November 2026

The Lucky Bag

RICHMOND, VA COUNCIL NAVY LEAGUE OF THE UNITED STATES

Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day - Monday, December 7, 2026
Virginia War Memorial with Guest Speaker
Rear Admiral Chase Patrick, USN (Ret.)

We hope you join us at the Virginia War Memorial on December 7 as we honor those Virginian's who lost their lives at Pearl Harbor December 7, 1941. Our Guest Speaker is Rear Admiral Chase Patrick, USN (Ret.).

Chase Patrick retired from the Navy in 2026 as a Rear Admiral with 32 years of Surface Warfare, Fleet and Joint Force experience in leadership, military operations, national security, Allied & Partner military engagement, surface ship engineering and operations, missile defense, ship maintenance, Navy manpower and personnel policies, professional military education, legislative strategic engagements and geopolitical operations. A native of Woodbridge, VA, Patrick holds a BA in Foreign Affairs from the University of Virginia, a Master of Science in Operations Research from the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, CA, as well as a Master of Military Studies from Marine Corps University's Command and Staff College, in Quantico, VA.

Patrick's final flag officer assignment was as the 34th Commandant of the National War College in Washington, DC. His previous flag assignment was

Guest Speaker
Rear Admiral Chase Patrick,
USN (Ret.)



under Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Europe/Africa and U.S. 6th Fleet located in Naples, Italy, serving as the N5 and later as Deputy Commander, U.S. 6th Fleet at a time when the focus of operations concerned the recently started conflict in Ukraine, enhanced support to NATO, and the Eastern Mediterranean after the October 7, 2023 attack on Israel. Prior to this he served on Capitol Hill as the U.S. Navy's liaison to the U.S. Senate, as well as in the in the Office of the Secretary of Defense as an operations research analyst for the Office of Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation (OSD CAPE).

Patrick possesses significant operational experiences that includes six warships homeported in Pearl Harbor, HI, the last command of **USS *Chafee* (DDG-90),** a tour that resulted in his selection as the U.S. Pacific Fleet awardee of the VADM James Bond Stockade Award for Inspirational Leadership. Patrick later commanded Destroyer Squadron 50 and Task Force 55 in U.S Naval Central Command/5th Fleet in Manama, Bahrain.

Following the Remembrance Ceremony, members and guests are invited to gather in the Freedom Hall (lower level in the War Memorial) to enjoy a pre-paid lunch, catered by *Homemades* by Suzanne.

Homemades will feature a delicious hot homemade deep-dish chicken pot pie with winter vegetables, fresh garden salad, and apple cranberry bread pudding with vanilla bean sauce.

Reservation Deadline – TO BE RECEIVED BY: Monday 16 November 2026

****Refund Policy 2026: Cancellations will be accepted & checks returned UP TO *and* INCLUDING the "deadline date".**

RESERVATIONS FOR: PEARL HARBOR REMEMBRANCE DAY LUNCHEON – TUESDAY 7 DECEMBER 2026

Name:_____ **Tel #:**_____

Email:_____ **Name:**_____

Tel # :_____ **Email:** _____

Email: _____ **Navy League Office phone # (804) 355-7557**

Cost $ 25.00/Chicken Pot Pie Enclosed: $_____ **Make check payable (and mail) to: Richmond Council NLUS P.O. Box 11201 Richmond, VA 23230**

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Vaughan F. Dize



Greetings Fellow Richmond Council Navy League Members and Friends.

As Autumn begins, the Richmond Council Navy League looks to close another year. It was a year of joy over winning awards at the National Convention, to great sadness in losing two of our members, Dr. Jay Fiedler and Tom Hassell. They are, and will be missed, not only as leaders of the RCNL, but as great friends as well.

A shoutout goes to Board member Pat Robson for the extra effort he put in to help make the Sea Services Luncheon such a success. The speaker did an ***excellent*** job, and we were elated to see representatives from two of our adopted ships (USGC's ***Northland*** and ***Spencer***), MSC and NTAG in attendance. Another thank you goes out to Mechanicsville High School for providing the String Quintet and the NJROTC Color Guard for the event.

