

The Atlanta Metropolitan Navy League Council
FROM THE QUARTERDECK

Quarterly Newsletter – April 2024



From the Bridge: A Welcome from the President

It's an honor and privilege to be selected as your new president. For the last 15 years, the Navy League has been close to my heart. My daughter, Catherine Seippel, is a U.S. Navy Lieutenant, Surface Warfare Officer, and department head on USS *Jason Dunham* DDG 19, with prior service on USS *Halsey* DDG.

Supporting our enlisted sailors and marines and creating new opportunities for the next generation of leaders is the foundation for my No.1 priority: growing membership and promoting the exemplary accomplishments of our youth members.



Our Council leadership shares this priority and works daily to increase our visibility in the community. We have already added 20 new members, many of whom are young people with ambition and fresh ideas. Exciting plans include empowering current and new members to launch future efforts, activities, or undertakings. I intend to encourage collaboration, promote communication, and support diversity and inclusion.

But we need help to succeed. Your continued financial and in-kind support will sustain our proud legacy and propel the service and recognition of current and future service members for years to come.

— **Will Seippel, President, Director**

Welcome Aboard!

The Atlanta Metropolitan Navy League Council was awarded Outstanding Council for 5 of the past 10 years. Usually, only about 14 of 180 National Councils are given this honor. Here is what we do to create that outstanding environment for the League:

- **Our Board of Directors meets monthly every second Tuesday** at 7:00 p.m. at the [Navy Talent Acquisition Group Atlanta](#) in Smyrna, GA. However, since the pandemic, we have been meeting online. Members are always welcome to attend. If you would like to join our Zoom meeting, please email or call me, and I will send you the login information.
- **General Membership events are scheduled about 4 times a year.** We host a banquet for the outstanding Navy and Marine Corps cadets from 45 JROTC units and 7 Sea Cadet Units that we support. These “Outstanding Metro-Atlanta Cadets” will be announced at the Annual Youth Awards Banquet in May.
- **We have interesting Keynote Speakers at our member events,** often Flag Officers, and noteworthy civilians. We will have the Navy Ball and attend the ARMAC Luncheon in the fall. In December, there will be the Marine Corp. Toys for Tots Dinner.
- **Trips to Maritime Services Bases or events are planned periodically.** For example, members went to NAS Pensacola to visit the National Naval Aviation Museum and the Blue Angels during their practices.
- **Project Mail Call will happen on September 30 this year.**
- **We elect officers and directors annually via a slate sent to all members by mail.** Our by-laws also allow the Board to add directors by vote. A new slate is presented to the Board and mailed in November to the Council members (about 175 right now). That annual mailing includes a local Council dues appeal (\$25 annually). The mailing also asks members to consider a donation to our “Leadership Fund” which is used to support youth programs and leadership awards to top sailors and marines in our sponsored and adopted units. We also support USS *Jimmy Carter*, USS *Georgia* (gold and blue), Naval Operational Support Center (NOSC) Atlanta, and Navy Talent Acquisition Group Atlanta.
- **We communicate by [eNewsletter](#), our [Council website](#), [Facebook](#) (please like and share!), and [email](#).** Also, sharing our noteworthy events will significantly increase our footprint.

Be assured that just your membership is vital to our advocacy of the maritime services. And your local financial support is a significant contribution to our many initiatives. Additionally, if you would like to contribute, your talents would be greatly appreciated. As your sponsor, please contact me with any questions.

— **Denny Holmes, Director, VP, Membership** - denny.holmes2426@gmail.com

News & Events

2024 Memorial Day Ceremony

The National Memorial Day Association of Georgia is hosting a Memorial Day Ceremony at the [Marietta National Cemetery](#). Please join us in honoring our nation's heroes on Monday, May 27, 2024 at 12:00 p.m. The Atlanta Metropolitan Navy League Council will lay a wreath along with about 30 other organizations. The Keynote Speaker will be Colonel Carl "Skip" Bell, USA (Ret.), while the Reflections Speaker is Cobb County District 3 Commissioner JoAnn K. Birrell. Please visit [the event page](#) for more information.

Legislative Affairs News

Great news! Our Navy League biennial **"Fly-in" to Capitol Hill** in Washington D.C. has resumed. We have started forming **Briefing Teams** that will participate in meetings with our Members of Congress scheduled for **May 15**.

Almost all our appointments were conducted virtually in the last two years due to COVID precautions. This is a welcome opportunity to carry our Navy League message directly to our elected Congressional Representatives this year. We want them to hear our grassroots voices regarding our Navy League support for legislation that will facilitate the Sea Services' highest priority requirements.

If you have an interest in participating, **you can still register**. Call me at the number below for details. I will brief you on arrangements, including hotel accommodation at the Residence Inn Arlington near Navy League Headquarters, transportation to Capitol Hill on May 15, and a detailed schedule.

Participants are invited to **attend online virtual orientation and training on April 23** via Microsoft Teams. Participants will meet for a final orientation at our National Navy League Headquarters Building in Arlington at 5:00 p.m. on May 14.

