



MARCH 2026



# The Lucky Bag

**RICHMOND, VA NAVY LEAGUE OF THE UNITED STATES**

## **USS *John F. Kennedy* (CVN-79)**



**The future USS *John F. Kennedy* (CVN-79) returned February 4, 2026, to Newport News Shipbuilding after a one-week stint at sea to complete builder's trials. (Huntington Ingalls Industries photo).**

The **USS *John F. Kennedy* (CV-79)** is the second ship in the Gerald R. Ford-class of the U.S. Navy nuclear-powered aircraft carrier and the second aircraft carrier named after the 35<sup>th</sup> President of the United States, John F. Kennedy (1917-1963).

Its sheer scale is astonishing: at 1,092 feet in length, it rivals the length of the Empire State Building if laid flat. The carrier holds enough aviation fuel to fill 2,000 tanker trucks, and its nuclear reactors can operate for 25 years without needing refueling. With its electromagnetic launch system, fighter jets are catapulted from zero to 150 miles per hour in under three seconds. This ship serves as a floating city, mobile airbase, and nuclear facility—all engineered to project American strength globally within days.

The Ford-class marks the first major redesign of U.S. carriers since 1975's Nimitz-class, featuring reactors with triple the power output and electromagnetic catapults replacing old steam-driven systems. Weapons elevators deliver munitions faster and more reliably, and the advanced technology allows the ***Kennedy*** to function with fewer crew members while boosting combat power. Lessons from the lead ship, **USS *Gerald R. Ford***, have all been applied to building the ***Kennedy***.

During these trials, the ship's engineering will face rigorous scrutiny. Key systems will be tested, performance analyzed, and expected challenges encountered as the vessel braves the open sea. More assessments will occur before the Navy officially commissions the ship. However, ***Kennedy's*** departure signifies a remarkable achievement—a testament to America's continued expertise in shipbuilding and its ability to produce unmatched weaponry. (**USS *Kennedy* cont. on page 3**).

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Vaughan F. Dize



Greetings Fellow Richmond Council Navy League Members and Friends.

February 2026 should be the month we forget. Looks like Punxsutawney Phil and General Beauregard Lee were right on their winter predictions. However, Spring is around the corner with the “boys of summer” reporting to spring training and the World Baseball Classic starting March 6th.

Again, I would like to reach out to our membership for help. We need volunteers on the golf committee and liaison for one of our JROTC Programs. I am liaison with two JROTC Programs. If anyone would like to be a liaison to J.R. Tucker MCJROTC please let me know. Also, James M. Slay Detachment of the Virginia Marine Corps League needs a Navy representative for their Color Guard.

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

If you are interested, please contact the office at 804-355-7557 and we will get you in touch with Joe Kelleher, USMC (Ret).

On February 7th, the America Division USN Sea Cadets had their annual inspection. They passed with flying colors.

On February 20th CDR Amy Thomas was relieved by CDR Jordan Dennis, USN as the new CO of Navy Reserve Center Richmond.

Reservations must be in by March 2nd for our Admiral Samuel Gravely Luncheon on March 11<sup>th</sup>. Our guest speaker is Debbie Phillips as “Rosie the Riveter” Impersonator. I urge everyone to sign up for this luncheon.

### March Naval Events:

- March 2, 1867: U.S. Navy Civil Engineer Corps (CEC) established.
- March 3, 1871 : Navy Medical Corps established.
- March 3, 1915: Naval Reserve Force established.
- March 5, 1942: Seabees established.
- March 9, 1862: First battle of Ironclads, **USS Monitor** vs. **CSS Virginia**.
- March 20, 2003: U.S. begins Operation Iraqi Freedom, by launching cruise missiles from Navy ships in the Red Sea and Persian Gulf.
- March 31, 1854: Commodore Matthew C. Perry negotiates Treaty of Kanagawa to open relations with Japan. 🍀

## CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Chaplain John A. Harler, M.D.



### Living with the Hand We're Dealt

Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might...

(Ecclesiastes 9:10)

Having counseled many patients over the years regarding various inherited medical conditions, my message to them has been, “We can’t change our

genes unless they’re Levi’s!” In other words, we must play the hand we are dealt to the best of our ability. This includes taking responsibility for our own health, by eating a healthy diet, exercising, and seeking God’s wisdom, as well as that of wise counsellors. Proverbs 11:14 says, “Where there is no counsel, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors, there is safety.”

Life often presents us with situations we didn’t choose—circumstances, strengths, and challenges that form the “hand” we are dealt. Like in a card game, we can’t always pick which cards we get. Yet, our calling isn’t defined by the hand itself, but by how we play it.

The first step in playing our hand well is recognizing and playing the correct game: the “what is” game, not the “if only” game we wish we could play. The second step is acceptance, acknowledging our present reality so we can move forward. In moments of quiet reflection or prayer, we can find the strength to accept what is and begin to discern our path forward.