Update on the **USS *Katie.*** She has found a new owner! She will be leaving the slip at the James River Yacht Basin to a new home further down the river. The new owner plans to restore her and use her to support his restaurant, event hosting and other business ventures.

The James M. Slay Detachment, Marine Corps League, is still in need of a Navy representative for their Color Guard. If interested, contact our office at 804-355-7557, and we will get in touch with Joe Kelleher, USMC.

On November 11, Veterans Day, we want to thank all our Veterans for their service and sacrifice. We appreciate the sacrifices you and your family made for our country.

Events in Navy History November:

- November 10, 1775 – United States Marine Corps Birthday
- November 11, 1918 – Armistice Day: World War I ends at 11:00 AM
- November 13-14, 1942 – Naval Battle of Guadalcanal
- November 28, 1775 – Chaplain Corps Birthday

Until next month may you have fair winds and following seas!

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CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Chaplain John A. Harler, M.D.



"It's OK lose to an opponent. Must not lose to fear!"

This message is the third and final in a series of messages taken from the wisdom of Mr. Miyagi in the Karate Kid trilogy.

In this scene, our man Daniel is back in the ring to defend his title at the All-Valley Championship. His opponent has succeeded at intimidating him. Daniel is contemplating giving up and quitting his match when Miyagi drops this quote on him.

Once again, Scripture offers this wisdom that we find in Karate Kid Part III about standing brave and not letting fear win: *"It's OK lose to an opponent. Must not lose to fear!"*

Facing Opposition Without Fear:

- Philippians 1:28 - Tells believers not to be frightened in any way by those who oppose them, which is a sign of God's strength.
- Deuteronomy 3:22 - Commands people not to fear their opponents because God fights on their behalf.
- Psalm 56:3-4 - Says that when fear comes, a person should trust in God rather than giving in to what mere mortals can do.

Overcoming Fear with Faith:

- Isaiah 41:10 - God tells His people not to fear or be dismayed because He is with them and will strengthen them.
- 2 Timothy 1:7 - Reminds believers that God does not give a spirit of fear, but of power, love, and a sound mind.

This quote reminds us that the loss comes when we allow fear to keep us from even trying. If we let it, fear robs us of the opportunity to take chances and experience the positive side of risk. When we really examine how we look at the world, we feel encouraged when things go well after we overcome fear. If things don't go well, then we get a front-row seat to learning something valuable. Choosing to run from an opportunity out of fear really is the only way to lose.

Some say we learn from our failures. Although this is true, a better perspective is that we learn by taking risks and overcoming the fear of failure.

Welcome Aboard !

The Richmond Council Navy League is proud to welcome you as a member. In the weeks ahead, when you attend one of our Navy League events, please let the person at the registration desk know that you are a new member attending your first luncheon.

New Member	**Sponsor**
Nicole E. Coleman	George L. Feitig, Jr.

AMERICA Division Sea Cadets

Gary K. Riffle, Sr. – Liaison

At their September drill, Cadets of AMERICA Division traveled to Montpelier, VA for their annual Weapons Training and Qualifications.

Weapons Qualifications were held using .22 caliber pistols. Six Cadets qualified as Marksman, 1 Cadet qualified as Expert and 10 Cadets qualified as Sharpshooter.

A huge *thank you* to Cavalier Rifle & Pistol Club, and their NRA certified instructors and trainers, for hosting this very successful event.



Sea Cadets Weapons Qualifications assisted by Cavalier Rifle & Pistol Club's NRA certified instructors and trainers.



Cadets hit the bull's eye in these four targets. Quite impressive!

JROTC HIGH SCHOOL UPDATES

Nottoway High School NJROTC

On September 14, 2026, the Richmond Council Navy League Board voted to begin supporting the Nottoway High School NJROTC, in Crewe, VA.

Navy League member, Alan Clemmons, volunteered to be Council's Liaison.

After Board's approval, Council President Vaughan Dize and Liaison Clemmons met at the school with approximately 60 cadets, Sr. Chief David Perrin, USN (Ret.) Naval Science Instructor, and school Principal Reginald Wilson, to initiate the relationship.

