



May 2026



The Lucky Bag

RICHMOND, VA COUNCIL NAVY LEAGUE OF THE UNITED STATES

Join us at our CDR Theodore G. Ellyson Summer Luncheon Guest Speaker: Joe Kelleher, Ph.D., USMC Vietnam Veteran Topic – Veteran Moral Injury: Past, Present and Future

We hope you come and join us at our Summer Luncheon on Wednesday, 10 June, at Richmond Country Club. We are honored to have Joe Kelleher, Ph.D., USMC Vietnam Veteran as our Guest Speaker. His topic will be Veteran Moral Injury: Past, Present, and Future.

Joseph M. Kelleher, Jr., son of Marie and long-term Navy League Board member, J. Michael Kelleher, was born, raised in RVA, and graduated from Benedictine High School in 1960 before enlisting in the USMC.

Deployments as a helicopter crew technician onboard the **USS Valley Forge** with expeditionary forces in Thailand and Vietnam (Operation Shufly) before sailing on the **USS Spiegel Grove** to the Mediterranean Sea and Persian Gulf for joint exercises with Iranian forces (Operation Courageous) to protect Kharg Island. He competed and earned the title of outstanding athlete of Marine Air Group 26 while stationed at New River Air Station in North Carolina.

In 1968, upon graduating from Wheeling Jesuit University with a BA in history, Joe cofounded Kelleher HVAC with his late mother and father, where he serves as President and CEO. Joe and his late wife,



GUEST SPEAKER
Joe Kelleher, Ph.D.,
USMC Vietnam Veteran

Maria Teresa raised three children and eleven grandchildren.

Presently, Joe is Sr. Vice Commandant of the USMC Slay Detachment and burial Honor Guard, ceremonial Color Guard participant, Chair of the RVA Veterans Mental Health Consumer Counsel, Director of the

Richmond Council Navy League and a volunteer for Wood Association of Richmond Metro (Project WARM).

During his 4-year practicum at the VA Medical Center in RVA, with Veteran group sessions for PTSD, Joe realized the need for spiritually focused psychotherapy for treating moral injury. His recently published adapted curriculum and facilitator manual, with PowerPoint slides, provide approaches for spiritually struggling Veterans to participate anonymously in remote sessions. Outcome assessments and psychometric analyses may alter therapeutic approaches to moral injury.

Today, Joe will present to us the background history of PTSD and his proposed management of 'Spiritual PTSD' as it relates to 'Moral Injury.'

SUMMER LUNCHEON SCHEDULE

DATE: Wednesday 10 June

TIME: 11:30 AM Registration
12:00 PM Luncheon
12:45 PM Program

PLACE: Richmond Country Club
12950 Patterson Avenue
Richmond, VA 23238

COST: \$ 35.00 per person

Reservation Deadline for SUMMER LUNCHEON: To be received by Monday, June 1, 2026

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

RESERVATIONS FOR SUMMER LUNCHEON – WEDNESDAY JUNE 10, 2026

Name: _____ Tel: _____ email: _____

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Fish meals will ONLY be available to those requesting it PRIOR to deadline date: If desired, circle 1 or 2 for a fish meal(s)

Total # of Res. _____ @ \$ 35.00 per person Enclosed: \$ _____ N.L. Office Tel #: (804) 355-7557

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.

On April 11, 20 members of the Richmond Council Navy League and their guests attended the Commissioning of the 74th Arleigh-Burke Class Destroyer **USS Harvey C. Barnum, Jr. (DDG-124)** at Naval Station Norfolk. Very seldom do we attend a commissioning when the ship's namesake is still alive.

Retired Marine Corps Colonel Harvey C. Barnum, Jr, a Medal of Honor Recipient, attended and spoke at the commissioning ceremony of his ship. Col Barnum's wife, Martha Hill, was the sponsor of the ship and gave command to the ship's crew to "bring her to life." All attendees were invited to tour the ship at the end of the ceremony, then treated to a free catered lunch by Mission BBQ. (see pages 4 and 5 for more

information about the Commissioning Ceremony).

