

# Kingsville Navy League – Quarterly Newsletter

Edition: 2025Q2:6

**SECOND QUARTER 2025**

April-June 2025



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QR CODE  
to visit our  
**WEBSITE**

*Proudly Serving South Texas Sea Service Families Since 1955*

## KINGSVILLE COUNCIL OF THE NAVY LEAGUE



[www.KingsvilleNavyLeague.org](http://www.KingsvilleNavyLeague.org)



@KingsvilleNavyLeague



@KingsvilleNL



### Our Mission, Goals, & Membership

The Kingsville Council of the Navy League (KCNL) is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) civilian organization with over 110 members. Our Council was founded in 1955 with the mission to support our Adopted Units (listed below). The Navy League of the United States, our national parent organization, with over 30,000 members worldwide, was founded in 1902 with the support of former President Theodore Roosevelt, with the mission to support military members, and their families, of our nation's Sea Services: U.S. Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and U.S.-flag Merchant Marine.

The goal of the Kingsville Council is threefold: to improve the quality of life of the members and their families of our adopted units, to support youth programs, and to educate the public about the need for our nation's Sea Services. **Educate. Advocate. Support.**

Our 6 adopted units and their leaders are:

- NAS Kingsville (NASK): CAPT Michael Bishop, USN
- Training Air Wing TWO (TW-2): COL Jayson Tiger, USMC
- USS Kingsville (LCS 36): CDR John Kavanagh, USN
- Training Squadron 21 (VT-21): CDR Michael Hooten, USN
- Training Squadron 22 (VT-22): LtCOL Sean Wolterman, USMC
- Donna ISD MCJROTC: SgtMaj Jose Romero, USMC (Ret.)

If you would like to join us in our mission, please visit our Kingsville Navy League website at [www.KingsvilleNavyLeague.org](http://www.KingsvilleNavyLeague.org) (scan QR code provided at the top of this page) to start the application process and/or contact one of our 13 Board of Directors or our President, Charlie Ratliff (361-455-5494). For 2025, our Directors are:

Jeanie Alexander	Dianne Leubert (Secretary)
Barbara Denney	Dick Messbarger
Tom Denney	Fred Neusch
Randy Foust	Charlie Ratliff (President)
Kim Hamm (Treasurer)	Brooke Spitzer
Lance Hamm	Buddy Windham (Vice President)
Alan Harwell	

Our Board of Directors and All-Hands Membership meetings/luncheons normally start at 12 noon at the Cherry Tree Tea Room Restaurant in downtown Kingsville, Texas. Tentative 2025 meeting dates are: 09Jan, 06Feb, 03Apr, 05Jun, 07Aug, 02Oct, and 04Dec (subject to change).

### Thank You to Our Donors & Volunteers

A big **THANK YOU** to our donors for supporting our mission and improving the quality of life of our local Sailors, Marines, and JROTC Cadets. Our gracious donors are listed below, alphabetically (major donors in **bold**):

- Alexander, Jeanie & Sandy (Member Donors)
- Baffin Bay Seafood Restaurant (Member/Yearly Gift Cards)
- Boeing Corp. (Goshawk Ball Sponsor)
- Bray's Smokehouse Restaurant (Gift Cards)
- Cherry Tree Tea Room (Use of Venue, Member Donors)
- Dodds, Scott (Member Donor)
- Domus Development LLC (Eric Jakimier, Member Donor)
- **Ed Rachal Foundation (Major Donor)**
- **Elks Lodge #1926 (Elks Nat'l Foundation, Major Donor)**
- El Tapatio Mexican Restaurant (Yearly Gift Cards)
- **Frank, Jonathan & Barbara (Major Artistic Donors)**
- **Gilcrease Foundation (Major Annual Donor)**
- **Hahn & Oldham, PC (Members/Major Donors)**
- **Hamm, Lance & Kim (Members, Major Donors)**
- Harrel's Kingsville Pharmacy (Member/Yearly Gift Cards)
- H-E-B Donna, TX (Donor for Special Projects)
- H-E-B Kingsville, TX (Donor for Special Projects)
- King Barbershop (Yearly Gift Cards)
- **King Ranch Family (Major Donors)**
- Kingsville CrossFit (Gift Cards)
- **Las Vegas Bingo, Corpus Christi (Major Annual Donor)**
- Rolls Royce (Corporate Affiliate & Yearly Donor)
- **Spitfire Elite Consulting (Major Sponsor of Goshawk Ball)**
- TAMUK-President's Office (Donor/Sponsor of Tailgates+)
- **Texas Rose Rentals LLC (Rose Damron, Mbr/Major Donor)**
- **The Tailhook Association (Major Donor, Top Hook Gifts)**
- **Ultra Screen Printing & More (Members/Major Donor)**
- **V2X (Major Sponsor of Goshawk Ball)**
- Woman's Club of Kingsville – Athena Dept.
- Yaklin, Dennis and Lynn (Member/Donors)
- Young's Pizza and Bar (Yearly Gift Cards)