Vaughan and Alan explained how the program works and the awards available for outstanding cadets.

They were very receptive and extremely happy to have the support of Richmond Council.

Goochland High School MCJROTC

By: LtCol Kevin Williams, USMC (Ret.), Sr. Marine Instructor

The Goochland High School MCJROTC Cadet Company recently completed an exceptionally productive first marking period, demonstrating outstanding leadership, physical endurance, and dedication to community service.

Physical Toughness & Esprit de Corps

To kick off the academic year and foster unit cohesion, the cadet company completed a Company Hike to the summit of Humpback Rock. Cadets navigated the steep terrain together, exemplifying unit morale and physical readiness.

Raiders Sweep Virginia State Championship

On October 17, the Goochland Raider Team competed at the **Virginia MCJROTC State Championship Meet**, delivering a dominant performance across all competitive categories:

Mixed Team: 1st Place State Champions
Male Team: State Runner-Up
Overall Meet Honor: #1 Overall State Champion Unit

Distinction in Drill and Musical Support

In addition to competing in drill and ceremony events, Goochland cadets routinely support local civic functions by rendering Color Guard honors across the community.

Notably, Goochland High School boasts the **only MCJROTC program in the nation with an active band capability** operating alongside its Color Guard. This unique asset allows the cadet company to deliver an unparalleled level of ceremonial dignity and respect to our nation, local veterans, and community partners during patriotic observances.

Looking Ahead: 251st Marine Corps Birthday Ball

The company is currently preparing to celebrate the **251st Anniversary of the Founding of the United States Marine Corps**. Cadets, staff, and distinguished guests will gather on **November 21** for the unit's annual Marine Corps Birthday Ball to honor Marine Corps traditions and heritage.

Saber Arch Request

We received an inquiry from Mary Randolph asking if we could provide six sabers for her God-daughter's wedding, Saturday, October 10, 2026, at St. Stephen's Church located at 6000 Grove Avenue in Richmond.

After many calls, Council President, Vaughan Dize, finally found someone who said, YES. Chief Jay Kelley, Naval Science Instructor at Mechanicsville High School NJROTC, came through with six cadets and sabers.



Upon leaving the church, LT Caroline Finn (Pilot on USS *Abraham Lincoln*

Saber Arch continued on page 4

Saber Arch continued from page 3

CVN-72) and Ryan Finkle, stopped to share a kiss under the Arch of Sabers.

Thank you, Chief Kelley and the following Cadets for going that extra mile:

- Cadet J. Cahoon
- Cadet K. Collette
- Cadet D. Basham
- Cadet A. Maddox
- Cadet J. Sutera
- Cadet K. Lopez-Mejia

Congratulations, Mr. & Mrs. Ryan Finkle!

Outstanding RCNL Sea Services Luncheon October 14, 2026

The big news that week was the return of the aircraft carrier, **USS *Abraham Lincoln* (CVN-72)** after its 322-day deployment in Operation Epic Fury. We neither heard nor read anything about the many Military Sealift Command ships that kept the ***Lincoln*** and her accompanying ships supplied with fuel, food, parts, mail, and ammunition.

Our keynote speaker at our Sea Service Luncheon, held at Richmond Country Club, was Rear Adm. Benjamin R. Nicholson, Commander of the Military Sealift Command (MSC). He commands a fleet of 175 ships that replenish our combatant fleet of about 460 ships. Sixty-four of the 175 are government-owned and government-operated (GOGO) by civilian mariners (CIVMARS) which are technically federal employees. Forty-one are government-owned but contractor-operated (GOCO) and another 74 are contractor-owned and operated (COCO). The COCO ships haul massive amounts of fuel and supplies to strategic areas where their cargo and fuel is transferred to ships in the Combat Logistics Fleet (CLF) to actually replenish combatants at sea.

