



**National Capital Commandery**  
**Monthly ExCom Meeting at SBG Technologies**  
**Alexandria, Virginia and on VTC**  
**Minutes**  
**20 January 2024**

Mr. John Shanahan*	CAPT William Steagall*	Master Chief David Mattingly*
CAPT John Rodgaard*	LCDR Steve Baker*	CAPT Michael Kamin*
Mr. Peter Pennington*	CDR John Prevar*	CDR Phil Puckett*
Dr. Dave Winkler	Dr. Judy Pearson, Sec-Recorder*	

\* indicates ExCom Membership

Online: CAPT Mileva Hartman      Cap Chris Orr      LCDR Mark Henderson  
 CAPT Jeff Johnson  
**Call to Order –1920**

**Commander’s Opening Remarks**

Mr. Shanahan called the meeting to order. A quorum was present. The meeting started late due to technical difficulties with video conferencing. Eleven people were present in person and four were on video conference. The agenda was issued previously via email. Items on display in the meeting room were the flag rank, a video explaining the Naval Order, life member pins and coins, and recently purchased perma-wreaths and ribbons.

Agenda items were as follows:

**1. Companion Survey Results – CAPT Steagall**

CAPT Steagall developed a member interest survey to determine what activities members are most interested in attending. He sent the survey, via email, to 267 people; 53 responded. He summarized the results as follows:

Most members do not participate in commandery activities. The usual ten or so people who hold offices are the ones who participate most often. Most spouses (75%) have no interest in commandery activities. About 50% of respondents are retired; about 30% are employed in civilian jobs. Most respondents read the commandery emails, the AL-NOUS emails, and the national newsletter. Most do not visit the NOUSCAP website.

Ten people said they would like to carpool to events; most are willing to drive. Twenty-five respondents want lunch meetings with speakers. Up to 12 respondents would

attend wreath-layings, up to 14 respondents would attend ship visits. Fifty percent did not know that guests are welcome at commandery events. Fifty percent are affiliated with at least one other maritime organization.

Discussion: Some people want to attend events and the commandery offers a variety to choose from. Some people were interested in a trip to Normandy – perhaps for the 85<sup>th</sup> anniversary 4 June 2029. This should be a national Naval Order project, planned in advance with a tour company.

## **2. Financial Report – CAPT Rodgaard and CAPT Steagall**

The commandery currently has \$17,182 in the accounts at NFCU. For December, the outlay was over \$11,000 for the Pearl Harbor Dinner, with \$209 in income for the month. For all of 2023 the outlay was \$18,779 with income of \$10,232, with the largest expense being the Pearl Harbor Dinner. Overall the dinner had a loss of \$3400 because the commandery subsidized the cash bar and GWU midshipmen.

Predictions for the 2024 budget: For 2024, CAPT Steagall estimates a \$2800 deficit. The three biggest expenditures will be the 1) USNA Essay awards (although National reimburses this expense), 2) \$750 for the Midway Dinner and 3) Pearl Harbor Dinner. The commandery needs to do fund-raising to offset expenses.

Discussion: The tentative date for the Midway Dinner is 4 June, but that date conflicts with the Navy Memorial Navy Band concert – and RADM Gil Thorpe is involved with both events. Steve Baker will attend Midway Dinner committee meetings and report to the ExCom. The Pearl Harbor Dinner will be held at the Fairfax Country Club.

## **3. Proposed Events for 2024 – CAPT Steagall**

CAPT Steagall proposed a list of 39 events, some of which were deleted due to lack of interest or overly complicated logistics. Those remaining (mostly in chronological order) are:

- 3 Feb: Udvar Hazy Air Museum – Lead: Steagall. Carpooling recommended b/c parking costs \$15. Make reservations for a group tour with a docent.
- 15 Feb: USS *Maine* – wreath, Arlington Cemetery – Lead: Kamin.
- 28 Feb: Midshipman Dale, Bermuda – Lead: Pearson/Rodgaard.
- 9 Mar: Mariners’ Museum trip for ironclads – Lead: Steagall will coordinate with Hampton Roads Commandery. Carpooling recommended.
- April-May: Kristensen Lecture at St. John’s College, Annapolis – Lead: Zampella

- 27 April: USS *Olympia* – wreath, Philadelphia – Lead: Steagall will coordinate with Philadelphia and New York commanderies.
- 28 April: Visit to Dewey Crypt – National Cathedral. Since the cathedral requires a \$250 fee for group visits, we can visit informally and place a temporary silk wreath, take photos, remove the wreath and leave. Mr. Shanahan proposed to make this event Life Member Sunday, and, as usual, all will meet for lunch across the street at the Cactus Cantina. The ExCom approved \$20 for purchasing the wreath.
- 4 May: USS *Brown* underway (not a commandery event – open to the public, \$250 per person). Ten or more get a group discount. CAPT Steagall will announce to membership.
- May: PAX River Museum and tour – Lead: Pennington.
- May: Whiddey Island Marker, Ireland – Lead: Day. The manufacturer for the marker is the highway department.
- May: GWU NROTC Graduation – Lead: Steagall. Discussion: The purpose of commandery involvement is to build a strong relationship with the GWU NROTC. CAPT Rodgaard plans to give a talk to them (date is TBD). Perhaps the commandery could give a gift (such as a sword) to the graduate with the highest GPA, or for leadership. CAPT Steagall will discuss with the Captain Sullivan, the new CO. CAPT Johnson, a graduate of GWU will work with CAPT Steagall on this.
- 22 May: National Maritime Day – Baltimore Harbor – Lead: Day. SS *Savannah* and *John Brown* will be open for tours.
- May or TBD: Visit to *Constellation* in Baltimore Inner Harbor – Lead: Pennington.
- 24 May: USNA Essay Awards – Lead: Crissy.
- May: Membership Madness Month – A National Initiative. The ExCom officers will call companions for a “buddy check”.
- 4 June: Midway Dinner – Lead: Baker is on committee.
- June: Tall Ship *Providence*, Alexandria (cruise on the Potomac) – Lead: Pennington.
- 3 Aug or TBD: USCG Birthday – Lead: Mattingly. CPO Mattingly proposed a monthly lunch event, on the third Saturday of each month, with a speaker, to recognize sea service birthdays and historical anniversaries. It could be at the Table Talk diner in Alexandria. He will organize these.