Every card, even the difficult ones, can teach us something. So, as Jeremiah tells us in 33:3, “Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known,” we can ask God what He is trying to teach us in a given situation.

Challenges often build our capacity for empathy, patience, and resilience. Our genetic makeup and life experiences give us a unique perspective, allowing us to connect with and serve others in ways no one else can.

In the letter to the Romans, the Apostle Paul says, “We glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope.”

So, we are called to play our best game with the cards we have. This requires resilience, our ability to adapt to and recover from adversity. We discover that even a seemingly poor hand, played with skill and wisdom, can lead to unexpected and meaningful outcomes.

May we all find the wisdom to accept our hand, the courage to play it with purpose, and the grace to know that we are never alone in the game of life. Our worth is not determined by the cards we hold, but by the integrity with which we play them.

Amen. 🍀

## USS Kennedy cont. from front page

The carrier has faced multiple delays over the years, as the Navy altered the delivery approach for the ship several times. After switching from a dual phase delivery to a single phase in 2020, the Navy planned to receive the carrier with modifications to accommodate the F-35C Joint Strike Fighter Lightning II – a capability the service previously planned to backfit later. The carrier will also deliver with the new Enterprise Air Surveillance Radar.

The ship's delivery schedule slipped again last year due to ongoing challenges incorporating new technologies like the Advanced Arresting Gear (AAG) and the Advanced Weapons Elevator (AWE). These two capabilities – the system used to catch aircraft landing on the deck of the carrier and the weapon elevators that move ordnance through the ship – are new to the Navy.

The **USS Kennedy** is a "giant of the sea" and we hope you will join us for the commissioning of this mega ship currently scheduled for March 2027.

(sources: *USNI News* 2/4/2026; World Warships Facebook) ✍

## Navy Reserve Center Richmond, Virginia



On February 20, 2026, the Navy Reserve Center-Richmond, held their Change of Command Ceremony at the Virginia War Memorial.

CDR Amy E. Thomas, Commanding Officer, Navy Reserve Center Richmond, Virginia was relieved by CDR Jordan L. Dennis, USN. Presiding Officer was Captain Christian R. Parilla, Commander Navy Reserve Region Readiness & Mobilization Command Norfolk. Guest Speaker was RDML Quinton S. Packard Director, Reserve

Warfare, N0959, Office of the Chief of Navy Reserve. ✍



**CDR Jordan L. Dennis, CO Navy Reserve Center Richmond.**



**CDR Amy E. Thomas, outgoing CO Navy Reserve Center Richmond.**



**AMERICA Division Sea Cadet Corps Color Guard presented the Colors at the COC Ceremony. Pictured Left to Right: CDR Thomas, PO3 Burns, PO1 Samberg and PO3 Lopez.**

## Salute to Service Virginia War Memorial March 21, 2026

## 35 Years Beyond Operation Desert Storm

## Celebrating The Veterans Who Served Together

Salute to Service is a multi-year program dedicated to providing a venue and program, reuniting Virginia Veterans with their units and the American conflicts in which they served. The inaugural program will be on March 21, 2026, to commemorate 35 years since Operation Desert Storm.

The program will provide Veterans and their families with a day of celebration and remembrance of a major conflict, all while fostering an atmosphere of peer support, camaraderie, and historical reflection.

The program will consist of speakers, moderated discussions, musical performances, and documentaries, providing rich context and a broad perspective of what 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, located at 621 S. Belvidere Street in Richmond, VA, 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. ✍

## HOUSTON-HOLICKY-SITTER VETERANS FORUM

**Date:** Tuesday, March 10, 2026

**Place:** Publix / 2<sup>nd</sup> 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: Greg McQuade,**  
Television Announcer, Channel 6:  
"I've Got a Story"

## AMERICA Division Sea Cadet Corps Updates



The AMERICA Division Sea Cadet Color Guard was once again honored to serve at the celebration of George Washington's Birthday held by the Old Dominion Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution at the Rotunda of the Virginia State Capital. The Cadets did a fantastic job! Pictured above from left to right: PO3 Lopez, PO3 Burns, SN Little and LC3 Landrum.



Presenting the Colors!



LCDR JoAnn Taft (05-3 Regional Director) and PO3 Lopez inspecting.



Annual Inspection for the AMERICA Division Sea Cadets. PO3 Lopez and PO3 Smith lead the cadets. CO ENS Donahue and LCDR JoAnn Taft (05-3 Regional Director) overseeing the cadets. They passed with flying colors!



A presentation with the VA State Police Explosive Ordnance Disposal Unit is given to the Sea Cadets. Explosive detection dog, Hulk, gave them a thorough demonstration of his skills.