The Military Sealift Command is a very complex organization. Three of its five "mission" components are similar to Navy components. The TYCOM (Type Commander), SYSCOM (Systems Commander), and NCC (Naval Component Commander) components involve the assignment, material readiness, training, and availability of MSC ships. The MCA (Manning Control Authority) and HCA (Head of Contracting Activity) components are unique. MCA is the MSC's human resources department for its civilian mariners. HCA contracts privately owned ships with non-government crews to do a lot of the "heavy lifting," which makes MSC the largest contractor of civilian ships in the world.

Rear Adm. Nicholson "wowed" the audience… especially the Sea Cadets and JROTC students and current military personnel…with the career opportunities with the Military Sealift Command. Starting salaries for maritime academy graduates (both government and private) exceed $160,000 and, with additional certifications (paid for by MSC) can raise personal income in excess of $200,000 per year. Fresh out of high school, the possibilities exceed $60,000. And, as CIVMAR's, they are federal employees with the same three-tiered retirement structure and medical benefits that all federal employees receive. Share these astounding numbers with someone you know who is making career decisions.

Audience reaction is the acid test of a program's success. Absolute focus during the presentation, robust Q&A with well-considered questions, and "high-fives" afterward are tangible proof that those who attended were completely engaged and impressed. Rear Adm. Nicholson was mesmerizing. We adjourned with the confidence that we'd given our members and guests a top-notch education and experience.

Successful luncheons don't just "happen." Our Richmond Navy League has a TEAM of astoundingly devoted members who make the venue arrangements (Tom Jennings) and the at-event arrangements (Nancy & Bill Butler, Carol Zembroski) for seamless execution. Be sure to thank them. And, if you have event planning skills, volunteer to help.

MSC's post on their Linkedin page:

"Today, Rear Adm. Benjamin Nicholson, Commander, Military Sealift Command had the pleasure of being the guest speaker at the Richmond Navy League Sea Services Luncheon.

He was able to share some of MSC's recent achievements and challenges ahead, and talked about the importance of partners like the Navy League who contribute in the support of our mariners and Sailors.

Its members send care packages to deployed crews, recognize our Sailors and recruiters, and invest in local JROTC units and the AMERICA Division Sea Cadets, the next generation of our maritime workforce.

Thank you to Council President Vaughan Dize and every member who made today possible. Fair winds and following seas."



Guest Speaker Rear Admiral Benjamin Nicholson, Commander, U.S. Navy's Military Sealift Command.



Rear Admiral Nicholson, Denise Walters (Ralph Lett's Daughter) and Pat Robson, RCNL Event Chairman.



Pictured L to R: Rear Admiral Chase Patrick, USN (Ret.); Rear Admiral Benjamin Nicholson and CO Anthony Bryant NTAG-Richmond.

Luncheon continued on page 5

Luncheon continued from page 4



George Feitig (on right), previously the RCNL Liaison with recently decommissioned USS *Normandy* (CG-60), is surprised to run into the former XO of *Normandy*, Anthony Bryant, who is now the CO of NTAG-Richmond.



Ralph Lett's Daughter, Denise Walters, was presented with the VA State Flag that was flown over the State Capital on her father's 100th birthday, an RCNL Challenge Coin and a framed U.S. Flag for her father who was unable to attend. Ralph Lett, USN (Ret.) turned 100 on September 21, 2026. Happy Birthday, Ralph. Thank you for your service.



PAO LTJG Jade Stewart and XO LCDR Harrison Carter from USCGC *Spencer* (WMEC-905).



Ceremonial Sea Services Luncheon Cake was cut by: CDR Jonathan Wolstenhole, CO USCGC *Northland*; Rear Admiral Benjamin Nicholson, Commander MSC; CDR Anthony Bryant, CO NTAG-Richmond and Joe Kelleher, Ph.D., USMC (Ret.).



Pictured left to right: From USCGC *Northland* (WMEC-904): XO LCDR Charles Chavtur; CO CDR Jonathan Wolstenholme; Council President Vaughan Dize; ENS Nicholas Butler and ENS Jacob Hardy.



