



OCT 2024

The Lucky Bag

RICHMOND, VA COUNCIL NAVY LEAGUE OF THE UNITED STATES

NAVY LEAGUE MEMBER, REAR ADMIRAL (RET.) MIKE CURRAN, EMBARKS ON A 3-DAY CRUISE ABOARD USNS *SUPPLY* (T-AOE-6)



Photo on U.S. Navy's MSC Photo Gallery. Photo by Photographer's Mate 3rd Class Summer M. Anderson (Released).

Getting groceries, gas, and other supplies is a part of our daily life. With so many ordering conveniences, you don't even need to get in your car, as many of these can be delivered at home. But what if you are on a Navy warship in the middle of the Red Sea? And you are actively engaged against a hostile force with little time to "shop"? That is when the ships and civilian mariners of the Military Sealift Command (MSC) answer the call! I recently embarked on such a ship. The **USNS *SUPPLY* (T-AOE-6)** recently returned from spending eight months in the Red Sea supporting the **USS *EISENHOWER* (CVN-69) Carrier Strike Group (CSG)**. The ***IKE*'s CSG** provided Naval deterrence against the Houthi regime in Yemen, shooting down numerous anti-ship missiles and bringing the fight to the Houthis. During their time in the Red Sea, ***SUPPLY*** provided continuous deliveries of food, fuel, mail, and materiel to the entire strike group. MSC Captain Peter Lenardson and his crew worked day in and day out for hours on end conducting simultaneous connected and vertical replenishments (CONREP/

VERTREP) for the ***IKE*** and her strike group.

I had the honor of embarking onboard ***SUPPLY*** from August 15 to August 17 while the ship operated off the U.S. East Coast. CAPT Lenardson and his entire crew are extremely professional and proud of the work they do. Members of the MSC workforce spend most of their careers assigned to MSC vessels. Some join as junior Able-Bodied Seaman work their way up through Chief Mate and even Captain. Others join from the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy and state institutions like Maine Maritime Academy and SUNY Maritime Academy.

During my time underway with ***SUPPLY***, I had the opportunity to witness ***SUPPLY*** conduct two CONREPS. The first was with **USS *MAHAN* (DDG-72)** where ***SUPPLY*** provided them with over 200,000 gallons Diesel Marine Fuel (DFM or F76). I have witnessed CONREPS during my Navy career and was reminded of just how complex and dangerous they could be. For those who have never seen the process, imagine two ships coming

alongside each other, using a rifle to shoot small ropes which are followed by larger ones connected to enormous fueling hoses, all while maintaining the same course and speed at a very close distance. The ships can maintain this connection for several hours of fueling and materiel replenishment. The second CONREP was with **USNS *ROBERT E. PEARY* (T-AKE-5)** was returning from a brief deployment to Europe supporting an exercise and transferred over 300,000 gallons of DFM to ***SUPPLY***. As many MSC mariners serve on several ships, it was great to see members of each ship's crew waving to and calling out to previous shipmates.

On the lighter side, those of you who have served at sea know the incredible views and sights you can see underway. Each evening, I was fortunate to see beautiful sunsets turn into endless starry skies. During the day, I saw dolphins (the mariner's friends) "playing" in the bow waves of the ships we were connected to and following us as

MSC Ship Ride continued on page 3

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By: **Vaughan F. Dize**



Greetings Fellow Richmond Council Navy League Members and Friends.

September has been a busy month for the Richmond Council. On 9/18/24, we had our annual golf outing. It was a rainy day, but 81 golfers and several volunteers came out, making the event a successful and fun outing. Golf players included two teams from two of our adopted ships: U.S. Coast Guard Cutter **Spencer** and two players from the **USS Carter Hall**. Thank you to all who made the outing a success.

Two of our members have accepted the Military Sealift Command's invitation to take a cruise on an MSC ship. Member RDML Michael Curran, USN (Ret.), took a cruise on **USNS Supply (T-AOE-6)**. A report of his cruise is included in this issue of *The Lucky Bag*. Member Tom Jennings is currently on a three-day cruise aboard MSC Ship

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USNS John Lenthal (T-AO-189).