Four High School JROTC Units held their Awards Night in April:

- New Kent NJROTC – April 15
- Patrick Henry NJROTC – April 16
- J.R. Tucker MCJROTC – April 17
- James River NJROTC – April 28

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

Please keep our forward-deployed troops in your thoughts and prayers, knowing that many have been away from their loved ones for many months. Pray for their safety and safe return home.

May Events in U.S. Naval History:

- May 1, 1898: RADM Dewey's squadron destroys Spanish squadron in Manila Bay
- May 2, 2011: Navy Seals kill Al-Qaeda terrorist leader Osama bin Laden
- May 4-8, 1942: Battle of Coral Sea; first carrier-versus-carrier battle
- May 7-8, 1945: **USS Farquhar** sinks U-881, the last German U-boat sunk in WWII, right before VE Day
- May 13, 1908: Navy Nurse Corps established

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

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Chaplain John A. Harler, M.D.



ARE WE POLLINATORS ?

While reflecting on how we recently

experienced a prolonged deep freeze, followed by an ice storm that left a heavy coating of ice for days, and now we are beginning to see heavy layers of pollen covering everything outdoors, it would be easy to become irritated with these natural annoyances. After praying about this, I realized that there is a spiritual parallel.

The pollination process of flowers and the spreading of the word of God share a beautiful parallel. Just as bees and other pollinators carry pollen from one flower to another, facilitating the growth of new blooms, individuals share spiritual teachings and messages that nurture faith in others. Each flower relies on the pollinator's journey to flourish, much like communities thrive on the spreading of divine messages, fostering hope, connection, and growth in belief. In both cases, the act of sharing leads to a blossoming of life and purpose.

In 1 Corinthians 3:6-9, the Apostle Paul states, "I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow." This is the foundational parallel to pollination, where human agents spread the "pollen" of the Gospel, but God brings the increase.

The Parable of the Sower (Mark 4:3-8) emphasizes that the seed (the Word of God) must fall on good soil (the heart) to bear fruit; active "pollination" (sharing) is necessary, but reception varies. Some seed falls on the path (a hardened heart), where the birds eat it up before it can grow; some falls on rocky ground (a troubled heart), where shallow soil causes quick growth, but plants wither from lack of roots and sun scorching; other seed falls on thorny ground (a worried heart) where the plants are choked by the thorns and prevent them from bearing grain; but some seed falls on good soil (a receptive heart) and produce a healthy harvest.

So, as nature prepares the soil to be receptive to the pollination process by the hard winter storms, let us respond to the trials of life as opportunities to prepare our hearts to receive God's seeds of love, mercy, hope, and grace, so that we may be able to spread the Good News of the Gospel as Pollinators for God. Amen. 🍃

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The Lucky Bag is published monthly, except Jan. & Feb. Issues which are combined.

FAITH ON THE FRONT LINES:

Father Bill Bartz On Military Chaplaincy



Father Bartz currently serves as a member of the Richmond Council of the Navy League's Board of Directors.

Click the link below to read the article from the Orthodox Observer.

FITH ON THE FRONT LINES

<https://orthodox-observer.org/faith-on-the-front-lines-fr-bill-bartz-on-military-chaplaincy/>

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

Debbie Phillips

Sponsor

Robert E. Lusk, Jr.

AMERICA Division Sea Cadets

On Saturday, April 11, the AMERICA Division Sea Cadets had a joint drill with the Pentagon Division, out of Fredericksburg, at the Navy Operational

Support Center (NOSC) where Gary Powers, Jr. came and told the story of his father's capture and imprisonment by the USSR during the Cold War.

Then on Sunday, the Cadets went to Norfolk to visit the Nauticus Museum and tour the **USS Wisconsin**. 🇺🇸



Gary Powers, Jr. shares his dad's story of his capture and imprisonment during the Cold War.



Cadets hold a joint drill with the Pentagon Division out of Fredericksburg, VA.



Cadets having fun at Norfolk's Nauticus Museum. (Note: the Cadets went to the museum and ship tour in their civilian clothes due to HQ safety directives regarding not wearing military uniforms in public).