Chief Jay Kelley, Naval Science Instructor at Mechanicsville High School, with Cadets in their Color Guard. (names not in particular order): C/LT Aaron Maddox, C/SCPO Keriol Lopez-Mejia, C/LCDR Jadyn Cahoon and C/LTJG Kylie Collette).

FROM THE FIRST SALUTE TO THE FINAL WELCOME

An Unforgettable Journey Honoring America's Veterans

By RCNL Member Jola Ruth West
October 17, 2026
Old Dominion Honor Mission #11

Some experiences leave an impression that lasts a lifetime. On October 17, 2026, I had the privilege of serving as a Guardian on Old Dominion Honor Mission #11, accompanying Veterans from Newport News, Virginia, to military memorials in the Washington, D.C., area. The day became a moving celebration of service, remembrance, and gratitude.

A Hero's Send-Off

Our journey began at the American Legion in Newport News. Community members and JROTC Cadets lined the walkway as Guardians escorted Veterans to their buses. State troopers then stopped traffic at intersections, their lights flashing and sirens sounding, to help our buses reach the interstate. Motorcycle escorts accompanied us to the National Museum of the Marine Corps in Quantico. At the museum, a crowd greeted the Veterans with flags, cheers, and applause. We toured the museum before continuing to the United States Air Force Memorial in Arlington.



American flags line the approach to the National Museum of the Marine Corps.

A Journey of Remembrance

At Arlington National Cemetery, we witnessed the Changing of the Guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Wreaths were laid, and we heard the solemn notes of "Taps." We then visited the World War II Memorial, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, and the Korean War Veterans Memorial. Each stop offered time to remember those who served and those who never returned.

Two Colonels, One Remarkable Story

I was honored to accompany a married couple, both retired military medical Colonels. They met during military training in 1966 and have been together ever since. At the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, I invited them to present Veterans' pins to one another. Watching two people with such a long-shared history recognize each other's service was a moment I will always treasure.

The female Colonel was also interviewed during the mission about her role in helping pave the way for women in military service. Her story reminded me that each Veteran carries experiences and achievements that deserve to be heard.



The two retired military medical Colonels near the Washington Monument during the October 17, 2026, Honor Mission.

A Community United in Gratitude

After our memorial visits, we stopped in Fredericksburg for dinner. Girl Scouts, parents, and motorcycle riders were there to greet the Veterans, and a fire truck displayed the American flag. Back on the buses, Veterans received challenge coins and took part in Mail Call.

Returning to Newport News, we were met again by state troopers, who escorted our buses through intersections with flashing lights and sirens. At the American Legion, children, military personnel, motorcycle riders, Knights of Pythias members, and many other supporters welcomed the Veterans home. Another fire truck displayed the American flag.



Veterans gathered during the day's visit to the military memorials.

More Than a Journey

The greatest gift of this Honor Mission was the privilege of walking beside those who served. I will remember the JROTC Cadets at our departure, the cheers at Quantico, the solemn ceremony at Arlington, the two Colonels honoring each other, and the extraordinary welcome when we returned home.

The day demonstrated how many people—from young students to fellow Veterans and community volunteers—want our service members to know they are remembered and appreciated.

An Invitation to Participate

If you have never experienced an Honor Flight or Honor Mission, I encourage you to explore the opportunities available through a hub in your area. Eligible Veterans can visit the memorials dedicated to their service, while volunteer Guardians provide assistance and companionship throughout the journey.

The escorts, the memorials, the conversations, and the homecoming are difficult to put into words until you experience them yourself. For me, October 17 will always hold a special place in my heart.

"It is a true honor, and I have been blessed beyond words!"

May we never forget the service and sacrifices of the men and women who have worn our nation's uniform.

OLD DOMINION HONOR MISSION #11
OCTOBER 17, 2026 / Written with the assistance of Luna (ChatGPT AI)

Honoring Our Heroes On Veterans Day

November 11, 2026



D'Andre D. Lampkin Foundation

On This Veterans Day, we pause to express our deepest gratitude to the brave men and women who have served our nation with unwavering dedication and courage. Few Americans truly understand the profound sense of enthusiasm that comes from facing immense challenges, achieving triumph against tremendous odds, and securing victory amidst harrowing upheavals. This unique experience is felt only by those who have risked their lives in arenas where many fear to tread.

