X Large for \$53.00  
2X Large for \$55.00 - 3X Large for \$57.00

They are Special Order items only and all sales are final. When I have 6 orders, I will place the order with the supplier. We need a minimum of 6 to be eligible for the above mentioned prices.

### ALL PRICES INCLUDE SHIPPING AND HANDLING

Make your checks payable to the Kearsarge Association and send order to:

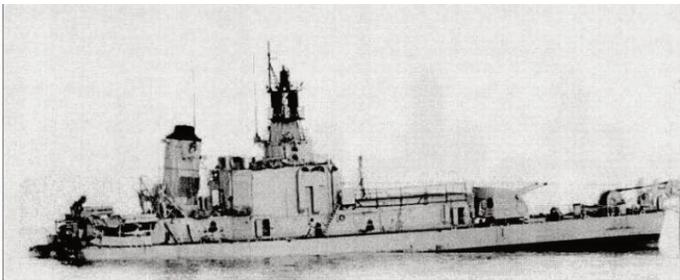
**Charles Patton**  
9125 Live Oak Avenue  
Ocean Springs, MS 39564

(228) 324-7174  
charlotteap@bellsouth.net

# Frank E. Evans (DD 754) 50th Remembrance Gathering

Barry Rittle, Kearsarge Association Vice-President

On June 3rd, 1969, 50 years ago, 74 Evans sailors were lost during operation Sea Spirit, a South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) exercise comprised of over 40 ships in the South China Sea. Of the 74 sailors lost, only one body was recovered, the other 73 sailors went down with the forward half of the ship.



Frank E. Evans was operating with HMAS Melbourne, an Australian aircraft carrier. At approximately 0300, while operating with "darkened ship," the Evans was ordered to move to "Plane Guard" position and while doing so the Melbourne and Evans collided, resulting in the forward half of the Evans sinking just a few minutes after impact, taking 73 of the 74 sailors with it.



Kearsarge was operating close by and immediately called GQ and steamed to the collision site to assist with rescue operations. The survivors were initially taken aboard Melbourne, but were ultimately transferred to Kearsarge for transit back to Subic Bay, PI. For those aboard Kearsarge and Frank E. Evans on June 3rd, 1966, a special bond was formed and it is a day we will never forget. Accordingly, ALL EVANS SURVIVORS THAT WERE BROUGHT ABOARD KEARSARGE ARE ELIGIBLE IN ALL RESPECTS FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THE KEARSARGE ASSOCIATION.

The Frank E. Evans DD 754 Association held a 50th Remembrance Gathering on the Queen Mary in

Long Beach, California, from May 31st thru June 3rd to remember and celebrate the lives of the "Lost 74" as well as those who survived the collision. Approximately 350 people were in attendance with some even coming from as far as Australia. Also, in attendance from Kearsarge, who were aboard at the time of the collision, were Bill Hollywood, Kearsarge Association Sec/Treasurer, wife Barb, my wife Lynda, me, David Grandchamp, wife Lupe, Keven Freedman and Randy Slaughter. Although the remembrance was similar to a reunion with tours and dinners, at times it was very somber and emotional. We presented the Evans Association with a plaque inscribed as follows:

USS KEARSARGE, CV CVA CVS 33 LHD 3

Presented to:

USS Frank E. Evans (DD 754) Association Members  
In honor and deep appreciation for your loyalty,  
dedication to your Shipmates and service to your  
country and the U.S. Navy.

From:

The Officers and members of the USS Kearsarge  
(CV CVA CVS 33, LHD 3) Association



The names of these "Lost 74" are not included on the Vietnam Memorial Wall in Washington, DC. Although the Evans had just come off the gun line and was returning to the gun line after the exercise, it was determined to be just outside the arbitrary line that defined the "combat zone." The Evans Association has been fighting to have this miscarriage of justice corrected and have the "Lost 74" memorialized on the Wall. For more information visit the Frank E. Evans DD 754 Association website at <http://www.usfee.org/the74>

**Lest the "Lost 74" be forgotten.**

**Wierd Stuff You Didn't Know!**

**The cost of raising a medium-sized dog to  
the age of eleven: \$16,400**

**The State with the highest percentage of  
people who walk to work is ALASKA.**

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## Commissary, Exchange & MWR Access Questions

The Defense Department announced expanded commissary, military service exchange and MWR access Jan. 1 and established a standard for physical access to military installations. Below are the top 10 questions Veterans have asked the Defense Department about the expanded access. For more information on expanded access, call Military One Source at 1-800-342-9647.

### **Q1. How do I get access if I have a 0 percent service-connected condition, but my income is too high to get a Veteran Health Identification Card?**

A1. Veterans who have received a Health Eligibility Center Form H623A that states they have been placed in VA health care priority group 8E may bring this form paired with an acceptable credential like a REAL ID-compliant driver's license or a U.S. passport for installation and privilege access.