A big **THANK YOU** is also extended to our many volunteers. Our donors and volunteers make our yearly events and programs very successful.

## April 2025

The second quarter of 2025 started off with the Kingsville Navy League hosting their All-Hands and Directors meeting at the Cherry Tree Tea Room restaurant on April 3<sup>rd</sup> with 12 Board members present along with 11 other members and 5 guests.

Jeanie Alexander, our Membership Chairperson, gave a report on our membership numbers and said we now stand at 113 members strong and have added 29 members since January 2024. Welcome aboard to all of our newest members!

Below (left to right), Charlie Ratliff, President of the Kingsville Navy League, presented "Welcome Aboard" certificates to Bruce Roberts, CAPT Aaron Rybar (USN), and Sam Fugate (Mayor of Kingsville).



During the April meeting, the members of the Kingsville Navy League, several service members from NAS Kingsville and Training Air Wing TWO, and community members took one more opportunity to congratulate Dick Messbarger (and Sandra) for being designated as the 38<sup>th</sup> Honorary Naval Aviator by the Chief of Naval Operations. The picture below was taken on "main" street of Kingsville in front of the Cherry Tree Tea Room restaurant where our meetings are held. Congratulations Dick! We know you will wear your "Wings of Gold" with extreme pride.



On April 4, 2025, CAPT Rybar held a Winging at the Club onboard NAS Kingsville and the members of the Kingsville Navy League (represented by Lance Hamm, Adopted Unit Liaison) helped CAPT Rybar present the TW-2 TOP HOOK award to LTJG Croatti. The Kingsville Navy League sponsored the plaque and helped coordinate a gift card from The Tailhook Association, see picture below. BZ and congrats, LTJG Croatti!



Pictured below are our nation's newest Naval Aviators as of 04 April and also a picture of the Aviators with their spouses, whom we are very appreciative of for their sacrifice and dedication to help their husbands achieve their monumental milestone of earning their "Wings of Gold."





On April 12<sup>th</sup> the Kingsville Navy League's Youth Programs Coordinator, Lance Hamm, traveled to Weslaco to attend the 44<sup>th</sup> Annual Weslaco High School Military Ball and to help COL Cuevas, USA (Ret.) (Weslaco's Senior JROTC Instructor) present the Navy League's Theodore Roosevelt Youth Medal to JROTC Cadet, Miguel Reyna, a senior at Weslaco High School who has enlisted in the U.S. Navy. Thank you, Miguel, for your service!

Pictured below (left to right): Lance Hamm, Cadet Miguel Reyna, COL Cuevas, and SgtMaj Jose Romero, USMC (Ret.), Donna ISD MCJROTC Senior Instructor.



## NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK April 21<sup>st</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup>

On behalf of the Kingsville Navy League's 13 Directors, we would like to express our sincere thanks to our many volunteer members and volunteer external partners for their dedicated commitment to the mission of the Kingsville Navy League and our continuing support of our local Sailors, Marines, and their families (including the Sailors and their families onboard the USS Kingsville stationed in San Diego, CA).