To all Veterans, your sacrifices and steadfast commitment to our freedom and safety are unmatched and unparalleled. Your service exemplified the highest ideal of our nation, and for that we are eternally grateful.

Thank you for your courage, your resilience, and your dedication. Your legacy of strength and honor continues to inspire us all.



Veterans are invited to connect with VA programs and services, learn about available resources, and enjoy food & activities as they come together to recognize and honor those who served.

patriot art FOUNDATION

FREE PAINTING EVENT FOR VETERANS

Art of Valor: Saturday, November 7, 2026 / 10 AM – 2 PM'

GIVING VETERANS A MEANS OF EXPRESSION, CONNECTION & PURPOSE

Join us for the Fifth Annual Art of Valor at two locations:

On the **USS *Yorktown* (CV-10)**, 40 Patriots Point Road, Mount Pleasant, SC 29464 **and** at **The National Museum of the United States Army**, 1775 Liberty Drive, Fort Belvoir, VA 22060.

We welcome all levels of ability. All materials and refreshments are provided for in-person participants. To register via email, contact: info@patriotartfoundation.org or website. Mark in person location.



Salute To Service - Coming Home The Vietnam War (1955-1975)

Salute To Service is a multi-year program dedicated to reuniting Virginia Veterans with their units while honoring the American conflicts in which they served.

The Virginia War Memorial Foundation and the Virginia War Memorial invite Virginia Veterans, their immediate family members, and those who served in support roles during the Vietnam War to **join us on April 3, 2027**, for Salute to Service – coming Home: The Vietnam War, chaired by Commander Paul Galanti, USN (Ret.) and Jamie Galanti. This powerful program will bring Veterans, families, and the community together to reflect, reconnect, and honor the courage and sacrifice of those who served.

This program will consist of speaker, musical performances, exhibit panels, and other events providing rich content and a broad perspective of the Virginia Veterans experienced in their campaigns and the people with whom they served. A wreath-laying ceremony and free time on the Virginia War Memorial's grounds will also allow Veterans to remember and honor those who did not return. The shared history of Veterans, and the public's understanding of it, will be enhanced through individual oral histories, photographs and artifacts.

Registration is Now Open.

Virginia War Memorial looks forward to honoring your service and the sacrifices made by Virginia's Veterans, and their families. For more information go to: vawarmemorial.org/salutetoservice2027

The Navy's Unsung Hometown Hero

By: RCNL Director, Pat Robson

One of the most overlooked people serving our Navy isn't in the Navy at all. They never go to sea, never engage in combat, and they have no rating or rate. Yet they are critical to readiness.

A Navy **ombudsman** is a civilian, usually the spouse of a crew member, appointed by a Commanding Officer to handle at-home situations that arise within the families of crew members while a ship is deployed. Ombudsmen are unpaid volunteers. An ombudsman is a communication resource between the Commanding Officer and the families of crew members. They disseminate information, as permitted, regarding ships' policies, updates, and resources. They are referral resources for families for counseling, financial assistance, or family support, but they are **NOT** babysitters, drivers, lenders, counselors, or lawyers. The ombudsman keeps the CO abreast of morale, welfare, and recreation situations related to the crew's families. They are among the first to welcome aboard the families of new crew members.

Ombudsmen are professionally trained. They are allocated budgets from the ship to fulfill their duties, but the funds are for the benefit of the crew's families and ombudsmen are financially accountable for their expenditures. Non-appropriated Funds (NAF) are capped at $50 per year per ombudsman and may be used for expenses like appreciation dinners and awards… but not cash awards.

Private organizations, like the Richmond Navy League, are prohibited from contributing cash directly to an ombudsman's funding. However, non-cash, in-kind donations (supplies, events) are permitted, if they are appropriately valued, documented, and they comply with the Navy's policy and ethics rules. In all situations, the Commanding Officer must be made aware and approve of such donations.

