

By [Jane Koropsak](#) | September 14, 2010

Brookhaven Veterans Association Commander Meets a Commander-in-Chief



[Don Farnam with President Clinton](#)

One recent Saturday afternoon, while enjoying some free time at a golf course on the east end of Long Island, Don Farnam, an employee in the Facilities and Operations Directorate, was pleasantly surprised when he found himself standing across from former President Bill Clinton.

During a brief conversation with the former Commander-in-Chief, Farnam mentioned to him that he noticed there was an impressive collection of military challenge coins on display in the background of his formal White House portrait. President Clinton smiled as he acknowledged the observation and Farnam seized the opportunity to present him with a distinctive challenge coin that represents the Brookhaven National Laboratory Veterans Association (BVA). "Most BVA members carry our coin in their pocket," said Farnam. "I was happy to have one with me the day I met the President."

According to Farnam, offering challenge coins is a time-honored tradition within the military dating back to at least World War I. The presentation of the coin is meant to recognize an event, campaign, or achievement and to build esprit de corps among military units.

The coin collection displayed in President Clinton's formal portrait now resides at the William J. Clinton Presidential Library and Museum in Little Rock, AR. Farnam, who is the current commander and a founding member of the BVA said, "It would be interesting to know if our BVA challenge coin found its way to that collection."