



May 2025



The Lucky Bag

RICHMOND, VA COUNCIL NAVY LEAGUE OF THE UNITED STATES

CDR Theodore G. Ellyson Summer Luncheon

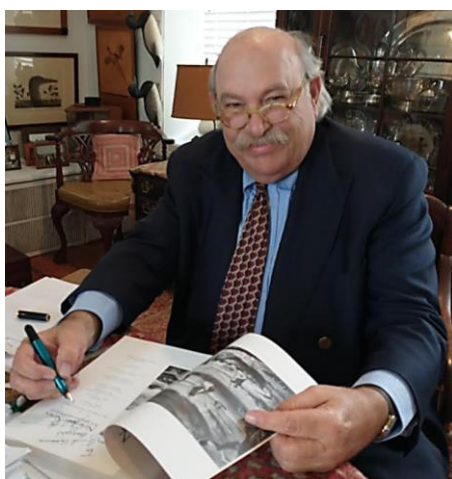
TOPIC: The Historic Great White Fleet

Wednesday, June 18, 2025

John V. Quarstein is an award-winning historian, preservationist, and author. He is the director emeritus of the USS Monitor Center at The Mariners' Museum and Park in Newport News, Virginia. The author of 21 books, his titles include *A History of Ironclads: The Power of Iron Over Wood*, *CSS Virginia: Sink Before Surrender*, and *The Monitor Boys: The Crew of the Union's First Ironclad*, winner of the 2012 Henry Adams Prize for excellence in historical literature.

Quarstein has also produced, narrated, and written several PBS documentaries, including, The Civil War in Hampton Roads series, which received a Silver Telly Award, and the award-winning film, Battle of the Ironclads.

He is an active historic preservationist and received the National Trust for Historic Preservation's President's Award for Historic Preservation and the Civil War Society's Preservation Award. He lives in the National Register of Historic Places property known as The Chamberlin on Ft. Monroe, Virginia, overlooking the site of



GUEST SPEAKER

**John V. Quarstein
Director Emeritus
USS Monitor Center
The Mariners' Museum
And Park**

the 8-9 March 1862 Battle of Hampton Roads.

Quarstein's lecture series covers a wide variety of US Navy fighting ships, including THE GREAT WHITE FLEET, about which he will speak to us. President Theodore Roosevelt ordered the Great White Fleet to steam worldwide to make friendly courtesy calls to many naval power nations. This white-painted, protected cruiser fleet showed goodwill and demonstrated America's naval power worldwide. It was a carefully concocted public relations event that helped prove that America was now a naval power to be respected by all nations. ✍

LUNCHEON SCHEDULE

DATE: Wednesday, June 18
TIME: 11:30 AM Registration
12:00 PM Luncheon
12:45 PM Program
PLACE: Willow Oaks Country Club
6228 Forest Hill Ave
Richmond, VA 23225
COST: \$ 30.00 per person

Reservation Deadline for SUMMER LUNCHEON: To be received by Wednesday, June 11, 2025

****Refund Policy 2025: Cancellations will be accepted & checks returned
UP TO and INCLUDING the "deadline date."**

RESERVATIONS FOR CDR THEODORE G. ELLYSON SUMMER LUNCHEON – WED. JUNE 18, 2025

Name: _____ Tel: _____ email: _____

Name: _____ Tel: _____ email: _____

Regular meal served unless special meal is requested (please circle): 1 or 2 Veggie Meal(s) / Fish Meal(s)

Total # of Res. _____ @ \$ 30.00 per person Enclosed: \$ _____

Make check payable (and mail) to: Richmond Council NLUS P.O. Box 11201 Richmond, VA 23230 Tel #: (804) 355-7557

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Vaughan F. Dize



Greetings Fellow Richmond Council Navy League Members and Friends.

On April 4th, the Richmond Council had an enjoyable and informative experience touring Fort Gregg-Adams in Hopewell, VA. This Fort is the home of many schools which are attended by members of each branch of service. Twenty-five members and guests were invited to tour three of these schools, as well as touring the USA Ordinance Corps Museum, which is not open to the public. (For more information about this trip, please refer to pages five and six of this issue).

In April and May our nine JROTC Units and AMERICA Division Sea Cadets will have their awards and change of command ceremonies.