JROTC High School Awards Night Ceremony held in April

In April, Richmond Council Navy League Liaisons presented Cadets, at the following schools, with their awards:

Patrick Henry H.S. NJROTC

RCNL Liaison: Earl Williams

Cadet Chief Petty Officer (CPO) Violet Lambert received the Teddy Roosevelt Medal Award. CPO Lambert is a rising Junior and will be the Drill Team Commander next year.

Cadet Commander (CDR) Gabrielle White received the Top Cadet of the Year Award and a Monetary Award.

J.R. Tucker H.S. MCJROTC

RCNL Liaison: Vaughan Dize

Cadet Craig Simmons received the Teddy Roosevelt Medal Award.

Cadet Madeleine Rose received the Top Cadet of the Year Award and a Monetary Award.

The Perseverance Award and Challenge Coin went to Mason Chang.

New Kent H.S. NJROTC

RCNL Liaison: Patrick Harris

Cadet Nathan Herrington received the Roosevelt Medal Award.

Cadet Brandon Crooms received the Cadet of the Year and a Monetary Award.

Bravo Zulu, Cadets!

(Note: We hope to receive photos from the schools of the students receiving their awards. If so, they will be posted in the next issue of *The Lucky Bag*). 🇺🇸

HOUSTON-HOLICKY-SITTER VETERANS FORUM

Date: Tuesday, May 12, 2026

Place: Publix / 2nd Floor
Community Meeting Room
2250 John Rolfe Pkwy
Henrico, VA 23233

Time: Doors open 11:15 AM
Arrive No later than 11:45 AM

Guest Speaker: LtCol Mike Schoelwer, USMC (Ret.)

Topic: Grey Bull Rescue extraction of Maira Corina Machado, former Deputy of National Assembly of Venezuela and Nobel Peace Prize recipient. 🇺🇸

Commissioning of USS *Harvey C. Barnum, Jr.* (DDG-124)



U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Oliver McCain Vieira

On Saturday, April 11, 2026, Richmond Council Navy League members and guests attended the Commissioning Ceremony of the 74th Arleigh Burke-Class guided-missile Destroyer **USS *Harvey C. Barnum, Jr.* (DDG-124)** at Naval Station Norfolk.

Approximately 1,800 guests attended the ceremony, including senior military leaders, Sailors, Marines, Veterans, and family members. Secretary of the Navy, John C. Phelan, served as the ceremony's principal speaker, joining Vice Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral James W. Kilby, and Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Eric M. Smith in celebrating the ship's entry into service.

"This is the first vessel to bear the name of a Vietnam War Medal of Honor recipient, and Col Barnum's actions in the Que Son Valley during Operation Harvest Moon defines what leadership looks like when everything is on the line," said Secretary of the Department of the Navy, John C. Phelan. *"This ship is not symbolic, it is combat power, and today she joins something bigger. The ship and her crew join the President's Gold Fleet, The Fleet of the future – rebuilding America maritime dominance by putting more capable ships in the water, strengthening our industrial base, and ensuring we can fight tonight and win tomorrow. To be a superpower, one must be a seapower, and USS *Harvey C. Barnum, Jr.* represents exactly what that future looks like."*

Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Eric M. Smith, called Barnum "a true warrior" and said, *"his gallant initiative and heroic conduct reflected great credit upon himself and were in keeping with the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service. Ladies and gentlemen, I don't know where we get individuals like "Barney" Barnum, but we're damn lucky to have him. This is the stuff legends are made of."* In closing, he led the crowd and ship's crew to a rousing, "Charge On!", which serves as the ship's motto.

During his remarks, Barnum recognized "my radio operator, Corporal Patrick Iacunato" who was with him on the fateful day in 1965. *"Because when I took over that rifle company, he took my radio and continued to adjust fire."* Barnum would later be awarded for "conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty."

Barnum also recognized the crew of the ship bearing his name, noting *"they will now operate under pressure" and "how they will trust one another to always do the right thing at the right time for the right reasons; how they will trust one another and how decisively they will act when the pressure comes. You have prepared this warship, the newest warship in the fleet. Mission accomplished. Bravo Zulu! Charge On!"*

Barnum also gifted them his Lone Sailor Award. *"This will go aboard the*

Barnum and sail the seas around this country as an example of who sailors are, what they are, what is expected of them and the traditions that go with this."