### **Q2. If I've got a DoD-issued identification card because I'm retired, a Medal of Honor recipient, or have a 100 percent VA-documented disability or unemployability rating, do I also need to have a Veteran Health Identification Card (VHIC) to get access to DoD privileges?**

A2. No. If you are eligible for a DoD-issued retiree, Medal of Honor, or 100 percent disabled identification card, you should obtain and use the DoD-issued card to access DoD installations and privileges. While you could use a VHIC if you had one, you would be subject to the commissary credit/debit card user fee if you paid for your commissary purchases with a commercial credit or debit card. The commissary credit/debit card user fee is not charged to DoD-issued identification card holders. Your DoD-issued identification card will also allow you broader morale, welfare, and recreation activity access.

### **Q3. How does the installation access process work for me and my guests; and if I have old felony activity on my record, will I be denied access to the installation?**

A3. All newly eligible Veterans and caregivers and any guests traveling with them who are age 18 or older must stop at the visitor control center before entering an installation for the first time to verify identify, establish purpose for the visit, and undergo a basic on-the-spot background check.

- Newly eligible Veterans must show a Veteran Health Identification Card that displays "PURPLE HEART," "FORMER POW," or "SERVICE CONNECTED" below the photo on the front of the card; or a Health Eligibility Center Form H623A that states the Veteran has been placed in VA health care priority group 8E, paired with an acceptable credential like a REAL ID-compliant driver's license or a U.S. passport. (DoD installations cannot accept a driver's license that is not REAL ID-compliant as proof of identity.)

- Newly eligible caregivers must show an eligibility

letter from the VA's Office of Community Care that lists them as the Primary Family Caregiver for an eligible Veteran under the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers, paired with an acceptable credential like a REAL ID-compliant driver's license or a U.S. passport. (DoD installations cannot accept a driver's license that is not REAL ID-compliant as proof of identity.)

- Guests of newly eligible Veterans or caregivers who are age 18 or older must show an acceptable credential like a REAL ID-compliant driver's license or a U.S. passport. (DoD installations cannot accept a driver's license that is not REAL ID-compliant as proof of identity.)

If the installation has credential enrollment capability and the acceptable credential(s) used are enrollable, they can be enrolled for recurring access so that the individual(s) don't have to stop at visitor control every time they want to visit the installation. Even a guest's acceptable credential can be enrolled. It will not allow them to enter the installation without someone who is eligible to enter the installation, but it will allow them to have their credential scanned from the car when entering with an authorized individual. This is the same process used for anyone who desires entry to an installation.

An individual may be denied access if derogatory information shows up on the background check that reflects on the integrity or character of an individual that indicates that such an individual may pose a risk to the good order, discipline, morale, or safety of a DoD installation or the resources or personnel on that installation. Examples include, but are not limited to, aspects of an individual's criminal history or current status as wanted or as a known or appropriately suspected terrorist. There is a process for an individual with accurately identified derogatory information that prevents individuals from establishing either historic or current fitness to seek an exception due to their specific circumstances, allowing them to be granted unescorted access. DoD Components may grant unescorted access to a convicted felon, in accordance with applicable Federal, State, and local laws, after considering appropriate mitigating factors such as the nature and seriousness of the offense, the circumstances surrounding the offense, recency and frequency of the offense, the individual's age and maturity at the time of the offense, the individual's effort toward rehabilitation, and other factors. Under these conditions, an individual should apply directly to the installation commander requesting an exception to all allow access to the installation.

### **Q4. Are dependents of newly eligible Veterans and caregivers also eligible for DoD privileges?**

A4. No. The Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act of 2018, only gave these privileges to specific Veterans and caregivers, not to their dependents. Dependents may accompany eligible Veterans and caregivers as their guests, but they may not make purchases.

### **Q5. Why can't all Veterans have these DoD privileges?**

A5. The scope of operations on military installations is sized

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to take care of the needs of military members and their families. Military operations are not funded or sized to accommodate all Veterans. Expanding access to the 4.1 million Veterans and caregivers directed by the Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act of 2018 (and that number continues to grow daily), will already be a test of DoD's capacity. Inserting another 15 million Veterans into the mix would overwhelm the system and our military members and their families would suffer.

**Q6. Will Veterans who choose to live overseas be able to access military installations and privileges in overseas foreign countries?**

A6. It depends. U.S. law doesn't apply outside of the United States and outside of the U.S. territories and possessions. Access in overseas foreign countries is subject to applicable host-nation laws and applicable international agreements, like status of forces agreements. The function of the installation also sometimes restricts access. It is best to check with the installation you desire to visit to find out if, as a Veteran or caregiver in one of the new Veteran or caregiver categories, you will be authorized access. Chances are that if you are a retired military member living abroad and didn't already have access as a retiree, you will not get access under any of the new categories.