- Aug: BB-64 *Wisconsin* and Nauticus visit, Norfolk – Lead: TBD. Book a group tour. Carpooling recommended. Is there interest in this trip?
- Aug: Ericsson Wreath at the Navy, CG, Merchant Marine Memorial, Potomac Park – Lead: Kamin. (maybe a picnic).
- 13 Sept: Commodore Barry Wreath – at the statue in Franklin Square with the Ancient Order of Hibernians – Lead: Day. Use the perma-wreath.
- 21 Sept: Commandery Business Meeting, location TBA.
- 2 – 6 Oct: Naval Order Congress, Buffalo.
- 20 Oct: British Officers Club Trafalgar Dinner at Fairfax Country Club. Naval Order Companions are invited. Lead: Pennington.
- 11 Nov: Sicily Tour - No info at this time.
- 7 Dec: Wreath at Tomb of Unknowns, Arlington Cemetery – Lead: Rodgaard.
- 7 Dec: Pearl Harbor Dinner – Fairfax Country Club – Lead: Pennington will head a committee. We want 100 attendees. Invite members from other sea service organizations. The ExCom will decide on VIPs and a speaker.
- Book Club: LCDR Puckett is developing a list of authors. It was agreed that the Book Club should be open to the Naval Order nation-wide and that it should have a FaceBook page. Meetings will be monthly on Zoom (in the evening) and can be announced in advance in the Naval Order newsletter and on the AL-NOUS emails.
- Movie Club – not discussed.
- Library of Congress Veterans History Project – Lead: Pearson – not discussed.
- Proposal: Mr. Pennington proposed that the commandery work with the city of Alexandria to erect a historic marker on the banks of the Potomac to commemorate the loss of the USS *Princeton* in 1844. The Excom favors this project and Mr. Pennington will gather more information.

#### **4. Commandery Initiatives for 2024**

(a) Outreach to prospects and membership growth. Each ExCom officer received a membership kit. All companions are encouraged to recruit new members and invite guests to events.

(b) Support for member outreach ("Buddy Check"). Mike Kamin is the lead for this effort to reach out to elderly and infirm companions who aren't able to travel.

(c) Connections with NJROTC programs in AOR. CPO Mattingly is the lead in

this effort. It was agreed he would choose two NROTC units to contact. He proposed awarding a naval history book based on some criteria. The ExCom approved \$100 for the purchase of two books.

(d) Naval history promotion and essays – in conjunction with state Naval History Day competitions (high school and junior high). Dr. Winkler and Dr. Chadbourn have the lead on this and will report to the ExCom. Discussion: Naval Order members want to judge only sea service history projects, not general entries.

(e) Outreach to Annapolis and Baltimore members. We have a POC in Baltimore. Mr. Pennington suggested holding an ExCom meeting in Annapolis or Baltimore.

(f) Fundraising appeal and legacy giving possibilities. Mr. Shanahan has discussed with CG Andress that National could take the lead, but for now, such efforts take place at the local level. Mr. Shanahan will lead this initiative with advice from CAPT Rodgaard and Dr. Winkler regarding letter-writing. The annual goal is \$3000 - \$5000. The commandery is a tax exempt organization, but for legacies, the commandery would require a legal structure.

(g) Other items.

- The ExCom approved the budget for 2024 (with amendments as needed) by unanimous consent.
- CAPT Johnson recommended the commandery move some funds into an NFCU Easy-start CD, currently earning 5% APR. The treasurer will look into this.
- Building the NAT Team. Not discussed due to time constraints.

Adjournment: 1210.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Dr. Judy Pearson  
Please send corrections to [judypear@cox.net](mailto:judypear@cox.net)

### **Links:**

National Capital Commandery website: <https://nouscap.org>

See photos and summaries of commandery events, learn about upcoming events, and download reports. In the members only section, see ExCom Minutes and Annual Reports.

NOUS NAT Directory of Companions (with continuing updates) <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/fa19im0vaqfitm6/AADkeb9hUavRG66MxIy4-gPka?dl=0>

NOUS NAT Newsletters 2022: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/6th2ixk6gief81k/AAA-qwEoOK6B3N1t4KEEEHTQQa?dl=0>

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<https://www.facebook.com/groups/NOUSNAT/>