The Houston-Holicky-Sitter Luncheon will be held on May 13th at Publix (2nd Floor) 2250 John Rolfe Parkway, beginning at 11:50 AM. Doors open at

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

11:15 AM and program concludes at 1:00 PM. The speaker is Major Chris Hemler, USMCR, Author and Professor of Naval Studies at the US Naval Academy. Topic will be on *Delivering Destruction*.

Friday May 16th, at the Virginia War Memorial, is Military Signing Day where high school students enlisting in the U.S. military will be recognized. The event will take place from 5:00 PM to 6:30 PM.

Note: Thanks to all our members who have paid their annual dues. As of this writing, 28 Council members have not paid their dues.

Until next month's issue of *The Lucky Bag*, may you have Fair Winds and God Speed. 🚩

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Chaplain John A. Harler, M.D.



HE WILL GUIDE YOU

*Trust in the LORD
with all your heart,
And lean not on your
own understanding;
In all your ways
acknowledge Him,
And He shall direct your paths.*

I am writing this just before Easter. In John 14:18, 26, Jesus Christ says to His disciples the night before He was to be crucified, 'I will not leave you orphans. The Father will send you another advocate, counselor, comforter, the Holy Spirit, who will teach you and

guide you into all truth."

In John 1:1-2, 4-5, John talks about the Word of God as the Light. He writes, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. In Him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."

In the days of sailing ships, navigation was based on the light of the stars, using an instrument called a sextant. A sextant is a navigational instrument that measures the angle between two objects, typically a celestial object (like the sun or a star) and the horizon, to determine latitude and longitude.

Imagine being adrift upon the sea at night with no guide to direct us. The feelings of being lost and alone would naturally occur. Similarly, there may be times in our lives when we may drift into darkness or isolation, and those feelings of being lost and alone may surface, especially when there is no one to help us find our way.

The Lord sent His Word, as the Light of the world, to dispel the darkness, loneliness, and fear, being our guide, comforter, and counselor in such times. If we trust in Him, He shall direct our paths. If we call on Him, He will answer. 🚩

SAVE THE DATE

**Wed., Sept. 17, 2025
Council's Annual Golf
Tournament at the
Hollows Golf Club**

Montpelier, VA.

COST: \$95.00

More details

Coming soon

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 function.

New Member

Robert J. McDaniel, II

Sponsor

B. Patterson (Pat) Robson, Jr.

Help us welcome three more of the Council's Newest Board Members

Joseph M. Kelleher, Jr.



I was born and raised in Richmond, VA by Marie and Mike and was the second of five. My father served on the Navy League Board thanks to Ed Gibbons and others whom we all admired.

Following in those big footsteps, I am a USMC Vietnam Veteran, President of Kelleher HVAC, volunteer Slay Detachment USMC League and Honor Guard, Chair the Richmond Veterans Mental Health Council, hold positions on the Boards of the Rotary Club of Richmond and The Retail Merchant's Association (AKA: En Unison). Year round, I pick up wood, split and deliver the wood in RVA with the Salvation Army's sponsored Project Warm Volunteers.

As a co-parent with the late Maria Teresa and 48 years of marriage, our children Michael, Kathleen, and Alice gave us eleven beautiful grandchildren. I enjoy swimming, education, and worldwide travel, mostly aboard cruise ships, to be with family.

Thank you to the Navy League for the opportunity to work with you to continue to support those serving our country. Semper Fi. ✍

Brian K. Miller



I have been a resident of Richmond since 1967. I served active duty in the U.S. Navy from 1960-1964 aboard **USS Eldorado (AGC-11)**, a Mt. McKinley Class Amphibious Forces Command Ship and **USS Telfair (LPA-210)**, a Haskell-class attack transport ship. From 1964-1990, I was active in the U.S. Navy Reserves. I retired in 1990 as CDR Judge Advocate General Corps, USNR (Ret.). I have been a practicing attorney from 1973 to present. ✍

Earl P. Williams, Jr.



I am Earl Williams of Henrico County Virginia. I was born in Ocean View, Virginia into a Navy Family. My father retired as a Chief Builder (SEABEE); my uncle (Navy Pilot) died in a carrier aircraft crash two weeks after I was born. I have several other family members and friends who have served in the Navy.

I graduated from Douglas S. Freeman High School and attended J. Sergeant Reynolds C.C. I have a post graduate certificate from Clackamas College in Emergency Management and hold several certifications in Law Enforcement, Emergency Management and Government Management.