For us at the Kingsville Navy League, we define a volunteer as anyone who contributes manpower, material, and/or treasure toward our mission. So, not only do we thank our working volunteers, but we also thank our many financial donors. Without your contributions, we would not be able to succeed in our mission. **THANK YOU ALL!**

In every newsletter we try to give recognition to at least a few of our gracious "major" donors. This quarter we especially thank...



**May 2025**

The members of the Kingsville Navy League express our deepest gratitude and thanks to CAPT Aaron “Princess” Rybar, and his wife Camille and children, for their service and sacrifice to our nation. CAPT Rybar retired from the U.S. Navy on 02May in a Change of Command and Retirement Ceremony onboard the USS Lexington Museum. On behalf of our members, Kingsville Navy League President, Charle Ratliff, presented our traditional gift of a rocking chair during the ceremony. Presiding Officer at the Ceremony was ADM Brophy (Chief of Naval Air Training, CNATRA) and relieving CAPT Rybar at the helm of Training Air Wing TWO is COL Jayson Tiger, USMC.

With the help of family members and in true Navy tradition, CAPT Rybar received a well deserved “wetting down” after his last flight in the T-45 Goshawk at NAS Kingsville.

**Congratulations Princess and welcome aboard COL Tiger!**

CAPT Rybar is a member of the Kingsville Navy League and has offered to volunteer in our fundraising efforts regarding the 250<sup>th</sup> Navy Birthday Ball, the 2026 Goshawk Ball, and the 2026 Blue Angel Air Show.

THANK YOU, CAPT Rybar!



Photos on this page are credited to the NAS Kingsville PAO Office.  
THANK YOU, Rod Hafemeister!



(L to R) COL Tiger, ADM Brophy, and CAPT Rybar.



“Fair Winds and Following Seas”



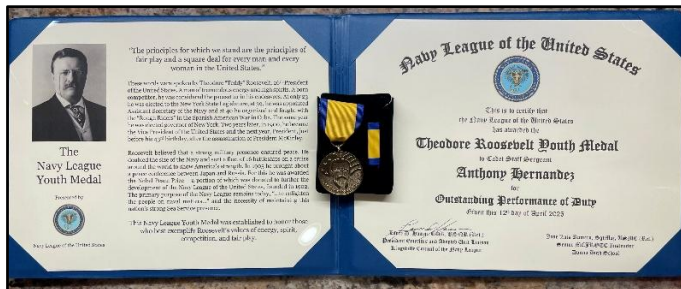
The traditional “wetting down” after the last flight.



The **Donna ISD Marine Corps JROTC Program** was adopted by the Kingsville Navy League in May2023.

On 13 May, Charlie Ratliff traveled to a Donna ISD School Board meeting to help their Superintendent, Dr. Angela Dominguez, and Donna ISD's Senior JROTC Instructor, SgtMaj. Jose Romero (USMC, Ret.), present the Navy League's Theodore Roosevelt Youth Medal to Ashley Flores (Cadet Major) and Anthony Hernandez (Cadet Staff Sergeant). Donna ISD School Board members are pictured in the background (BTW, they were recognized as the Texas 2024 School Board of the Year, CONGRATS!). The members of the Kingsville Navy League are proud of ALL of the Donna ISD Cadets and their accomplishments thus far and we are inspired by their volunteerism, motivation, and patriotism during their high school years. **THANK YOU to all!**

Cadet Anthony Hernandez has enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps and reports for training in August. BZ and the best of luck, Cadet Hernandez!



The **USS Kingsville (LCS 36)** and her crew (including family members) were adopted by the Kingsville Navy League on 20August2024, four days before the ship's Commissioning Ceremony on 24August2024.

As a reminder, Jonathan Frank from Galveston, Texas (a pilot with United Airlines and a friend of all Aviation and Maritime communities), was our very talented commissioned artist for the USS Kingsville oil painting, and Mr. Frank graciously donated the oil painting and its copyright. The Kingsville Navy League sold the painting to the gracious King Ranch Family for \$10,000 and the painting hangs on a wall within the confines of the King Ranch Big House in Kingsville, Texas. **THANKS again** to Mr. Frank and to the King Ranch Family! The oil painting is pictured below. Paper and canvass prints and other merchandise are available for purchase at our external partner's store, Ultra Screen Printing and More, located downtown Kingsville. **Thank you, Ultra Screen Printing, for donating 100% of the proceeds to our Kingsville Navy League mission!**



A Change of Command Ceremony (pictures below and on the next page) was held onboard the USS Kingsville on 22May2025 where CDR Ludwig "Lou" Mann III was relieved as the Commanding Officer (CO) by CDR John Kavanagh (below his wife is pictured pinning on his Command pin). CDR Wayne Lileks is the incoming Executive Officer. CDR Mann is now the newest CO of the USS Kansas City (LCS 22). Congratulations to all!



