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Relief society marks 110 years

**Pensacola region launches annual fund drive to support Sailors,
Marines**

PENSACOLA, Fla. – Navy and Marine Corps leaders from commands around Pensacola, met Feb. 26 at the Mustin Beach Officers' Club to launch the 2014 Active Duty Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society (NMCRS) fundraising drive.

Each year the responsibility for leading the drive rotates among the various commands in the region. For 2014 Naval Education and Training Command (NETC) has the lead.

"I can't think of a better way of starting my tour of duty here in Pensacola than to work with the area commands and the dedicated people at the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society to support our troops and their families," said NETC Commander Rear Adm. Mike White, as he opened the breakfast event. "The Navy and Marines have a culture of caring for our own, and throughout our travels, my wife Marietta and I have seen the great work done through the society."

The history of the NMCRS, noted on their website, lists their beginning in 1904.

"This year marks 110 years the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society has been providing valued services to our military members and their families," said

NETC Chief of Staff Capt. John Jones, who is also the regional chair for the drive. "The annual drive raises funds to provide a variety of services to Sailors and Marines, as well as their families, including financial assistance and counseling, emergency loans, help with funding for emergency travel, and education loans or grants. For those service families who are expecting a baby, there are education programs on how to budget for the new arrival. These are just a few of the important services funded through donations during the drive."

Lt. Cmdr. Joshua Martin, Operational Support officer in NETC's Total Force Manpower division, and a member of the coordination team for the drive, said the goal is 100 percent contact with Sailors and Marines.

"Pensacola is a big training area and many of the young Sailors and Marines are just beginning their careers," Martin said. "This is an excellent opportunity to inform our newest military members about the society and the services they provide. While we certainly want to be able to raise lots of funds to keep those services going, our goal is to ensure 100 percent of the Sailors and Marines are contacted and know about the relief society."

According to Mark Harden, the Pensacola director of the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society, the volunteers are what make the society such a success.

"In 2013 volunteers working in our Pensacola office and in the NMCRS Thrift Shop, located in building 3736 on Corry Station, contributed more than 26,000 hours of service," said Harden. "Last year our office helped more than 2,080 clients with more than \$1.3 million in assistance."

Each command will have volunteers to head their individual efforts in raising awareness and for raising funds. The official drive runs from Mar. 1 to Apr. 15. While active duty members can donate via allotment, cash, check or

online with a credit card, civilians may not use the allotment process. All checks should be made payable to the NMCRS Active Duty Fund Drive.

For more information about the society or to donate online, visit <http://www.nmcrs.org/> .

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Story by Joy Samsel, NETC Public Affairs