Please plan to attend the upcoming Sea Services luncheon on 10/23/24 at the Willow Oaks Golf Club. Our speaker will be Rear Admiral Phillip E. Sobeck, Commander of the Military Sealift Command of the U.S. Navy.

On October 8, 2024, Colonel Gary Anderson, USMC (Ret.) will be speaking at the Houston-Holicky-Sitter Veterans Forum Luncheon, at 11:50 AM. The forum will be held at Publix, John Rolfe Commons, 2250 John Rolfe Parkway, Henrico, Va. I encourage all our members and readers of this publication to attend if you are able to. ✍

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Chaplain John A. Harler, M.D.



"According to Twitter
You have Cancel" *

HATE SPEECH

"Seven things the Lord hates: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that kill the innocent, a heart that plots evil, feet that race to do wrong, a false witness who pours out lies, a person who sows discord in a family" (Proverbs 6:16-19).

When I was growing up, a popular phrase went something like this: "Sticks and stones can break my bones, but words will never harm me." We all understand the meaning behind this childish saying which is, I don't care what you think or say about me! Of course, we have all probably been on the receiving end of someone's hurtful words, and though no bones were broken in the process, hearts were broken and spirits crushed.

The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit. (Proverbs 18:21).

We should try hard to watch what we say and uplift those around us rather

than tear them down with our very powerful words. This requires self-governing. As with many catch words, or phrases, "hate speech" seems to echo throughout modern culture. Please consider what the Bible tells us about God. Proverbs 6 acknowledges that, "God hates..." What does He hate? "Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that kill the innocent, a heart that plots evil, feet that race to do wrong, a false witness who pours out lies, and a person who sows discord in a family." Wouldn't it be nice if the human standard for "hate speech" were set so high.

Let us seek to look above our delicate carnal human nature to learn how to hate what God hates. As we read the list in Proverbs 6, about what God hates, may it guide us toward biblical truth, rather than being influenced by a culture that has hijacked the Word of God. (Borrowed in part from a message in Sherry Sharp's Sweet Monday blog, with permission).

* (In case you didn't understand the caption under the cartoon above, hate speech is promoted via social media, i.e. Twitter, etc. Hate speech is manifest as "cancel culture" meaning that if someone disagrees with your worldview, they cancel you). ✍

REMINDER

**COUNCIL'S SEA
SERVICES LUNCHEON**

**WEDNESDAY
OCTOBER 23, 2024**

**WILLOW OAKS
COUNTRY CLUB
6228 FOREST HILL AVE
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**11:30 AM REGISTRATION
12:00 PM LUNCHEON**

GUEST SPEAKER:

**REAR ADMIRAL
PHILLIP E. SOBECK
COMMANDER OF THE
MILITARY SEALIFT
COMMAND
OF THE U.S. NAVY**

MSC Ship Ride cont. from front page

we transited in and out of Norfolk.

The ships of MSC are vital links in the U.S. Navy's global logistics supply chain. Please take advantage of the unique opportunity to be a ship rider on a future underway opportunity; you will be glad you did!

The U.S. Navy League advocates for the readiness and resourcing of MSC, its personnel, and equipment. As you may have read in defense news and periodicals, MSC is considering sidelining 17 of these ships due to a shortage of professional civilian mariners. Unfortunately, many experienced personnel are retiring or leaving at a greater rate than those joining. As USNL members, this is an area where our voice to legislators can help. The U.S. Navy faces threats in all parts of the world and is greatly extended. MSC ships are right there with them, but in less numbers than in years past. If you would like to have your voice heard in this and other matters affecting U.S. maritime concerns, please consider joining the Richmond USNL Legislative Affairs committee. This is a new arm of our chapter which is currently forming. Please feel free to reach out to me at curranva2268@gmail.com or (804) 291-6378. 📧

*By: Michael T. Curran
Rear Admiral, (Ret.),
Supply Corps, U.S. Navy*



Rear Admiral (Ret.) Michael T. Curran aboard USNS SUPPLY (T-AOE-6) while refueling USS Mahan (DDG-72).