Pictured above, right to left: CAPT Jose Roman (Commodore, Littoral Combat Ship Squadron ONE), CDR Mann III, and CDR Kavanagh. This photo and photos on the next page are credited to LTJG Tahj Clements (attached to Littoral Combat Ship Squadron ONE).



## USS KINGSVILLE (LCS 36)

### Change of Command

(continued)

Pictured below, CDR Mann (on the left) received the Meritorious Service Medal from CAPT Roman for his superior accomplishments while serving as the Commanding Officer of the USS Kingsville. **Congrats CDR Mann!**



Pictured below, CDR Kavanagh has his new Command Pin securely fastened by his wife during the USS Kingsville's Change of Command Ceremony.



Pictured below, Sailors of the USS Kingsville show their pride and professionalism while standing in ranks for the Change of Command.



Pictured below, the new Commanding Officer of the USS Kingsville, CDR John Kavanagh, held an awards ceremony on the flight deck of the mighty Navy ship this summer where he recognized ET1 Torres (in photo) along with another 12 crewmembers for their efforts during the INSURV Final Contractor Trials (FCT). Others recognized were ENS Acosta, FC1 Cruz, ET! Hanback, MN1 Solenberger, HT2 Merced, EM2 Rodriquez, IT2 Sotorivera, EN2 Toledo, CS3 Balecillo, CS3 Lino, CS3 Williams, and DCFN Mancera. BZ and CONGRATS TO ALL!



Pictured below, Lance Hamm took this photo of the USS Kingsville as she departed the Port of Corpus Christi on 26 August 2024 while passing the USS Lexington Museum (in the background with the Lex's mast "protruding" upward from the flight deck of the USS Kingsville).





**June 2025**

The Kingsville Navy League hosted another All-Hands and Directors meeting at the Cherry Tree Tea Room restaurant on June 5<sup>th</sup> with 10 Board members present along with 8 other members and 12 guests.

Jeanie Alexander, our Membership Chairperson, gave a report on our membership numbers and said we now stand at 116 members strong and we have added 4 new members since the start of the new year. Welcome aboard to all of our newest members, including Edna Lopez and LT Alex Horton, USN.

Pictured below is Edna receiving her "Welcome Aboard" certificate from Kingsville Navy League President, Charlie Ratliff



LT Alex Horton is pictured below receiving a plaque at the 2024 Goshawk Ball in recognition of being selected as TW-2's 2023 LSO OF THE YEAR.



## NAS KINGSVILLE

### SAILORS OF THE QUARTER – 2<sup>ND</sup> QTR 2025

Also at our June meeting, the members of the Kingsville Council of the Navy League (KCNL) welcomed many guests from NAS Kingsville as the SAILORS OF THE QUARTER – 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2025 were recognized and presented Certificates of Achievement and gift cards.

Pictured below holding their certificates (L to R) are:

**ET1 Michael Gomez** – Sailor of the Quarter

**ABE2 Matthew Aguilar** – Junior Sailor of the Quarter

Not pictured: **MA3 Jordan Murphy** – Blue Jacket of the Quarter



Also pictured above, left to right: LCDR Dylan Phillips-Levine (XO, NAS Kingsville), ABEC Ryan Henry, CMDCM Joezette Julien, ADC Marcus Miciotto, ABHC Anthony Morrison, Charlie Ratliff (KCNL President), Kim Hamm (KCNL Treasurer), and Dianne Leubert (KCNL Secretary).

