

**2006 FRA Pinnacle Award Presentation  
to Representative Bill Young  
17 May 2007**

Good evening, I'm Joe Barnes, National Executive Secretary of the Fleet Reserve Association (FRA). Distinguished members of Congress – (especially the gentleman from Florida's 10<sup>th</sup> District) – special guests, particularly representatives from The Military Coalition and other veterans' organizations, Shipmates and Ladies: It's my privilege to welcome you this evening on behalf of our members – which include current and former members of the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard. We're pleased that you could join us in recognizing Congressman Bill Young.

Before we begin the presentation, I'd like to introduce FRA's National President Jerry Sweeney (from the great state of Nebraska), and ask that he and Rep. Young come forward and join me here at the lectern.

FRA's primary mission is to maintain and enhance the quality of life for Sea Service personnel through legislative advocacy programs and grassroots lobbying efforts. FRA shipmates were the first enlisted personnel to testify before Congress in the 1920s, and since then FRA's work has contributed to a number of quality-of-life enhancements benefiting our members, other service personnel and their families.

These are not possible without the strong support of members of Congress – especially members who are truly committed to introducing and advancing legislation addressing compensation and benefit enhancements – particularly for enlisted personnel.

Since 1996, the FRA has presented its Pinnacle Award to recognize distinguished members of Congress for their work to improve the quality of life for America's men and women in uniform and those who've served in the past. Representative Bill Young certainly exemplifies this and tonight joins the ranks of previous honorees that include:

Senators Strom Thurmond, Ted Stevens, John McCain, John Warner and Daniel Inouye, and Representatives G. V. "Sonny" Montgomery, Owen Pickett, Walter Jones, Ike Skelton and Michael Bilirakis and Gene Taylor.

Congressman Young represents the tenth district in Florida and was first elected to Congress in 1970. Throughout his tenure in Congress, Rep. Young has maintained as his highest priority an untiring commitment to a strong national defense. His record is long and distinguished. As a former Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, former Chairman of the House Appropriations Defense Subcommittee, and a current member of the House Armed Services Committee, he has focused on improving the quality of life for those who serve our nation in uniform -and on ensuring that they have the best equipment and training available to do their job.

To that end, Congressman Young and his wife Beverly meet on a regular basis with enlisted personnel and officers stateside and around the world to learn more about their needs, both on the job and with their families. These visits are not limited to garrison locales and have included field duty, at sea deployments, imminent danger areas, and combat zones. In short, they go where we ask our troops to go. Because of these meetings, Chairman Young's Appropriations Bills have consistently addressed many of the needs of enlisted service members, which include improved base housing, better medical care, and a significant investment in more modern equipment. I'm confident that the service members, veterans and military retirees in Florida's tenth district take great pride in being represented by a man of conviction and who boldly demonstrates his dedication to his constituents.