I was a Cub Scout, Boy Scout (Life) and Sea Scout (Quartermaster). I joined the Henrico Division of Fire as a Fire Cadet, I then joined the Tuckahoe Rescue Squad of Henrico as a Junior Member. While at TVRS I have served as an Officer, Board Member, Committee Chairman and Instructor. I became one of the first Emergency Medical Technicians in Virginia (#135) and instructed numerous rescue related subjects including Rescue Operations, Emergency Driving, Water Rescue and was the Program Coordinator for the State Tactical (SWAT) Medic Program. I currently serve as a Life Member (55 years) E.M.T. and Committee Member (Logistics).

After High School I entered Law Enforcement as a Dispatcher and was sworn in as a law enforcement officer at the age of 19. I served in progressive positions in all aspects of law enforcement including Jail and Court Security, Patrol, Undercover Operations, Executive Protection, Criminal and Internal Affairs Investigations, Training Academy Director, Crisis Intervention Team Member (primary focus on military and public safety issues) Emergency Management Team Member and Special Response Team and Honor Guard Commander, I served in progressive positions from Dispatcher to Chief Deputy Sheriff retiring after a 47-year career.

In addition, I served with The Virginia Defense Force (Department of Military Affairs) for over 23 years. I entered service as a Non-Commissioned Officer (Military Police) advancing to First Sergeant before being commissioned as a Military Police Officer. I served in progressive positions from Lieutenant (Va) to Major (Va) in platoon to company and special staff officer positions including the Division Provost Marshal. I was then promoted to Lieutenant Colonel and transferred to the Division Signal Officer. I then became a member of the Division General Staff serving as the G-3, G-5, G-6 and retiring as the Division G-8 at the rank of Colonel Va. (O-6). Upon retirement I was transferred to The Virginia Militia Unorganized. During my service I served on State Active Duty during times of "Governor declared emergencies" to include Y2K, 9/11, and other national events. I want to thank you for the opportunity to serve as a Board Member of the Richmond Council Navy League. ✍

Council's Admiral Samuel L. Gravely, Jr. Spring Luncheon

On March 26th, the Richmond Council Navy League held their Admiral Samuel L. Gravely Jr. Spring Luncheon at Willow Oaks Country Club with 45 attending.

We were fortunate to have Commander Brian C. Gismervik, Commanding Officer of **USCGC Northland (WMEC-904)**. **Northland** was adopted by the Richmond Council 26 years ago in April.

Along with a slide show presentation, Commander Gismervik talked about their last mission to the Florida Straits where they rescued a group of twelve migrants off a deserted island and returned them to their home country. Other migrants were intercepted as well and returned to their home country. Some ports were off limits to **Northland** and they gave the migrants to the Bahamas Coast Guard. CDR Gismervik shared interesting information regarding the Coast Guard's readiness, needs and current operations. His interesting presentation was followed by an informative Question and Answer session.

This was the first time in quite a while we were treated to a speaker from the Coast Guard. We thank Commander Gismervik for his service and much appreciate his willingness to take time from his busy schedule to come speak to at our luncheon.

Thank you to all who attended, especially we would like to thank the new Commanding Officer of Navy Talent Acquisition Group Richmond CDR Tim Henderson and his group for attending. 🍷



Commanding Officer CDR Tim Henderson of Navy Talent Acquisition Group Richmond and Commanding Officer CDR Brian Gismervik.



Dennis Biggs, Tom Hassell and Tom Jennings enjoying the social hour.



Returning member, Dennis Quearry, catches up with Past President, Jay Fieldler, M.D.



Dana Law, (on left), engages in conversation with one of our new board members, Brian Miller.



Navy Talent Acquisition Group Richmond. Pictured left to right: ABEC Amber Balajadia; LSC Andy Mucciaroni; CO CDR Tim Henderson; LS2 Deron Randall and YN1 Dearis Douglas.



Melody Gray and Ellen Nau enjoying a cup of coffee before the program.

FORT GREGG-ADAMS TRIP

It may seem like a boring activity to take a tour of the schools at Fort Gregg-Adams, but twenty-five Council members and guests boarded a bus on Friday April 4th and did just that. The visit was anything but boring.