USNS SUPPLY (T-AOE-6) receiving fuel alongside USNS ROBERT E. PEARY (T-AKE-5).



Pictured on left in the Captain's Chair, Rear Admiral Mike Curran, (Ret.) alongside Captain Pete Lenardson, USNS SUPPLY (T-AOE-6).

VFA-213 FIGHTING BLACKLIONS UPDATE



We've been super busy over the last couple of months. Currently, we're in the work-up cycle for our next deployment. Our current phase of training is the Strike Fighter Advanced Readiness Program (SFARP), which is a squadron-focused event designed to establish a baseline of execution standards for our aircrew. As the work-

up cycle progresses to more difficult and advanced tactics and scenarios, the skills we develop now will allow us to effectively integrate with the rest of the Air Wing. We've been in this phase since June and should wrap it up next week.

Next, we will embark aboard **USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN-78)** for our first underway period since we returned from deployment this past January. We will be at sea for ~30 days and get back before Thanksgiving, we're looking forward to spending this year with our families.

After some holiday leave, we'll depart for Fallon, NV in January and February to conduct what we call Air Wing Fallon, which is part of the integrated operations I mentioned earlier. With the current state of world-wide affairs, from Ukraine to the Middle East to the South China Sea, this will be an extremely challenging event for the Blacklions and CVW-8. After that, we get a couple

weeks at home before we once again embark aboard **Gerald R. Ford** and conduct our final training event, known as Composite Unit Training Exercise, which will integrate all elements of the Carrier Strike Group. When we return from that at-sea period, we'll be certified to deploy, which will happen sometime next summer.

Finally (and sadly), my time as Skipper of the World-Famous Fighting Blacklions is coming to an end on December 18th when I will turn over the reins to the XO, CDR Kevin Swift. I don't yet have details on the Change of Command ceremony other than the date, but I would be honored if you could join us for the time-honored Naval Tradition. ✍

Very Respectfully,
CDR Justin "Flounder" Nixon
Commanding Officer
VFA-213 Fighting Blacklions



VFA-213 Fighting Blacklions aviators on their last cruise aboard USS *Gerald R. Ford* (CVN-78)

AMERICA DIVISION SEA CADETS

Weapons Qualifications for the Sea Cadets at Cavalier Gun and Pistol Club, Montpelier, VA on September 14, 2024.



HOUSTON-HOLICKY-SITTER VETERANS FORUM LUNCHEON



Date: October 8, 2024

Time: Program begins at 11:50 AM; ends by 1:00 PM; doors open at 11:15 AM

Place: Publix at John Rolf Commons/2250 John Rolfe Parkway/Henrico, VA

Speaker: Colonel Gary Anderson, USMC (Ret.)

Topic: TBD (Colonel Anderson was a Special Advisor to the Deputy Secretary of Defense and spent a total of 30 months as a civilian advisor in Iraq and Afghanistan. He retired as the chief of staff of the Marine Corps Warfighting Lab. These days, he writes for various defense and national security publications and teaches at George Washington University). 📝

5th Annual HHSVF Marine & Veterans Golf Outing 13 November 2024 Federal Club Golf Course 13450 Palmers Way Glen Allen, VA 23059

This outing is to celebrate the Marine Corps Birthday and Veterans Day. Start time is 10:30 AM. The Fee for the Outing is \$90.00 per player. Contact Bill Parrish at whparrish@comcast.net NO LATER THAN 4 November. 📝

On October 19th, the Sea Cadets will be visiting the Henrico Fire Training Center for hands-on training.

On October 25 /26 an optional overnight drill is scheduled to visit the "Ghost Ship" (Liberty Ship John Brown) located in Baltimore. This is Baltimore's newest Halloween Haunt. 📝

ADOPTED SHIPS UPDATE

(Note: these reports may be edited to fit space available)



USS Normandy (CG-60)
CO: CAPT Nathan Diaz
XO: CDR Adam J. Samson
CMC: CMDCM Andrew Conover

George L. Feitig, Jr., Liaison
Dennis Biggs, Ass't Liaison

Hello Richmond Navy League!