Col Barnum's wife, Martha Hill, serves as the ship's sponsor. It was Hill's role as sponsor to *"Wish her fair winds and following seas. May God Bless all who sail in her, and may God bless the United States of America. Man our ship and bring her to life!"* 🚩



Col Harvey C. Barnum, Jr. and his wife, Martha Hill, the ship's sponsor. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Olive McCain Vieira).

The Ship's Crest



Colonel Barnum is quoted as saying, "If you are going to be a bear, be a Grizzly!" The lightning bolts between two bears embodies Harvey C. Barnum, Jr.'s intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty as he stood exposed repeatedly to identify enemy targets to armed helicopters and to direct the landing of transport helicopters for the evacuation of injured Marines. The moon pays homage to Operation Harvest Moon.

The anchor shank above the gold star represents the Medal of Honor, awarded to 1st Lieutenant Harvey C. Barnum, Jr. for his actions on 18 December 1965 during Operation Harvest Moon in the Que Son Valley, South Vietnam. The Medal of Honor ribbon is represented on the top of the shield. The shape of the shield is taken from the Navy Corpsman's insignia, paying homage to those lost in battle and those that still serve alongside Marines today. The white border of the shield alludes to the defensive perimeter that 1st Lt. Barnum painstakingly created by moving into the midst of heavy fire to reorganize and stabilize the badly decimated units.

Two caltrops denote Barnum's two tours of Vietnam with the 3rd Marine Division, first as a 1st Lt with Company H, 2nd Battalion, 9th Marines, and second as a Captain and Commanding Officer of Battery E, 2nd Battalion, 12th Marines. His illustrious career as a Marine officer is symbolized by a red disc bearing the Marine Corps eagle, globe and another emblem.

The two crossed cannons represent Colonel Harvey C. Barnum, Jr.'s role as an artillery officer and the armament of the **USS Harvey C Barnum, Jr. (DDG-124)**. ⚡



Twenty Richmond Council Navy League members and guests attended the Commissioning Ceremony of USS *Harvey C. Barnum, Jr.* on April 11, 2026.



Sailors await the call from the ship's sponsor to "Man our ship and bring her to life!"



Richmond Council Navy League members and guests were given a ship tour by Operations Deck Division LT Brandon Robeson.

USS Lorain County (LST-1177)

By: Pat Robson, RCNL Board Member & Liaison with **USS Carter Hall (LSD-50)**



Photo by Historical Collections of the Great Lakes; Bowling Green State University

Two months after graduating from the University of Richmond in 1969, I got my draft notice and enlisted in the Navy instead. Lower-than-cutoff math scores kept me out of OCS, but that turned out to be a blessing. Being an enlisted Sailor for 24 years was one of my most impactful privileges. Long-term, a 24-year Navy career was the single best decision I've ever made.

Every very USEFUL thing I've ever learned was from the Navy. In Boot Camp, we learned the "Navy way," discipline, seamanship, how to march, wash our clothes in a sink, hem our bellbottoms, fold our clothes (still do it that way), and to salute officers, but not Chiefs. In Boot Camp, I also learned how to ignite flatulence with a butane cigarette lighter and how to kill a rat with a push broom. In Radioman "A" School in Bainbridge, MD, we learned Morse Code, how to type, how to tune receivers and transmitters, radio voice procedures, and how to man a teletype. I also learned how to torch wall-climbing roaches with a butane cigarette lighter while on barracks watch and how to tie down a shipmate who was high on LSD and was trying to "fly" off the second deck. All of that was mediocre compared to life aboard the **USS Lorain County (LST-1177)**, in Little Creek, VA.

My first minutes onboard, I was met by Jim, a fellow RM, who offered me access to his locker library of pornographic novels. Later, I met DJ, a Golden Gloves state champ who was soon after tried and convicted of murder. DJ worked with Larry, a BM3 who was running an onboard car-stripping ring and had stolen auto parts hidden all over the ship. One night, I stepped out on the main deck and saw Highline (a nickname), a self-professed white witch, sitting on a bollard praying to the moon. For a recent psychology major, it was a smorgasbord of interesting characters and personality

types.

