From the Signal Bridge
Respecting our Past – Shaping our Future

This year marks the fifteenth anniversary of the attack on the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, and seventy five years since the devastating attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. As we look back and remember these events, we pay homage to the brave men and women who fought and died in the attacks, and those who lived through the battles. They shaped our future and protected the freedom we enjoy. They have earned our respect and gratitude.

Throughout the years, during these and other conflicts, the Society has been a steady source of support. For instance donors made it possible for Ed Cochran and his wife to start over after a fire destroyed their apartment. They also helped Commander Guzauskis’ crewmembers take care of their families while stationed off the coast of Vietnam. Recently, your donations supported Sea Service families evacuating ahead of Hurricane Matthew and making repairs when they returned home. Today, your support will bring a Marine to the bedside of an ill loved one; it will buy diapers and food when a Navy family needs help making ends meet until payday; and it will keep the lights on this winter for a Sea Service widow living just above the poverty level.

Taking care of Sailors, Marines, their widows, orphans, and families – that’s what your donations allow Society volunteers to do every day. Your support matters – and it makes a difference.

Thank you for considering the Society in your end-of-year charitable giving - the need is great.

Sincerely,

Admiral Steve Abbot, U.S. Navy (Retired)
President and Chief Executive Officer

Your Support Was There for Victims of Hurricane Matthew in Florida

By the time evacuation orders were given to residents of Jacksonville, Florida, on Thursday, October 6, the rain from Hurricane Matthew was already pouring down. “We quickly switched to disaster mode and sent our volunteers home to take care of their families,” said NMCRS Jacksonville Director Monika Woods. “But soon, clients started coming to our office. With a staff of three, we served more than 70 clients that afternoon. Every client told us they were grateful we were open and providing evacuation assistance.”

Meanwhile, thirty miles east, military families at Naval Base Mayport were ordered to evacuate, so NMCRS Mayport also went into disaster mode and began providing interest-free loans to Navy and Marine Corps families for emergency expenses.

Soon, NMCRS Mayport had to close because of strong winds. “We helped more than 50 families that afternoon before we had to shut down,” said NMCRS Mayport Director Bill Kennedy. “We opened our office again for a few hours on Sunday and Monday to process more evacuation assistance for families who were returning home and had not received assistance prior to evacuating, but had spent their savings on food, gas, and temporary lodging.”

“Navy and Marine Corps families are fortunate to have the Society as a financial resource.”

Navy ombudsmen, Fleet and Family Service Centers, the news media, and social media all helped get the word out about evacuation assistance from NMCRS. “Calls started coming in from spouses who didn’t know if they should evacuate or not,” said Jaymie Muser, ombudsman for the USS Iwo Jima. The Iwo Jima got underway ahead of the storm, sailing to Haiti to assist with the cleanup efforts resulting from Hurricane Matthew. “We told the spouses to start filling their disaster preparation kits, thinking about where they would go, and making a plan. Preparation is key.
Military families don’t always have the “rainy day” funds to pick up and leave at a moment’s notice. Navy and Marine Corps families are fortunate to have the Society as a financial resource.”

When the staff at NMCRS Mayport returned to regular office hours, they had helped 124 families with interest-free loans totaling more than $60,000. “About 15 houses on base had been damaged by fallen trees,” said Bill Kennedy, “and those families weren’t allowed back in their houses. They needed our financial assistance to pay for more temporary lodging and food.”

Meanwhile, NMCRS Jacksonville re-opened its office and had volunteers wanting to help. “By the time Hurricane Matthew passed, we’d served 136 USN and USMC families,” said Monica Woods. Most single service members received a $300 interest-free loan, and families were given a $600 interest-free loan.” After the storm, a Navy family returned to ask for a second loan. They had used their first disaster assistance loan to pay for the hotel when they evacuated, and now they’d lost all their perishable food because the electricity was out. “This Sailor had a one-year-old and a two-month old,” Monica said, “and because their home was so hot without air conditioning, they needed to stay a few more days in a hotel.” Needless to say, the family got the help they needed.

“The week after the hurricane, we had a lot of requests for financial assistance to repair damaged houses and cars,” Monica said. Similarly, NMCRS Mayport Relief Services Assistant Barb Dulaney reported that service members also requested financial assistance to help pay their car and home insurance deductibles so they could begin to make repairs related to storm damage.

“Families who needed financial assistance received it, and all in all, everyone worked together to get information communicated,” said Jaymie Muser. “Fortunately, the hurricane shifted out to sea. We had some damage, but nothing catastrophic, thankfully.”

Your generous support helped us provide $376,000 in assistance to 660 clients impacted by Hurricane Matthew in Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina and Virginia. We were able to be there for Sea Service members and their families, and that’s because of you.
These Veterans Groups Support the Society to Honor Military Service

Only 18 years old and fresh out of Navy boot camp, Wayne Goodson was assigned to Naval Intelligence, given a top secret clearance, and flown halfway around the world to a secret duty station in China.