**BZ and CONGRATULATIONS to ET1 Gomez, ABE2 Aguilar, and MA3 Murphy!**

All guests at our June meeting saw Charlie elated to receive a \$1,000 check payable to the Kingsville Navy League from Carmen Llacuna from the Elks National Foundation on behalf of Elks Lodge #1926, Kingsville.

Pictured below, Charlie thanks Carmen Llacuna (and Ted Figueroa) from the Elks Lodge with a presentation of a "Donor Appreciation Certificate."



## VT-22 CHANGE OF COMMAND CDR HANSON'S RETIREMENT CEREMONY TW-2 WINGING CEREMONY

Onboard USS Lexington Museum  
27 June 2025

Aaron Rybar and Lance Hamm were two Kingsville Navy League members who were excited to welcome ADM Stephen "Web" Koehler, USN (Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet) to South Texas and to the USS Lexington Museum for a three-in-one celebration of Naval Aviation in Kingsville on 27 June 2025.

The first two combined ceremonies were the Change of Command for VT-22 where CDR Cory "C-Bone" Hanson was relieved by LtCOL Sean "Sas" Wolterman as Commanding Officer and the official retirement of CDR Hanson from the U.S. Navy. Presiding Officer was COL Jayson Tiger, USMC (Commander, Training Air Wing TWO). Incoming Executive Officer for VT-22 is CDR Kevin Guldner.

Pictured below, CDR Hanson addresses the service members and guests in attendance during his retirement ceremony. **Congratulations, C-Bone!**



Below, CDR Hanson congratulates LtCOL Wolterman for becoming the new CO of VT-22 with a friendly embrace as COL Tiger looks on.



Above, L to R: Lance Hamm, Lt COL Sean Wolterman (USMC), CAPT Travis Suggs (USN), CAPT Aaron Rybar (USN, Ret.), CDR Cory Hanson (USN, Ret.), and COL Marc Couvillon (USMC).

## Admiral Koehler, U.S. Pacific Fleet, Presiding Officer at the TW-2 Winging Ceremony



Pictured above and celebrating our newest NAVAL AVIATORS, as of 27 June 2025, (left to right): CDR Kevin Guldner (USN, XO, VT-22), LtCOL Sean Wolterman (USMC, CO, VT-22), **[five newest Naval Aviators... LTJG Jonathan Schwan, 1stLT Paul Jervis, LTJG Morgan La Sala, LTJG Sean Garrett, and LTJG John (Jake) Menges]**, Admiral Stephen T. Koehler (USN, Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet), CDR Michael Hooten (USN, CO, VT-21), and CDR Zachary Matthews (USN, XO, VT-21).

## IN OTHER NEWS FROM THE KINGSVILLE NAVY LEAGUE

In June, Lance Hamm attended the National Conference of the Navy League in Jacksonville, FL, and was informed that the Kingsville Navy League was the recipient of several National Navy League awards for 2024, including:

1. Meritorious Council Performance Award
2. Sea Service Adoption Excellence Award, Medium Council
3. Donald M. Mackie Award for NEWSLETTER (Platinum)
4. Donald M. Mackie Award for SOCIAL MEDIA (Platinum)
5. Donald M. Mackie Award for WEBSITE (Gold)

A council group photo is planned to be in our 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Newsletter.

## UPCOMING EVENTS IN 2025 AND 2026:

1. Our next meetings of the Kingsville Navy League will be:
  - 07 August 2025
  - 02 October 2025
  - 04 December 2025
2. **Patching and Winging** Ceremonies are normally held the last Thursday and Friday of the month. Check our calendar on our website for exact dates and times.
3. 18 October 2025. The Kingsville Navy League will be co-hosting with the Corpus Christi Navy League the **250<sup>th</sup> Navy Birthday Ball**. See our website and our Facebook page for details. We're seeking sponsorships and donations.
4. TBD: **VT-21 Change of Command** and Retirement Ceremony for CDR Michael Hooten (Commanding Officer).
5. TBD, FEB2026: **2026 Goshawk Ball**. We're seeking sponsorships and donations.
6. 18-19 April 2026: **Blue Angels Air Show** (Wings Over South Texas Airshow, NAS Kingsville).