An LST is an amphibious Landing Ship Tank, aka, Long, Slow Target. She was 446 feet long, 62 feet on the beam, and had a draft of 17 feet. She was manned by about 20 officers and 150 enlisted Sailors. The purpose of an LST was to haul Marines, tanks, LVT's (Landing Vehicle Tracked), and six-by trucks to the op area, lower its bow ramp, and disembark all of it onshore. If the draft was too shallow to allow "beaching," we carried causeways, which formed a floating, connectable bridge from the bow ramp to the beach.

In addition, we launched LVT's full of Marine infantrymen. Whoever designed an LVT never intended to actually ride in one. They worked on the simple principle of pumping water out as fast as it rushed in. If the pump failed, the LVT flooded and sank. Fortunately, there was just enough time for 25 Marines to climb out of the single top hatch like angry ants. We always accompanied an LVT launch with LCVP's (Landing Craft, Vehicle, Personnel), aka Higgins Boats. We pulled alongside a distressed LVT so the Marines could literally jump onboard before their LVT sank. In my two years aboard the **Lorain County**, we lost about three LVT's, but no Marines. Supposedly, there are numerous LVT's on the bottom off the coasts of Onslow Beach, NC and Vieques Island, PR. I'm told that modern day LVT's are a bit better.

The old DeSoto Class LST's (1171) were flat-bottomed. They rolled through the water instead of pitching. While V-hulled ships' bows bobbed up and down, we rocked from side to side. Fortunately, I wasn't prone to seasickness. Many Marines were, so our cooks made sure that greasy spaghetti was our menu leaving Cape Hatteras, NC. We "sped" along at a steady 11 knots cruising speed but could hit 17 kts. with "brownbagger turns" (in a

hurry). We'd embark about 200 Marines in Morehead City, NC and take them to several places, usually in the Caribbean or the Mediterranean. I can tell funny stories about Marines for hours. Our entertainment was inflicting pranks on them, and they retaliated by leaving their troop spaces in dumpster condition.

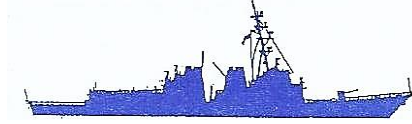
On liberty, our crew could be jailbait. If a place was declared off-limits at morning quarters, that was where most of our shipmates went as soon as they left the ship. Onboard, despite the use of marijuana and glue-sniffing by some, questionable morals, Sailor-language, personal quarrels, and draftee mindsets, we became a professional, cohesive, efficient team when tasked. All the diversions left and we became a machine. The Navy trained 18-year-olds to flawlessly operate million-dollar systems and equipment instinctively. I learned that everyone has more ability than they realize and that "can't" is a very far reach. We were "CAN DO." Sailors come through when challenged. My shipmates were some of the most admirable people I was privileged to serve alongside. And some of the funniest.

From the **USS Lorain County**, I was transferred in 1972 to Assault Craft Unit Two, also in Little Creek and was assigned to LCU-1949 (Landing Craft Utility). LCU's are 110 ft. long boats, not ships. They do what LST's did, but on a smaller scale. Crews are small, thus highly cross-trained. I learned navigation, radar, flashing light, boat-handling, and even some engineering. I loved it. LCU's are still used, but the LST's were replaced in the early 1990's by LCAC's (Landing Craft Air Cushioned).

My four years of active duty (1969-1973) were aboard "Gator Freighters" (amphibious ships and boats). My 20 Navy Reserve years were even better, but that's a story for another time. ✍️

ADOPTED SHIPS UPDATE

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



USS Gravely (DDG-107)
CO: CDR Greg Piorun
XO: CDR Gregory Tornambe
CMC: CMDCM LeDezman Johnson

Alan Clemmons, Liaison
Courtney Mustin, Ass't Liaison

USS Gravely is in port. ✍



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

Pat Robson, Liaison

USS Carter Hall is in port. ✍



USCGC Northland (WMEC-904)
CO: CDR Brian C. Gismervik
XO: LCDR Charles Chavtur
CSEL: MKC Ethan Stanford

Vaughan Dize, Liaison

Despite remaining moored up at Base Portsmouth, **Northland** had an exciting and productive April. Over the course of the month the cutter saw major progress in several mission-critical repair projects, most notably its innovative pier-side Main Diesel Engine (MDE) replacement.