Upon arrival, we met up with Staff Sergeant Brown, our guide for the day. We began our tour with a visit to the Parachute Rigging School. We were able to observe instructors and students as they were training to pack their parachutes for combat readiness. Upon completion of their packing, each soldier would raise their hand for it then to be inspected. Packing had to be completed within a specific time frame. Next, we visited the Culinary School where students from all branches of service learn to prepare meals for large groups (i.e., mess halls) as well as specialized training for feeding small groups (i.e., fine dining and wine selection for high-ranking officers and dignitaries). We were treated to delicious cookies, which were prepared by the students, and made from scratch. The Culinary School had just competed in the Culinary Olympics, where they had won a few Gold Plate Awards.

Lunch was on base at a facility that serves both military and civilians. The food was quite tasty and there were multiple selections.

One of the highlights of the tour was an opportunity to experience a virtual parachute drop. One of our members and two guests, including an eight-year-old grandson of one of our members, volunteered to experience this thrill: virtually jumping out of a plane and landing in a designated area. Exciting!

Next, we went to the indoor rifle range. After receiving detailed instructions on usage and safety of the M-16 weapons, fifteen of our members and guests were able to shoot electric replicas of the M-16 rifles at multiple targets. The participant's goal was to hit 20 targets in one minute. Needless to say, no one qualified for sniper school, but all had a fun time trying.

Lastly, we toured the USA Ordnance Corps Museum. This museum is not open to the public. Our guides shared interesting historical information on many of the museum's artifacts. It featured a collection of armaments from the Revolutionary War to the present

day ordinance. The mission of the Ordnance Museum is to obtain historically important equipment. Among the tanks, equipment and weaponry we viewed were German, French and British WWII tanks and Italian tank destroyers.

We thank the staff at Fort Gregg-Adams for their time and hospitality in making this an interesting and enjoyable day for all!



We started our tour with an education on the various types of parachutes, then observed soldiers pack their parachutes. From there we went to experience a supervised "virtual parachute jump." Pictured on the top left is John Harler, M.D. feeling the weight of the parachute's soldiers carry. Next stop is the "virtual parachute" drop, where council member, Wayne Sine (on left), Tom Hassell's son, Chip (top right) and eight-year-old Thomas Evans (bottom picture), grandson of one of our board members, Bob Lusk, take on the challenge. What a thrill!





Eight-year-old Thomas Evans is all smiles after his thrilling experience of the virtual parachute drop.



Culinary students at work in the kitchen while Bob Priddy gets a sample of one of their tasty treats.



Student shares cookies with group.



Instructors give safety and usage instructions to fifteen members of our group before experiencing target practice with electric replicas of the M-16 weapons. Great fun!!



Soldier raises his hand for his parachute to be inspected.



Group learns the history of the XM1 Abrams Tank.



Eight-year-old Thomas Evans proudly holds the electric replica of the M-16 rifle that he used in target practice.



French, German and British tanks on display in the USA Ordnance Corps Museum.

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

USS Normandy continues to operate in the 4th Fleet Area of Responsibility, working with partnered nations in the region as Colombia, the Netherlands, and Guyana.

Normandy has pulled into Naval Station Guantanamo Bay and Colon, Panama, taking full advantage of the tropical weather. Most notably, we hosted six Panamanian sailors onboard and gave them tours of the ship. We showcased a CIWS (Close-In Weapon System) and Mk38 25mm machine gun live fire exercise, tours of engineering spaces, and even participated in DC Olympics, where we dressed out in full FFE (Fire For Effect) and simulated fires. Despite a full schedule and the crew working non-stop to execute the nation's tasking, our MWR (Morale, Welfare and Recreation) team has done an exceptional job hosting "steal beach picnics" on the flight deck with plenty of BBQ and a "pie in the face" competition where sailors raised funds to throw a pie at their favorite Officer or Chief.

Normandy's schedule remains action packed and filled with stories. If you would like to see more of her crew in action or read our weekly Newsletter, feel free to find us on Facebook! Fair winds and Following Seas! 🚩

Very respectfully,
LTJG John Barber, FCO



USS Gravelly (DDG-107)
CO: CDR Greg Piorun
XO: CDR Gregory Tornambe

CMC: CMDCM LeDezman Johnson

Courtney Mustin, Liaison
Patrick Harris, Ass't Liaison

USS Gravelly is together again with Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron HSM 74 Swamp Foxes and back at sea. Aboard the **Gravelly**, the completion of the ISAT (Initial Ship Aviation Team Training) certification event marked another milestone in seamless and effective helicopter flight operations. The dedication and precision of the flight crew ensured that the event was executed flawlessly, displaying their exceptional coordination and skill.