USS Normandy sends her regards from the Baltic Sea as we continue our real-world national tasking, abroad. The Sailors of Vanguard are in good spirits as we periodically pull into ports to refuel, which gives the crew a chance to call loved ones. While underway, **Normandy** had five Sailors become Chief Selects. Bravo Zulu to FCAC (SEL) Espich, EMC (SEL) Mock, YNC (SEL) Rodriguez, OSC (SEL) Riddick, QMC (SEL) Mitchell and FCC (SEL) Nicholas! **USS Normandy** also proved what it means to be self-sufficient by being the first CG ever to have ship's force replace a Helo Hanger Door (HHD) drive chain underway. Big win for A-Gang and Vanguard as a whole.

Lastly, we would like to take a moment to remember the lives lost on 9/11 and to also remember those who responded to the call the day of the attack. **USS Normandy** held a remembrance on September 11 to honor those individuals.

That's all for now! We will check back in next month. Fair winds and following seas RNL! ✍

Very respectfully,
LT Michael Krueger
Assistant Chief Engineer



USS Carter Hall (LSD-50)
CO: CDR Steven E. Grey
XO: CDR Brittany N. Lynn
CMC: CMDCM Benjamin Cruz

Report from Pat Robson, Liaison

USS Carter Hall is currently in the BAE Maintenance & Repair Facility in South Norfolk (Chesapeake) for scheduled maintenance and repairs. This time will be used to enhance training and certifications. ✍



USS Gravelly (DDG-107)
CO: CDR Brian C. Sanchez
XO: CDR Greg Piorun
CMC: CMDCM Timothy Bickerton

Courtney Mustin, Liaison
Patrick Harris, Ass't Liaison

In July, **USS Gravelly** returned to her homeport of Norfolk, VA, concluding a nine-month deployment to the 5th and 6th Fleet areas of operations. Entering the Central Command Area of Responsibility, **Gravelly** and the **USS DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER Carrier Strike Group (IKECSG)** steamed in the Arabian Gulf and southern Red Sea for nearly eight months. The destroyers of the **IKECSG** primarily operated in and around the Bab al Mandeb Strait (BAM). Bab al Mandeb is Arabic for "Gate of Tears." During that time, the destroyers were engaged on multiple occasions with ballistic missiles, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV), and cruise missiles.

Gravelly was tasked with conducting escort operations and successfully defended herself, the **IKECSG**, and civilian merchants from attack. **Gravelly's** first engagement was on December 30th and 31st, 2023 **Gravelly** was steaming toward Motor Vessel Maersk Hangzhou to provide any assistance after she was hit by Houthi missiles. While approaching her, the Houthis fired once more with two ballistic missiles traveling at approximately Mach 3; **Gravelly** was able to successfully intercept the inbound missiles with Standard Missiles. Following the failed missile attack, Houthi attack boats began firing at M/V Hangzhou, with 22 souls on board, and AMBUSH flight (**Gravelly's** helicopter.) **Gravelly** and AMBUSH then defeated the attack boats with Hellfire missiles, saving the lives of the 22 mariners on M/V Hangzhou.

On the 9th of January, occasionally referred to as the "Battle of the BAM", **USS Gravelly**, alongside **USS Mason**, **USS Laboon**, and **HMS Diamond**, were attacked by multiple waves of UAVs and missiles. This battle lasted several hours and ranged throughout the southern Red Sea. The Sailors aboard **USS Gravelly** coordinated with other units and worked as a team to selecting targets and engaging with her weapons systems. After approximately three hours the waves of UAVs were shot down and the inbound missiles ceased.

Over the next several months **Gravelly** was engaged on several more occasions and was able to defend against more ballistic and cruise missiles and UAVs, totaling nine defeated UAVs, eight ballistic and cruise missiles, and two attack boats over the course of her time in the Red Sea.