# The Good 'Ole Days at the Richmond Navy League Office

By: John A. Harler, M.D., Chaplain, Richmond Council NLUS



Our bustling office was often treated to a Mission BBQ lunch. Pictured left to right: Alan Palmer, Milton Owen, Bill Butler, Carol Zembroski, John Harler, Joy Mullins, Bill McCathern, Mission BBQ employee, Ed Gibbons, Henry Allen, Tom Hassell and Earl McKnight.



Some of the old crew hard at work, taking care of Navy League business. Pictured left to right: Bill Butler, Milton Owen, Alan Palmer, Gary Riffle, Ed Gibbons, Harvey Lankford and Joy Mullins.

From the 1980's through the early 2000's, a group of "full-time retired volunteers" showed up at the Richmond Navy League office Monday through Friday, as they had at their regular jobs: Ed Gibbons, Denny Gilchrist, Henry Allen, Milton Owen, Bill McCathern, Mickey Woodward, Ken Lee, Jackie Willey, Alan Palmer, and Tom Hassell.

The office was organized with a front-office receptionist desk, four cubicles, and a back-office for the newsletter editorial "staff" volunteer, Bill McCathern, who had his draftsman's desk, where he literally "cut and pasted" articles for *The Lucky Bag*. The office secretary, Nancy Butler, assisted with the newsletter and wrote all office correspondence.

Before we decided to digitize *The Lucky Bag* and send it out by email at the end of each month, the regular office crew would gather to fold, label, stamp, and sort *The Lucky Bags* in preparation for mailing.

Around noon most days, the office "staff" would break for lunch at the now extinct Dairy Bar Restaurant, where there was ongoing discussion of the Richmond Navy League's business.

Well, as time has gone by, only a few of the old guard of men and women who held things together remain. The others have passed on to the Great Commander where they have received

their well-deserved medals of honor and heard the words, "Well done, good and faithful servants," or more likely, "Bravo Zulu!"

So, the Navy League office certainly has changed from the old days of a regular team of daily workers, to a part-time team that meets regularly once a week on Monday mornings for what we have come to call our "roundtable," where we plan our events and manage the nuts and bolts of the organization.

Currently, Nancy Butler and Bill McCathern create the digitized *Lucky Bag*, and send it to our members, supported ships and other units, supporters, and friends by blast email.

We give thanks to Bill Butler, who has faithfully served as our treasurer for fifteen years. Bill comes into the office several times a week to handle the office manager's duties, pick up the mail, and manage our finances.

We are blessed to have Tom Jennings, who comes in to answer the phone and assist with the office manager's duties half a day, once a week on Thursdays.

Well, having been down memory lane, we must return to reality and set our sails to the prevailing winds to stay the course toward our destination – the Richmond Navy League's Mission of **THEY SERVE WE SUPPORT!**

Would you be willing to make the same sacrifices as our old guard? We need volunteers to serve at our front desk half a day once a week on Tuesday or Wednesday, as Tom Jennings does on Thursdays. We also need volunteers to serve as a liaison to one of our JROTC High Schools or on our golf committee (Richmond Council's largest fundraiser). Volunteers help us to stay the course and complete our mission. Please let us know if you are interested.



Today it looks like this, except on Monday's at 10:00 AM for our weekly "roundtable" meeting. Anyone interested in learning the "nuts & bolts" of the Richmond Council Navy League, are welcome to attend. 🇺🇸

# A Brief History of the United States Navy Supply Corps

**The United States Navy Supply Corps has a rich history**, dating back to the early days of the Republic. Established on February 23, 1795, by an Act of Congress, the Supply Corps was initially tasked with providing logistical support to the fledgling U.S. Navy. Over the centuries, it has evolved into a vital component of Naval operational readiness, ensuring ships and sailors are well-equipped and supplied to meet the challenges of both peace and war.



**Naval Supply Systems Command  
Supply Corps**

**In its early years, the Supply Corps primarily focused** on procuring and transporting goods for the Navy, including food, clothing, and ammunition. As the Navy expanded and modernized, so did the responsibilities of the Supply Corps. During the Civil War, the corps played a crucial role in sustaining naval operations, managing supply depots, and supporting blockading squadrons.

**In the 20th century, the Supply Corps continued to adapt** to the changing nature of naval warfare. During World War II, Supply Corps officers were instrumental in managing the vast logistics of a global conflict, ensuring that ships operating in distant theaters had the necessary resources to sustain prolonged campaigns. The Korean and Vietnam Wars further underscored the importance of a well-organized and efficient supply chain for naval success.

**Today, the Supply Corps provides a wide range of services critical to the Navy's mission.** These include logistics and inventory management, financial management, contracting, and procurement. Supply Corps officers are responsible for overseeing the supply chain, ensuring that ships are adequately provisioned with everything from fuel and spare parts to medical supplies and personnel support services.