I will schedule all the appointments with our Georgia Members of Congress (MOC). For any MOC that are not able to schedule in Washington D.C. on May 15, we will still try to schedule locally or by virtual means. Let me know if you have an interest in participating either way.

— **Don Giles, VP for Legislative Affairs** - 770-509-3772, dongiles01@comcast.net



Lockheed Martin Conducts Historic LRASM Flight Test

The U.S. Navy in partnership with Lockheed Martin successfully conducted a historic Long-Range Anti-Ship Missile (LRASM) flight test with four missiles simultaneously in flight.

[Read More >](#)

Navy and Air Force fighters to train in NAWCAD's Joint Simulation Environment

Navy and Air Force fighter pilots will begin training as a joint force at the Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division (NAWCAD)'s Joint Simulation Environment starting in 2024.

[Read More >](#)

COMING SOON: “Harbor Hope Raffle”

In our mission to fund programs for the next generation of leaders, the Atlanta Metropolitan Navy League Council will soon kick off its “Harbor Hope Raffle.” Our goal is to sell 2,000 tickets at \$10 each. All proceeds will stay in the Atlanta metropolitan area and benefit the Atlanta Metropolitan Navy League Council.

The first prize is an autograph of Pharmacist's Mate Second Class John Henry Bradley, USN, the longest surviving member of the six who raised the second flag on Iwo Jima during World War II. The framed autograph is accompanied by an image of the iconic photograph “The First Flag Raising on Mount Suribachi,” taken February 23, 1945, at Iwo Jima.

The second prize is an original map of Iwo Jima from World War II United States Army Air Forces.

Winning tickets will be drawn on Veterans Day, November 11, 2024, in Atlanta following the [43rd Annual Georgia Veterans Day Parade](#).

Details will be announced soon.



Your “Voice to Congress”

You have an easily accessible opportunity to communicate with your Congressional Representatives and Senators. Make your voice heard on issues that are important to supporting our Maritime Services. Simply go to the [Navy League | Voice to Congress homepage](#) and find the latest Navy League Legislative Affairs priority “campaign” issues on the home page under “Take Action Now.”

Click on one of the listed issues and you will find a summary of “The Issue,” “The Solution,” and “Why You Should Take Action” through contact with your Representative and/or your Senators. Moreover, you will find a prepared letter that you can send immediately, with your desired edits. Featured current issues are:

- [Support Pay Parity for the Coast Guard](#)
- [Defend Jones Act Jobs](#)
- [Appropriate an Adequate Navy Shipbuilding and Conversion Budget](#)

— **Don Giles, VP for Legislative Affairs** - 770-509-3772, dongiles01@comcast.net

Chaplain’s Corner

Each day we offer prayers through our individual faith. When praying, please include everyone regardless of the faith they worship. We are all children of a supreme being. We may all use a different name to describe who we pray to and for. Reach out to a stranger and offer them what they need to make life a bit easier.

Yours in prayer,

Rev. Jim Klynman, Director, Champlain, VP, Education - j.klynman@att.net

Education Update

We are hoping to unite our education programs, which will target the youth of our area and inform them of the importance of helping others who may be in need of help in many different areas.

We have different organizations throughout our education system that are not aware of all the good they can do to help others. Our children need to learn what giving back means and how to do it.

If you have contacts within any student organization, please let us know so we can reach out to them.

Yours sincerely,

Rev. Jim Klynman, Director, Champlain, VP, Education - j.klynman@att.net

Youth Program Update

The Atlanta Metropolitan Navy League Council currently [provides support](#) to 45 Navy and Marine Corps JROTC units. The unit breakdown is as follows:

1. Of the 45 units, there are 34 NJROTC units and 11 MCJROTC units.
2. The Chief of Navy Education and Training has reorganized the assignment and placement of units, as well as the establishment of several new Area Command. The Georgia units were formally assigned to Area 12 based in Jacksonville, FL.
3. 28 of the 34 NJROTC units supported by the Council have been assigned to the newly formed Area 9, composed of Georgia units in the designated Atlanta and surrounding metropolitan areas. Focus on managing the Metro Atlanta assets.
4. Of the 6 remaining NJROTC units, the 5 units located in South Georgia will continue their assignment in Area 12, and the lone unit in Alabama will continue in its present assignment.
5. The total number of NJROTC cadets in our area for this year is 5,098.



Cadet LT Tiana Reid, Peachtree Ridge High School NJROTC, received the Theodore Roosevelt Youth Medal from CAPT Harley Jones, USN (Ret.) on behalf of the Atlanta Metropolitan Navy League Council of the United States on April 25, 2024.

(continued)

The Atlanta Metropolitan Navy League Council currently provides support to 7 Naval Sea Cadet Command units in the Northeast Region. The unit breakdown is as follows:

1. There are a total of 80 cadets currently training in the program.
2. Of the 7 units, 2 are currently without commanding officers. The Sea Cadet Regional Director is working to fill these positions.
3. The Council provides \$500.00 annually to each unit. The Council does not direct where this money is to be allocated, but the preference is for the fund to support summer training. Recent annual unit inspections reveal that the units are using the funds to support summer training. On some occasions, the funds were reallocated to purchase uniform items for summer training.