A deployed Sailor who is worried about his/her family's wellbeing at home can be distracted, morale-compromised, and less effective. Knowing there is a competent resource on the homefront to help with situations that arise removes much of that stress. That reflects in the Sailor's performance and the ship or command's readiness.

One of the most overlooked people serving our Navy isn't in the Navy at all. They are vital to readiness.



The United States Navy Chaplain's Corps will celebrate its 251st birthday on November 28, 2026.

Established on November 28, 1775, when the Second Continental Congress adopted Navy regulations requiring divine services aboard warships.

It is the U.S. Navy's oldest staff corps. The corps provides spiritual care, counseling, and religious support to personnel across the U.S. Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard.

Happy Birthday, Navy Chaplains.

Station Milford Haven to Return to Full Operational Status in 2027

U.S. Coast Guard Station Milford Haven in Mathews, VA is scheduled to return to full operational status next year for the first time since 2024, when it transitioned to Scheduled Mission Status and crews began working scheduled shifts rather than 24-hour days.

Record recruiting results are now allowing the Coast Guard to fully staff Milford Haven and five other stations in 2027, said a press release from the U.S. Coast Guard, with additional stations also returning to full operations in the future, according to a USCG release.

The six stations were prioritized to return to full operations based on operational risk and mission demand, said the release. In addition to Milford Haven, they are Station Castle Hill in Rhode Island, Station Saginaw River in Michigan, and three stations in California – Station Vallejo, Station Golden Gate, and Station Rio Vista.

Returning these stations to full operations will increase capacity for search and rescue, maritime security and law enforcement, said the release.

"Record recruiting is giving us the people we need to strengthen frontline operations," said Adm. Kevin E. Lunday, Commandant of the Coast Guard. "Returning these stations to full operations means more Coast Guard men and women serving in our communities and greater capacity to respond when the American people need us. This is an important step, and more stations will follow."

The Coast Guard reduced operations at several units in 2023 and 2024 through its Force Alignment Initiative in response to workforce shortages, said the release. The initiative shifted personnel to higher priority units and missions.

Reconstitution of the stations, to include staffing and restoration of full operations, is contingent upon Fiscal Year 2027 appropriations, and the Coast Guard will prioritize stations based on operational risk, mission demand, and available funding.

(storied in the *Gloucester-Mathews Gazette Journal*; December 8, 2026)

UPDATE

In 2027 Richmond Council Navy League's Annual Business Meeting and Quarterly Luncheons will be held at:

The Willow Oaks Country Club
6228 Forest Hills Ave.
Richmond, VA. 23226

Mark your calendars for the following events in 2027:

February 3 – Business Meeting

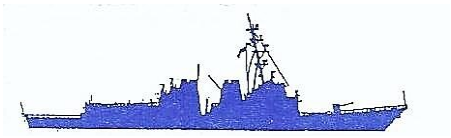
March 17 – Admiral Samuel Gravely Spring Luncheon

June 16 – CDR Theodore Ellyson Summer Luncheon

October 13 – Sea Services Luncheon

ADOPTED SHIPS UPDATE

(these reports may be edited to fit the space available)



USS *Gravely* (DDG-107)
CO: LCDR James Showanes
XO: Vacant / Transitioning
CMC: CMDCM LeDezman Johnson

Alan Clemmons, Liaison

Report from **USS *Gravely* (DDG-107)** Facebook Page



Fair Winds and Following Seas, Command Master Chief Johnson!

Command Master Chief Johnson is being recognized as having a highly successful tour aboard **USS *Gravely***.

Throughout his time aboard, he led from the deck plates, standing alongside Sailors, supporting the crew, and setting the example through his leadership, dedication, and commitment to the mission.

His impact on the crew and the command will continue long after his departure. We are grateful for his service, leadership, and lasting contributions to the ***Gravely*** team!



USS *Carter Hall* (LSD-50)
CO: CDR Brittany N. Lynn
XO: CDR Phillip E. Wise
CMC: CMDCM Chelsea L. Turner

Pat Robson, Liaison
Dennis Biggs, Assistant Liaison

USS *Carter Hall* is currently in port.