**Supply Corps officers also play key leadership roles within the Navy.** Some serve in roles assigned to Fleet Logistics Centers, responsible for managing the distribution of supplies across entire naval fleets. Additionally, they serve as supply officers on ships, overseeing the day-to-day logistics and ensuring that the crew has the resources needed to carry out their missions effectively.

**In times of conflict, Supply Corps officers are critical to sustaining naval operations** by managing the flow of supplies to deployed forces. Their expertise in logistics and procurement becomes even more crucial during humanitarian missions and disaster relief efforts, where the Navy's ability to provide timely and effective aid depends on a well-functioning supply chain.

**Throughout its history, the U.S. Navy Supply Corps has demonstrated its adaptability** and resilience, evolving to meet the challenges of an ever-changing global landscape. Whether supporting combat operations or providing humanitarian assistance, the Supply Corps continues to be an essential element in ensuring the Navy's success in fulfilling its missions around the world. ✍️

By [admin@navysupplycorpsfoundation.org](mailto:admin@navysupplycorpsfoundation.org) | November 21, 2023 | Heritage, Supply Corps History

## 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**

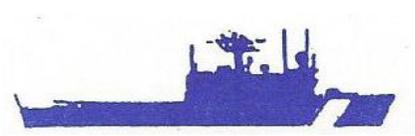
USS Gravely is in the BAE shipyard for repairs and upgrades. 🛠️



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

**Pat Robson, Liaison**

No report. 🛠️



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

**Vaughan Dize, Liaison**

USCGC Northland is in a prolonged maintenance period. 🛠️



**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**

Report and pictures from *The Spencer Scuttlebutt*, Issue 4:



This past stretch at sea included a much-needed and well-earned break for the crew with a port visit at Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Shipmates took full advantage of the time ashore—relaxing on the beaches, enjoying base amenities, and spending time together off the ship. It was a great opportunity to rest, reset, and come back aboard recharged for the work ahead.

Once back underway, we shifted quickly back into readiness and training. Our boat crews conducted focused small boat training for our coxswains in training, giving them valuable time at the helm and the chance to practice key maneuvers and procedures. This training is an important investment for not only our own future operations, but in their own professional development as they prepare for small boat operations at other units and in future mission sets.

We also made time to keep things fun. Trivia night brought out some friendly competition, plenty of laughs, and more than a few surprising facts.

It's been a great balance of hard work, professional growth, and well-deserved downtime, and I'm proud of how the crew continues to perform and support one another. Hope you enjoy this week's edition of *The Spencer Scuttlebutt*! 🛠️

Valor, Honor, Tradition  
 Very Respectfully,  
 CO Justin W. 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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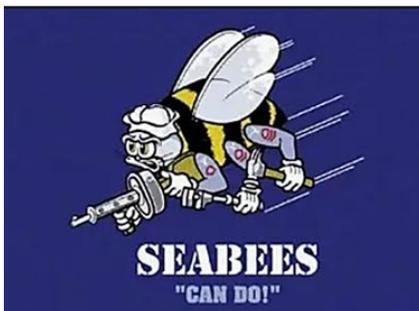


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Motto, "We Build, We Fight!"

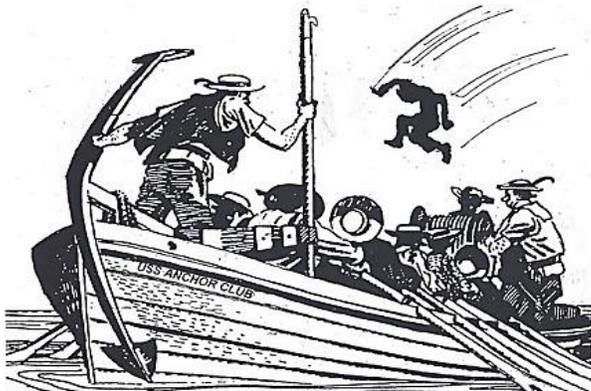
The Seabees are construction workers fully trained in defending themselves against enemy attack while building the infrastructure to keep the war effort moving. The drive and ingenuity of those fighting builders allowed the U.S. military to stay a step ahead of the enemy in both World War II Theaters of Operation and were a key factor in securing victory.

Success in WWII hinged on the ability of the military to quickly complete ambitious construction projects under dangerous conditions, so the U.S. Navy established the military's first Naval Construction Battalions under the direction of officers from the Navy's Civil Engineer Corp. More than 325,000 Seabees served during WWII. Continuing this proud tradition the Seabees have provided critical support to American troops in every conflict since then. (Source: Navy Seabee Foundation).



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*Thanks for jumping on board !!!*

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Carol Zembroski

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**The following names are listed from donations made in memory on their behalf.**

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Jacqueline E. Willey  
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