The first repair of its kind on a Famous-class cutter involved the cutting of a substantial hole just above the waterline in the side of the hull. Various interferences in the Engine Room were removed, a cofferdam was installed to prevent water intrusion, and finally a six-by-eight-foot hole was cut on the side of **Northland's** hull. Moving forward, this hole will facilitate the

extraction of one **Northland's** MDEs and the installation of its replacement.

In addition to the strides made to improve **Northland's** material condition, there were multiple personnel advancements during April. The celebration of these crew members' devotion to duty and their achievements was a fitting acknowledgement of some of the key members behind **Northland's** many projects.

April is expected to bring more progress in the MDE replacement, and the **Northland** crew will continue to put their best foot forward every day. The Commanding Officer and crew thank you for the steadfast support that enables their service and wish all fair winds and following seas! ✍



A six-by-eight-foot hole was cut on the side of Northland's hull, just above the waterline, to facilitate the extraction of one of the Main Diesel Engines and the installation of its replacement. The first of its kind on a Famous-class cutter.



A cofferdam is hoisted then installed to prevent water intrusion.



Cofferdam successfully installed.

Very Respectfully,
XO LCDR Charles Chavtur



USCGC Spencer (WMEC-905)
CO: CDR Justin Strock
XO: LCDR L.H. (Hank) Deatrich

Thomas T. Hassell, Jr., Liaison
Thomas A. Jennings, Ass't Liaison

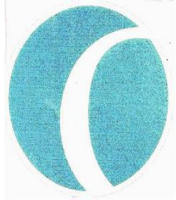
Since returning from patrol, the crew has focused on maintenance, readiness, and training as we prepare for our biennial Tailored Ship Training Availability. The Damage Control division has welded in new hatches, completed maintenance on our dewatering pumps, and focused on keeping critical damage control equipment ready for use. The Machinery Technicians have completed an overhaul of inoperable galley equipment and installed new appliances to support daily operations. The Electronics Division also upgraded aging communications systems, enhancing our ability to coordinate and respond during operations.

We have also focused on training, and our boat crews have been pushing forward on qualifications and conducting pursuit training to sharpen their skills. Our Law Enforcement division received high praise for the condition of LE gear and crew proficiency during their recent inspection. As we approach our upcoming assessment, every division is leaning in to ensure both the ship and crew are ready, and the team's hard work is clearly showing. ✍

Very Respectfully,
CO CDR Justin Strock

Thank You Sponsors!

Your Financial contribution to the Richmond Navy League provides Funds for programs supporting those serving in the United States Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard and Council's Youth Programs; The Naval Sea Cadet Corps and the Local Navy and Marine JROTC Units.



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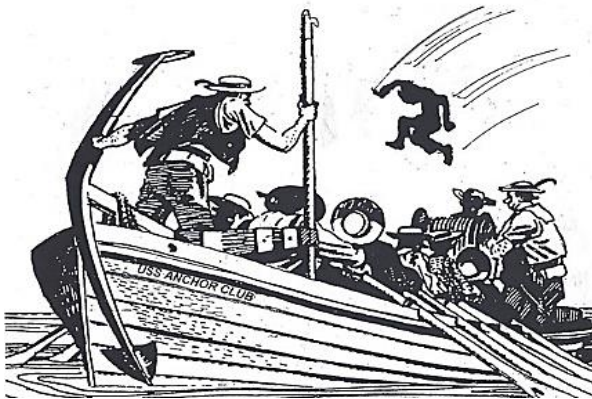
Memorial Day, observed on the last Monday of May, honors military personnel who died while serving in the United States Armed Forces. Originally known as “Decoration Day” to honor Civil War dead. It evolved to honor all fallen service members, providing a time for nation remembrance, grave decoration, flags flown at half-staff, and reflection on the sacrifices made to protect our freedom

“Our flag does not fly because the wind moves it. It flies with the last breath of each soldier who died protecting it.” (author unknown).



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