After a well-deserved post-overseas movement (POM) stand down, the crew is back and hard at work maintaining the ship during this in-port period. Recently, the ship traveled up to Naval Weapons Station Yorktown for a weapons offload. We are now currently in a Continuous Maintenance Availability (CMAV) pier-side at Naval Station Norfolk. In addition to maintenance, Sailors attend various schools while in-port to further gain technical expertise to bring back to **Gravelly** and the fleet. Officers attend the Navigation, Seamanship and Shiphandling Trainer (NSST) to keep proficient in their bridge watchstanding skills. As **Gravelly** remains in sustainment, the team always stays ready to execute tasking as one of the fleet's greatest assets.

We greatly appreciate your continued support, wishing you all the best! ✍

Very Respectfully,
LTJG Jake Ramos, USN
Unit Public Affairs Representative



Gravelly moored alongside **USS Philippine Sea (CG-58)** in Souda Bay, Greece. (Official U.S. Navy photo).

USS *Gravely* cont. from page 6



Sailors heave around to seat a refueling probe as *Gravely* conducts an underway replenishment with the USNS *Kanawha* (T-AO-196) in the Red Sea. (Official U.S. Navy photo).



Gravely launches Tomahawk Land Attack Missiles in response to increased Iranian-backed Houthi malign behavior in the Red Sea. (Official U.S. Navy photo).



Gravely conducts a pre-action calibration fire of the 5-inch gun in the Red Sea. (Official U.S. Navy photo).



Gravely conducts night flight operations

in the Red Sea. (Official U.S. Navy photo).

GRAVELY update:

On September 17th, Captain Edward J. Pledger, Commodore, Destroyer Squadron 22, presented the crew with the 202 Commander Naval Surface Force Atlantic Battle Effectiveness, or Battle "E", award. The Battle "E" is awarded annually to commands that exhibit the highest state of readiness amongst competitors in the fleet. Bravo Zulu to the crew for another recognition well-deserved! 🚩



Bravo Zulu USS *GRAVELY* crew!



USCGC *Spencer* (WMEC-905)
CO: CDR Justin Strock
XO: LCDR L.H. (Hank) Deatrich
COB: BMC Cody Johnson

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

USCGC *Spencer* (WMEC-905) remains in Baltimore, Maryland, at the Coast Guard Yard, and we are pleased to report she successfully refloated in late August! While some crew members continue to support other cutters homeported in Portsmouth, others are taking advantage of temporary duty (TDY) opportunities for professional development. ***Spencer*** is approaching the final stages of the Service Life Extension Program (SLEP).
Back in Portsmouth, the crew continues to support local Cutters, assisting with preventative maintenance, and other hull painting and preservation projects.

The Weapons Division recently hosted range week, qualifying and recertifying over 20 members, ensuring our Law Enforcement program remains ready.

To foster camaraderie, the Morale Committee, led by ENS Turner Linfelter, organized a ***Spencer*** bowling

night for the crew and their families, and many crew members enjoyed attending the Richmond Navy League Golf Outing. We also celebrate two newborns welcomed into our family, and we couldn't be happier for the new fathers and their families!

As always, ***Spencer*** greatly appreciates every aspect of support from the Richmond Navy League. We remain motivated to continue sharing updates with you as this process progresses! 🚩

Very Respectfully,
ENS Lea Walker
Public Affairs Officer
USCGC *Spencer* (WMEC-905)



USCGC *Northland* (WMEC-904)
CO: CDR Brian C. Gismervik
XO: LCDR Patricia Green
COB: GMC Matthew Winters

Vaughan F. Dize, Liaison

Greetings from **USCGC *Northland*!**

The month of August brought a myriad of unique opportunities for ***Northland*** and her crew as she joined forces with Arctic nation allies for Operation Nanook 2024. This annual exercise is led by the Canadian Armed Forces and supported by the U.S. 2nd Fleet and U.S. Coast Guard. ***Northland*** was

USCGC *Northland* cont. on page 8

USCGC *Northland* cont. from page 7

honored to be the sole USCG representative this year, joined by The Royal Canadian Navy, Royal Danish Navy and U.S. Navy. *Northland* gained proficiency in formation steaming, as well as conducted joint training exercises and crew exchanges. Crew exchanges with our partners helped to share best practices and deepen international relations with these allies. Operation Nanook served as a great exercise to enhance polar interoperability among allied forces and increased our collective readiness in the evolving Arctic environment.