As part of the Sino-American Cooperative Organization (SACO), Wayne worked as a radioman in one of 14 camps located in China to help U.S. forces during World War II. He was stationed there only for a year and a half, but his time in China created lifelong bonds with the men with whom he served.

SACO, a forerunner of the Navy SEALs, was also the unit that Judith Barbieri’s late father served with in China. “He was there for more than a year, and moved to nine different camps during that time,” she said. “When the war was over, he had to get to Shanghai where an American troop ship would pick him up.”

When he arrived in Shanghai, the Japanese were still in control, and he and two other SACO members were captured and imprisoned for a few days before they were rescued. Upon leaving China, SACO members had to swear oaths of secrecy. The 3,500 service members who served in SACO were the first Americans to serve under a foreign leader during a time of war.

Today, only 200 SACO members survive, and 50 of them are involved in a reunion group. They recently decided to honor the memory of each passing member by donating to the Society.

Other veterans reunion groups also give generously to the Society to honor veterans and their legacy of service.

For example, when the USS Coghlan (DD606) Association dissolved this year, the members contributed the balance of their bank account to the Society. The Coghlan was launched in 1942 and decommissioned in 1947, with 900 crew members assigned during that time. “No man was ever killed or lost on the Coghlan during World War II,” wrote Marsha Swantz, treasurer of the Association. The Coghlan received eight battle stars for service during the war.

The National Amphibious Veterans Association (NAVA) also closed out its treasury with a donation to the Society. “The gift was in gratitude for the good work that you do and have done for us and our Shipmates over the years,” wrote retired Master Chief Paul Wilfong, who served as treasurer of NAVA.

In addition, the USS Chikaskia (AO-54) reunion group, the USS Champlin (DD601) reunion group, and the Special Forces Association have all made generous donations this year to the Society to honor Shipmates who died.

When Sailors and Marines reflect on their active duty service, they remember that the Society was there for them, their Shipmates and fellow Marines. Because of donors like you, we’ll be there for many more generations of Sea Service members.
A Navy Commander Creates His Legacy of Serving Sailors and Their Families in Need

“I’m really taken with the Society,” Commander Steven Guzauskas said. And he means it. His sense of the value of what the Society does comes from his 25 years with the Navy, including tours in Vietnam. He’s seen firsthand what we do and how we help.

“There were numerous situations,” he said, “when Sailors were generously helped when the chips were really down.”

Steven served on the USS Agerholm and the USS Constellation in the Gulf of Tonkin during Vietnam. It wasn’t possible then for service men and women to talk to their families every day from a war zone, as it is today.

Often the Sailors needing help were underway, operating. The main way their families could contact them was by letter, and that could take weeks until a replenishment ship would come alongside and deliver mail and provisions. So, for a Sailor whose family was in need, things could really get critical because of the delays.

“I remember a Sailor who was in dire need of getting money back home,” Steven said. “The allotment hadn’t been established, so the money wasn’t there for his family. We were on the gun line in Vietnam. I mentioned to the XO that this Sailor needed help, and he took it from there, working with the Society.”

It was the same throughout Steven’s 25-year naval career, and he continues to believe that the welfare of Sailors is a primary responsibility.

Retired, he began supporting the Society in 1990, and recently made the decision to help even more by leaving a gift in his will to support Sea Service men and women, and their families in need, for years to come.

“I hope my gift will help propagate the word about the Society,” he said, “that it’s there for Sailors and Marines.”

For him, it’s about ensuring the service man or woman feels good about what they do and why they do it. It’s about instilling a sense of teamwork. And, it’s about leading by example.

“I wanted to give,” he said, “because military service matters. When I served, I saw active duty personnel do what was right, what was righteous, and they did it with full commitment. I’m proud to support that.”

If you would like to learn more about easy ways to support Sailors, Marines and their families through a gift in your will, please visit www.myplanwithnmcrs.org
Playing “Taps” To Honor Our Fallen

The ceremonial folding and presenting of the American flag and playing “Taps” on the bugle is a venerable tradition that honors our fallen service members at funerals. These traditions are required by law, but in the mid-1990s, the growing number of funerals for veterans posed a challenge.

“The Department of Defense had only about 300 buglers,” said Mark Ward, now retired. “But in the 90’s there were 1,500 veterans dying every day, and DOD couldn’t support a live bugler at every funeral.”

However, the law permitted a recording of “Taps” to be played if a bugler wasn’t available—but families of deceased service members felt that playing “Taps” on a boom box lacked solemnity.

“Those who have served in the military want to take care of their own.”