The air wing and their operations are pivotal to **Gravelly's** mission readiness, providing critical support and forceful backup, wherever we deploy. From reconnaissance to tactical response, their contributions significantly enhance our capabilities and resilience. Together, the ship and air wing form an unstoppable team, embodying excellence and preparedness at every turn. (**USS Gravelly DDG-107** Facebook; 4/17/2025)



An MH-60R Sea Hawk helicopter, attached to the "Swamp Foxes" of Helicopter Maritime Squadron (HSM) 74, prepares to land on the flight deck of the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer **USS Gravelly (DDG-107)** during flight operations in the Atlantic Ocean, March 20, 2025. **Gravelly** is deployed under U.S. Northern Command's maritime homeland defense

authorities with a U.S. Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment embarked to enable maritime interdiction missions, to prevent the flow of illegal drugs and other illegal activity. U.S. Northern Command is working together with the Department of Homeland Security, to augment U.S. Customs and Border Protection along the southern border with additional military forces. (**USS Gravelly DDG-107** Facebook; U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Ryan Williams)

Update: **USS Stockdale (DDG-106)**, has joined **USS Spruance (DDG-111)** and **USS Gravelly (DDG-107)**, to aid southern border operations. 🚩



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

Pat Robson, Liaison

USS Carter Hall (LSD-50) is currently undergoing repairs and modernization at the BAE Systems Shipyard in Norfolk, VA. 🚩



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

Spencer is back in business! After a successful Sea Trials evolution, we departed the Coast Guard Yard for our first patrol. We are excited to be back on mission again. The current task at hand is to finish our patrol, in support of Presidential directives and qualify new crewmembers.

As we approach the transfer season, this is the last patrol for many members, so the camaraderie is high. We continue to work across departments to conduct mission-specific training that included law enforcement, damage

USCGC Spencer cont. on page 8

USCGC *Spencer* cont. from page 7

control, medical, cutter boat, and navigation training. We also revived our newsletter and gave it a different name: the ***Spencer*** Scuttlebutt.

Outside of work, the crew had some other exciting opportunities. We witnessed a Space-X rocket launch and its booster land off the coast of Cape Canaveral, a morale-filled music trivia night brought out a competitive spirit, and a much-needed movie and spa night provided an opportunity for relaxation. We just departed our Port Call from Fort Lauderdale – and it was a great spot to escape the winter weather we had in Baltimore.

As always, thank you, Richmond Navy League, for supporting us! We look forward to sharing more good news soon and having you onboard when we return in April! 🍷



Keeping a lookout.

Very Respectfully,
LTJG Lea Walker, PAO



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

Vaughan Dize, Liaison

Northland is getting ready for deployment in early June and XO LCDR Patricia Green will have a change of command ceremony at sea. 🍷



AMERICA Division Sea Cadets recently toured USCGC *Northland* at the U.S. Coast Guard Base Portsmouth, VA.



Efforts are currently underway for the commissioning of **USS *John F. Kennedy* (CVN 79)**. Unfortunately, at this time, there is no set date. It could be at the end of 2025 or early 2026. We will keep you informed as soon as we get further details.

John F. Kennedy served as a Navy Lieutenant during WWII before serving as the 35th President of the United States.

The CVN 79 is the second aircraft carrier for lifetime of service to the nation, (the first JFK Carrier was decommissioned in 2007). This *Gerald R. Ford*-class carrier will incorporate more than 23 new technologies. The new technology and warfighting capabilities that CVN 79 will bring will transform naval warfare, supporting a more capable and lethal forward-deployed U.S. Naval presence. (for more information visit:

www.jfkcvn79commissioning.org) 🍷

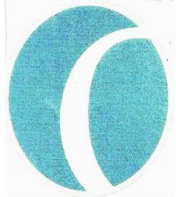


**JOSEPH MICHAEL (MIKE)
KELLEY, USMC**

**Former Richmond Council
Navy League Board Member
Sept. 13, 1946 – April 17, 2025**

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, Monday, May 26, 2025, we honor the courage, sacrifice, and enduring legacy of the men and women who gave their lives in service to their country.

(photo by Nancy Butler at the opening of the Virginia International Tattoo Virginia Arts Festival at the Scope Arena, Norfolk, VA 4/25/2025)



**RICHMOND, VIRGINIA COUNCIL
NAVY LEAGUE OF THE U.S.
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Thanks for jumping on board !!!

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