Northland, along with some of the other vessels who participated in Operation Nanook, got to complete the 8-hour transit of the Nuuk Fjord (Nuup Kangerlua Fjord) - a scenic yet challenging voyage complicated by floating and semi-submerged icebergs.



Upon the completion of Operation Nanook, *Northland* continued traveling north to navigate across the Arctic Circle. This allowed for the indoctrination of more than 70 crew members into the Order of the Blue Nose Polar Bears – a popular sailor’s tradition.



Northland continues its ongoing partnership with Canada, completing the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) portion of her patrol. NAFO is a multinational partnership committed to fighting illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing alongside interagency partners and maritime stakeholders.



As always, we are extremely grateful to the Richmond Chapter for their consistent support. Until next time, fair winds and following seas! ✍

Very Respectfully,
LCDR Trish Green
Executive Officer
USCGC *Northland* (WMEC-904)

-Currently Underway

NATIONAL NAVY DAY

National Navy Day in the United States is observed annually on October 27. This observed day is a celebration of the U.S. Navy’s history, achievements, and the service of its members. It is also a time to recognize the Navy’s role in defending the country’s security and maritime interests and an excellent occasion for Americans to express their support and gratitude to the Navy.

The Navy League suggested October 27 as Navy Day to honor Theodore Roosevelt, who supported a strong Navy and served as Assistant Secretary of the Navy. It’s also the anniversary of a 1775 report that favored purchasing merchant ships to establish an American Navy.

The official birthday of the U.S. Navy is October 13, 1775, when the Continental Navy was established. The Navy celebrates its birthday to promote pride and professionalism, and to increase appreciation for its heritage. ✍

(source: AI Overview)

“You can be proud of your heritage and the magnificent efforts made to promote the well-being of our Sailors and Marines and their families.

From Seattle to Miami and Singapore to New York, you are always there for the members of the sea services. Whether you are involved in the Sea Cadet programs or in sponsoring port visits by our ships, your dedicated work is deeply appreciated.” ✍

Gordon R. England
29th Deputy Secretary of Defense
72nd & 73rd Secretary of the Navy
1st Deputy Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security

The Richmond Council Navy League will be celebrating the Navy’s Anniversary along with recognizing other Sea Services (U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. Coast Guard and Merchant Marines) at our Sea Services Luncheon on Wednesday, October 23 at the Willow Oaks Country Club. Hope you will join us in this celebration. ✍

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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MC**



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RICHMOND COUNCIL'S 35th ANNUAL GOLF OUTING



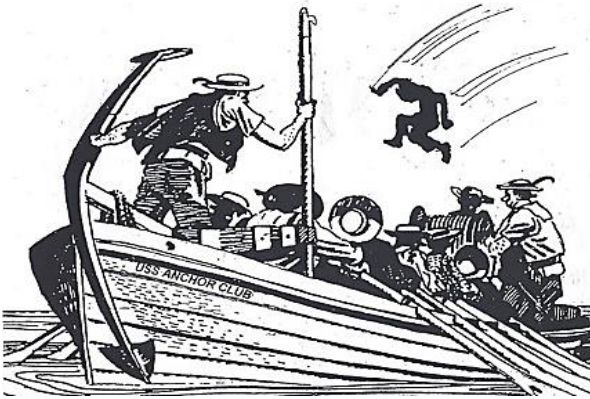
The Richmond Council Navy League would like to say **THANK YOU** to the sponsors, contributors, volunteers and players who helped make our 2024 golf fundraiser a BIG success.

Our next month's issue of *The Lucky Bag* will feature more details and updates regarding this event. Many thanks to all who made this fundraiser a successful outing.



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Thanks for jumping on board !!!

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