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National VP for Public Relations

Spring Conference '03 – From a Junior Officer Perspective

active duty or drill periods.

Rear Admiral Israel, National President, kicked off the event with an inviting reception and social mixer. The atmosphere was welcoming and relaxed, complemented by senior officers' sincere desire to hear from the membership. It was not intimidating and regimented. To the contrary, the leadership expressed a genuine interest in listening to JO's to help further the organization and its goals.

Saturday, we divided into committee breakout rooms and discussed issues significant to the members. Issues like health care, promotion, awards, professional development, and many others directly related (and absolutely invaluable) to JO's.

Navigating one's career may seem overwhelming to our untrained eyes. However, with the assistance of experienced and successful senior officers available to advise junior personnel, we can make it a progressive and rewarding career.

Attendance gave this junior officer a new perspective on this organization. I discovered new ways to be a better Naval officer and to develop my career. I made new contacts and friends while fostering old relationships. Unlike many private sector conferences, the NRA leadership reminded us why we joined the Naval Reserve and became a military officer: To serve our country to the best of our ability! Will I see you at the next one? 📧

If you want to advance your career and develop as a professional, the Naval Reserve Association (NRA) conferences are an easy and fun way to reach that objective. As a junior officer (JO) attending for the first time, I expected to be obscured from the leadership based on my rank. Surprisingly, rank was not an issue; and senior leadership were available to all attendees. Unfettered access to captains and admirals provided opportunities that may not exist while on

Letters (Cont'd. from page 25)

Dear Editor:

In your May 2003 issue of *Naval Reserve Association News*, on page 22, CAPT Dick Devault, USNR (Ret), emphasized timely pay and support of a Reservist's career opportunities and progression.

I can not agree more with the author that these issues are important. If we as CO's can not pay and promote our Sailors, then our organization will cease to exist. I do take exception that a Unit CO has the sole responsibility for resolving pay issues with selected reserve members. It has been my experience over the last 15 years in the naval reserve that our reserve pay system is broken and has yet to be fixed. The burden to fix the pay system rests with the full time support staff – namely the reserve center CO's, Readiness Commanders and the leadership in New Orleans. As a unit CO about all I can do is to report the issue and continuously follow up. I have done this many times in the recent past to only be given a tracking number by the NSIPS help desk and told

to wait. Meanwhile our unpaid reservist continues to perform drills and active duty periods without being paid in a timely manner. I applaud our selected reservists for their tenacity and patience; however, this is beyond the call of duty. The reserve pay system is still broken and does not respond well to changes in drill status. My recommendation, let's fix the pay system once and for all. All we have to do is to look to the USCGR for a solution.

Richard Robey
CAPT, USNR

NRA NEWS,

I could not believe that the "old Reserve Center" is still there [June 2003, Vol 50, No. 6, p30]. It was with extreme pleasure that I read the article. Oh yes! From January 1947 to July 1950, Ensign and then LTjg Trainor was a drilling member.

Joseph F. Trainor
CAPT, USNR (Ret)

Dear Naval Reserve Association,

I wanted to report the death of NRA member CDR Newell Erickson, USNR (Ret) on 1 May in Clearwater, FL. He had been battling cancer and it finally got him.

His wife Adele requested information on the things that had to be done to report his death to Navy channels. I asked her if they had the May 2003 issue of the *NRA NEWS* and she reported that her daughter had inadvertently threw it away so I made a copy of "When Something Bad Happens" by CAPT Tom McAtee and sent it down to her.

My compliments to CAPT McAtee for an excellent piece that is a permanent part of my file and a great help to my shipmate's wife.

Robert D. Espeseth
CAPT, USNR (Ret)