**Q7. Can newly eligible Veterans and caregivers bring guests to the installations and facilities?**

A7. Yes. Guests will be subject to installation access procedures described in #8 above and must remain with the eligible Veteran or caregiver at all times when they are on the installation. Also, guests cannot make any purchases in commissary or exchange stores.

**Q8. Which of the following MWR activities can be used? (This is only the most frequently asked about activities.)**

A8. AmericanForcesTravel.com: Yes. Bowling: Yes. Camping: Yes. Tent sites and RV parks. Child Care: No. Clubs: Yes. Fishing: It depends. If lakes are operated as part of the installation park and picnic areas, no. If lakes are operated as part of the installation outdoor recreation activity, then it is at the discretion of the Military Department, subject to capacity and funding conditions. Golf: Yes. Gyms: No. Libraries: No. Lodging: Yes. Cabins, cottages, recreation centers, resorts, and official temporary duty and permanent change of station lodging (on a space-available basis). Movies: Yes, if there is an admission fee. (No, if the movies are shown at no charge.) Pools: Yes, if designated as a recreational swimming pool. (No if designated as an aquatic training facility.) Rentals: Yes. Tickets: At the discretion of the Military Department, subject to capacity and funding conditions. MAC flights: This is NOT an MWR, exchange, or commissary activity and access is NOT authorized. Pharmacy: This is NOT an MWR, exchange, or commissary activity and access is NOT authorized. USO: Is NOT a military organization. USO is a non-Federal entity.

**Q9. What conditions are required to get access to the DoD privileges?**

A9. Newly eligible Veterans must meet at least one of the following conditions:

- Purple Heart recipient or Former prisoner of war
  - Service-connected disability rating 0-90 percent
- Veterans with a 100 percent disability or unemployability rating and Veterans who are Medal of Honor recipients already have DoD privileges, so they are not newly eligible. Veterans include former members of any of the uniformed services (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, U.S. Public Health Service, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration). Newly eligible caregivers must be the individual assessed, approved, and designated as the Primary Family Caregiver for an eligible Veteran under the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers.

In addition to meeting one of the above conditions, newly eligible Veterans and caregivers must possess the specific documentation that DoD will accept as proof of identity and eligibility for access:

- Veterans must possess a Veteran Health Identification Card (VHIC) that displays "PURPLE HEART," "FORMER POW," or "SERVICE CONNECTED" below the photo. If an eligible Veteran is not eligible to obtain a VHIC, the VA Health Eligibility Center Form H623A indicating placement in VA health care priority group 8E, paired with an acceptable credential, like a REAL ID-compliant driver's license or U.S. passport, will be accepted. For information on enrolling in VA health care, visit [www.va.gov/healthbenefits/enroll](http://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/enroll) or call 1-877-222-VETS (8387) Monday through Friday 8 a.m. until 8 p.m. Eastern time.

- Caregivers must possess an eligibility letter from the VA Office of Community Care that lists them as the Primary Family Caregiver for an eligible Veteran under the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers, paired with an acceptable credential like a REAL ID-compliant driver's license or a U.S. passport.

**10. Can anyone with a Veteran Health Identification Card (VHIC) get these privileges?**

A10. No. Only Veterans with a VHIC that displays "PURPLE HEART," "FORMER POW," or "SERVICE CONNECTED" will be authorized the new privileges. Veterans may be able to use a VHIC that doesn't contain one of these markings to access an installation with a medical facility if they have an appointment there, but if the VHIC does not display "PURPLE HEART," "FORMER POW," or "SERVICE CONNECTED," they will not have access to commissaries, exchanges, or morale, welfare, and recreation facilities.

Learn more about the VHIC requirement and how you can get one. Download the Expanded Access at Commissaries, Exchanges and Recreation Facilities fact sheet here.

For more information on expanded access, call:  
**Military One Source at 1-800-342-9647.**

# TAPS!



**Lawrence Gault, 86.** – I would like to inform the association that my husband, Larry Gault, passed away peacefully on November 9, 2019, at the age of 86, surrounded by his loving family. He had a wonderful life, with his service to our country ranking as one of the highlights. He enlisted in the U.S. Navy in 1953 and for the next four years served proudly on the U.S.S. Kearsarge (CVS 33). He was a charter member of the Kearsarga Association and enjoyed attending the reunions over the years. He will be greatly missed by his family and all who knew & loved him.  
**Joyce Gault**

## Memo Shows More Than 3 Dozen Military Hospitals Stop Treating Retirees & Families

*Military.com | By Amy Bushatz*

Military families and retirees receiving care through 38 military hospitals nationwide will soon be forced to go off-base instead, and some pharmacies at those hospitals will stop providing drugs to those not on active duty, Military.com has learned.