So the late Meg Falk (1944-2016), director of the Defense Department’s Family Policy Office, came up with a solution. She shared her idea with Simon Britton, a sound engineer, and asked him to develop a prototype. “I bought a bugle from a music store and put a device inside that played “Taps,” along with a speaker,” he said. “Then we improved the design to include a digital amplifier and a larger speaker.” And the ceremonial bugle was born.

When DOD piloted the program by sending 50 ceremonial bugles to the Missouri National Guard and a group in Panama, most families said the bugling seemed just like the real thing, and the ceremonial bugle was officially accepted as an alternative to a live bugler.

Right before the bugler brings it up to his or her lips, the buglar presses a button inside the bell of the horn and “Taps” plays. “You don’t have to be a musician to play it,” said Mark Ward. The “bugler” can even make it appear more realistic by breathing in and out as though blowing into the instrument.

Since 1999, more than 20,000 ceremonial bugles have been sold and are in use around the world. Today, the ceremonial bugle is used in 150,000 funerals each year, which includes about 80% of funeral services for veterans. The original ceremonial bugle only included a recording of “Taps,” but in response to requests received over the years, the ceremonial bugle now comes with eight different bugle calls.

“People love it,” said Simon Britton. “Those who have served in the military want to take care of their own. And today, every U.S. veteran can be honored with the traditional playing of “Taps” as they go to their final resting place.”

Just as the playing of “Taps” honors the courage of every service member, your support for the Society respects the sacrifice that Marines and Sailors make to serve our great country.

Learn more at www.ceremonialbugle.com

The ceremonial bugle - a dignified instrument developed to respect our past - and all those who serve in our nation’s armed forces.
Your Support Helped This Sailor, and Now He Pays It Forward

When his family’s apartment caught fire, Ed Cochran was aboard the USS Intrepid (CV-11) in the shipyard at Portsmouth, Virginia. He had no idea what had happened until he got home that night. Fortunately, his wife was unhurt, but their furniture and belongings were destroyed.

“I went to the Society,” Ed recalled. “I told them what happened. They reviewed my case and said, ‘We can’t give you a loan. You don’t make enough money to pay it back.’ I said, ‘what can I do?’ ‘We can give you a grant’ they said.”

The Society provided the funds for furniture and other household items the family needed to start over.

“Throughout the years, I’ve thought about that fire and decided that, when I had enough money and the time came around for the annual fund drive, I would be happy to give,” Ed said. “During my career, I did well enough and could afford to donate to the Society. Now that I’m retired, I’m in a position to give back even more. I think it’s time for me to do just that.” And so Ed set up a monthly donation to the Society by credit card.

Ed’s Navy career began in 1953. “When I was a teenager, I got hit in the face with a stickball bat. As a result, my teeth were a mess,” he said. “Kids always asked me when I was going to get my teeth fixed. I told them after high school I would join the Navy and the Navy would fix my teeth. So, as soon as I graduated, I went down to the Navy recruiting station on Whitehall Street in New York City and signed up.”

In his last assignment, Ed served as a recruiter in Las Vegas, Nevada, and retired from the Navy in 1977 after 22-½ years. Then, he joined the Las Vegas Police Department, where he worked for 12-½ years before retiring again. Now 80, Ed has been retired from the Navy for nearly four decades, but his home office is still decorated with his Navy memorabilia. “I’d go back in a minute,” he said, “if it was necessary.”

Ed Cochran’s monthly support for the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society makes a tremendous difference. Your gifts will also help Sea Service members and their families in need.

MCM Runners Support Sailors and Marines

62 Runners Raise More than $30,000 for NMCRS

The 62 runners representing Team NMCRS at the 41st Marine Corps Marathon in October were a diverse group, but they were all supporting Sailors, Marines and their families. Our runners:

• Were between 18 and 71 years old
• Came from 17 states
• Included 9 active duty Sailors and 3 active duty Marines
• Each raised funds as a member of “Team NMCRS,” with the top fundraiser setting a record $6,100 in contributions.

353 donors supported these runners and their names were listed on signs carried by cheering family and friends along the 26.2 mile course. Together, they raised more than $30,000 for Sailors, Marines and families in need. Thank you, team NMCRS!

Were you inspired? Why not pass this copy of Legacy Newsletter to a friend!
EVERY DOLLAR MATTERS.
EVERY DONOR MAKES A DIFFERENCE.

Bottom Line Up Front:
The challenges of military life continue to impact the financial stability of Navy and Marine Corps service members and their families.

We’re committed to ensuring every Sailor, Marine, and their family who needs financial assistance will get our help. But now we urgently need yours.

Make an Immediate Impact

Go to nmcrs.org/donate or mail your gift to:
NMCRS
875 N. Randolph Street, Suite 225
Arlington, VA 22203-1767

Please give generously before December 31.