USCGC *Northland* (WMEC-904)
CO: CDR Jonathan M. Wolstenholme
XO: LCDR Charles Chavtur
CSEL: MKC Ethan Stanford

Vaughan Dize, Liaison
David Hajek, Assistant Liaison

USCGC *Northland* is currently in port.



USCGC *Spencer* (WMEC-905)
CO: CDR Steven M. Volk
XO: LCDR Harrison Carter
CSEL: MKC Andrew Chavez

Thomas A. Jennings, Liaison
George Feitig, Assistant Liaison

From The ***Spencer*** *Scuttlebutt* Newsletter:

This month aboard ***Spencer*** has been focused on maintenance, training, and preparing for the next deployment. The crew has continued making progress on much-needed maintenance projects throughout the ship. With our deployment looming, the crew is hard at work reassembling spaces and restoring equipment to ensure ***Spencer*** is ready to meet the demands of the next patrol.

We have also continued training and integrating the newest members of the crew. As new shipmates arrive, experienced personnel are taking the time to build their knowledge, develop their qualifications, and introduce them to the standards and traditions expected aboard ***Spencer***.

At the same time, we have said farewell to several shipmates as they depart for their next assignments. Their contributions to the cutter and the crew have been appreciated, and we wish them success in the opportunities ahead. The work being accomplished throughout the ship reflects the commitment of the crew as we prepare for the next deployment this holiday season.

Valor, Honor, & Tradition
CO CDR Steven M. Volk

USS *McFaul* Returned Home after 332 Days of Deployment



For 332 days, home was something the sailors aboard **USS *McFaul*** could only think about from thousands of miles away. While families continued their lives back in America the crew of this American guided-missile destroyer remained at sea, carrying out demanding naval operations far from home. Then, on October 23, 2026, the warship finally returned to Naval Station Norfolk, VA. After nearly eleven months away, the long deployment had come to an end.

During these months, **USS *McFaul* (DDG-74)** spent much of its deployment supporting U.S. naval operations in the Middle East. The destroyer performed air defense, surface warfare, and naval fire support missions while working alongside several American carrier strike groups, including those led by **USS *Abraham Lincoln*, USS *George H.W. Bush*,** and **USS *George Washington***. These missions required a combination of advanced technology, constant vigilance, and a crew prepared to respond when conditions changed.

But one detail about ***McFaul's*** journey stands out. Instead of returning through the Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea, the destroyer sailed around the African continent. The longer route reflected the security challenges surrounding the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, a strategic maritime passage near Yemen. Dring this journey, the ship also relied on cooperation with partner nations, including Ghana and Cabo Verde, for refueling and essential supplies. Even on the journey home, the mission demanded planning, cooperation, and endurance.

Finally, the long journey brought **USS *McFaul*** back to Norfolk. For a crew that had spent nearly a year deployed, the return home was more than a ship arriving at its homeport. It marked the end of months of demanding operations and separation from loved ones. The ship had crossed oceans, supported combat operations, and completed a remarkable journey around Africa before reaching American shores again.

332 days away from home. Nearly eleven months of duty. One long journey back. Behind every warship are sailors whose work often takes them far away from the people they love. Their mission may be measured in days at sea and miles traveled, but the meaning of coming home is something much more personal.

(source: Maritime History archives Facebook page).

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Veterans Day was originally commemorated as Armistice Day to mark the end of World War I hostilities at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month in 1918. It was expanded in 1954 to honor American Veterans of all wars. (source: History.com)

Our Motto: They Serve, We Support **Our Mission Statement: The Richmond, VA Council Navy League is a civilian, volunteer, 501(c) (3) non-profit charitable educational organization. Our primary mission is to support the men and women of our nation's Sea Services: U.S. Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, Merchant Marine and Military Sealift, their families, and our related local Naval Sea Cadet and JROTC youth programs. We support all branches of active-duty military personnel and their families with care packages and monetary contributions to Morale, Welfare and Recreation Programs. Through the National Navy League, we are advocates for legislation regarding the Sea Services.**



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