A 12-page memo, reviewed by Military.com, was sent to the commanders of 50 military treatment facilities, or MTFs, targeted for changes. It details for commanders the impacts of a planned MTF restructuring, the subject of an upcoming report to Congress. It also includes a letter to commanders explaining upcoming changes, signed by Lt. Gen. Ronald Pace, who directs the Defense Health Agency, and provides communications guidance to public affairs personnel.

## New Concurrent Receipt Bill Introduced

Director of Legislative Programs John Davis attended a press conference with Rep. Gus Bilirakis (Fla.) to announce that the legislator has introduced the Major Richard Star Act (H.R.5995), which would expand concurrent receipt eligibility for certain medically retired veterans seeking combat related special compensation. The FRA has long argued that retired pay and VA service-connected disability compensation are fundamentally different benefits, granted for different reasons. Military retired pay is an earned benefit for vested years of service. Service-connected disability compensation is for injury. To deny retired pay because of a disability is an injustice. Sens. Jon Tester (Mont.) and Thom Tillis (N.C.) introduced similar legislation (S.3393) in the Senate. Members are urged to go to the Action Center to weigh

in on these newly introduced bills as well as other pending concurrent receipt proposals.

## Could the Military 'Widow's Tax' Finally Get Abolished?

Sailors assigned to Navy Region Hawaii fold the American flag over the remains of U.S. Navy F1c Grant Clark COOK Jr. at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, Honolulu, Hawaii, May. 09, 2019.

With overwhelming support in Congress, two senators hope this is the year a dollar-for-dollar offset in compensation to surviving military spouses of military personnel and retirees -- known colloquially as the "widow's tax" -- is eliminated.

Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, and Sen. Doug Jones, D-Alabama, took to the Senate floor Monday urging for a vote on their proposed amendment to the national defense policy bill to overturn the offset.

The legislation, which has the backing of 75 senators, would repeal deductions taken from those who receive payments under the Defense Department's Survivor Benefit Plan and also get Dependency and Indemnity Compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs. Under the Survivor Benefit Plan, military retirees pay a portion of their retirement benefit to ensure that family members receive up to 55% of their retirement pay when they die.

The program, which is subsidized by the Defense Department, requires retirees to pay up to 6.5% of their gross retired pay, depending on the amount of coverage desired, much like an insurance plan.

On the other hand, DIC is automatically awarded to surviving families of troops or veterans who die of service-related conditions.

But under the current system, family members who receive both see their SBP reduced dollar for dollar for the amount they receive in DIC.

In some cases, Collins said, the offset can lead to total elimination of the Survivor Benefit Plan.

"It is out and out unfair and harms the survivors of our service members and military retirees," Collins said Monday. "The average offset [of \$925] is a significant amount of money that the widower or widow needs to support themselves and their families in the absence of their service member."

Related: Momentum Grows in Congress to Overturn Controversial Military 'Widow's Tax'

Roughly 65,000 military family members are affected by this offset, which amounts to a loss of more than \$65 million in income each year. Jones said given that the family members paid into the Survivor Benefit Plan, they should receive full payment of both benefits.

"We obviously can never repay these families for their loss. ... But we can dang sure stop the government from robbing them of the benefit they have paid for and earned."

# KEARSAGA

First  
Class  
U. S.  
Postage

## U.S.S. Kearsarge Association Newsletter

### U.S.S. KEARSARGE ASSN.

% Bill Hollywood  
3059 Crest Ave.  
Ketchikan, AK 99901

**ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED**



**CHECK MAILING LABEL FOR YOUR MEMBERSHIP EXPIRATION DATE**  
*If it has been highlighted in yellow please renew immediately.*

*You can now check your membership details on the website roster to determine your expiration date, the date by which your dues are due.*



## U.S.S. Kearsarge Hawaii December '65

### DUES and MEMBERSHIP

Annual membership dues are \$15.00

Check payable to the: **Kearsarge Association**

Mail to: **Bill Hollywood**

**3059 Crest Ave.**

**Ketchikan, AK 99901**

New members, send your information including:  
Name, Address, Phone Number, E-Mail Address,  
Rate, Rank, Division, and years serving aboard.

If you are interested in receiving your Kearsaga via E-Mail, go to our website and leave a message stating: "Send KEARSAGA via E-Mail"  
If you do not have a computer, we will continue to send it via U. S. Postal Service.

### Association Office Holders

**President:** C. V. Lindley, 9729 Shadow Wood Dr., Pensacola, FL 32514 • (850) 712-4664 • cvjan78@gmail.com

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Honorary President Kenneth McDaniel (Deceased) Association Founder  
John Bennett "President Emeritus," John Starnes Past President

[www.kearsargeassociation.com](http://www.kearsargeassociation.com)