The 2023 graduation rate among NJROTC seniors is higher than the state average and most of the county school districts. Roughly 95.6% of NJROTC seniors are graduating, as compared to the state average of 84.4. The graduation percentages of the “Big 3” districts in metro Atlanta school districts are as follows:

1. Fulton - 89.3%
2. Cobb - 87.4%
3. Gwinnett - 83.2%

Very respectfully,

Wm. C. Wilkerson, CAPT, USN (Ret), VP, Youth Programs - (770) 597-5524

Project Mail Call

An energetic team of volunteers gathered on March 26 to pack sixteen care boxes—weighing 228 pounds—for deployed U.S. military servicemembers stationed worldwide. Participants included members of [The Atlanta Metropolitan Navy League Council](#), [The Honorable Order of Kentucky Colonels](#), and members, family, and friends of the [Rotary Club of Towne Lake](#). A generous donation from the club paid for all mailing costs.



Volunteers packed boxes for the U.S. Navy units aboard USS *Eisenhower* (CVN-69), USS *Theodore Roosevelt* (CVN-71), USS *Philippine Sea* (CG-58), USS *Carney* (DDG-64), and USS *Jason Dunham* (DDG-109). Boxes will also be sent to a Seabee unit based at the U.S. Navy Support Facility Diego Garcia and to Navy Seals positioned in an undisclosed location.

We thank every volunteer for their energetic and professional packing job, especially Carleen Wesson and Holly Freeman for facilitating the event.

Care Package to Troops in Africa

On September 30, 2023, the Atlanta Metropolitan Navy League packed care boxes that weighed a total of 143 pounds for the U.S. Navy units in Bahrain and aboard USS *Eisenhower* (CVN-69), USS *Carl Vinson* (CVN-70), USS *America* (LHA-6), and USS *Bataan* (LHD-5). We thank the League for their donations that helped defray care box mailing costs.

We also thank members of the Rotary Club of Towne Lake for their financial and merchandise donations. In addition, we thank

Carleen Wesson and Debbie Arnold for acting as facilitators for the event.

“Thank you for your dedication to sending care packages forward to our troops in Africa. We received your box this week and are grateful for your support and the items within. If you are able to tell the kids that send cards we got them and thank them for writing to us. Have a great week.”

— **Jeffrey Markle, CPT, PO**
PDD Chief, 319th PSE
Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti

Where Are They Now?

Commander Paul “Disco” Ritter, USN

From 1998 through 2001, Ritter was an NJROTC Cadet at North Cobb/Harrison High Schools in Cobb County, Georgia, under the leadership of Senior Naval Science Instructor CDR Frank Campbell, USN (ret). As is evident by his ribbon rack, Cadet Ritter was an active member of the NJROTC program.

After graduating from high school, Ritter attended Auburn University in 2005 and graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, Finance.

He earned his designation of Naval Aviator in June 2008. CDR Ritter reported to VAQ-129 at NAS Whidbey Island for initial fleet training as an EA-6B Prowler Pilot.

He began operational flying in June 2010 with the “Cougars” of Electronic Attack Squadron 139 (VAQ-139). He completed a deployment aboard USS *Ronald Reagan* (CVN-76) with Carrier Air Wing *Fourteen* (CVW-14) in support of Operation Tomodachi and

combat operations New Dawn and Enduring Freedom. Upon completion of the deployment, LCDR Ritter and VAQ-139 transitioned to the EA-18G Growler in 2012.

Reporting to the “Vikings” of VAQ-129 as Fleet Replenishment Squadron (FRS) Instructor, Ritter served until May 2015 when he was selected for the Growler Weapons Tactics Instructor Course (GTI) at Airborne Electronic Attack Weapons School (HAVOC), Class 02-15. He then reported to the “Shadowhawks” of VAQ-141 in Atsugi, Japan, and aboard CVN 76 with Carrier Air Wing *Five* (CVW-5) in November 2015. As Training Officer and Chairman of the CVW-5 Standardization Board, he completed 3 WESTPAC patrols.

Reporting for his Department Head tour, CDR Ritter again checked into VAQ-139 in March 2017. He completed two combat deployments aboard USS *Theodore Roosevelt* (CVN-71) and USS *Nimitz* (CVN-68) with Carrier Air Wing



Seventeen (CVW-17), supporting Operations Inherent Resolve and Freedom’s Sentinel as a Strike Lead and SEAD Lead Mission Commander.

In January 2021, CDR Ritter checked into Naval Air Warfighting Development

(continued)

Center (NAWDC) in Fallon, Nevada, where he was the Assistant Department Head (N10A) of HAVOC.

In January 2023, he reported as Executive Officer to Electronic Attack Squadron 136 (VAQ-136) "Gauntlets," where he now proudly serves

as Commanding Officer.

CDR Ritter's awards include the Meritorious Service Medal, Strike/Flight Air Medal, Navy Commendation Medal (three awards), Navy/Marine Corp Achievement Medal, and various personal and service awards. He has over 2,800 flight hours in the EA-6B and

EA-18G and 585 carrier-arrested landings.

CDR Ritter is married to Nicole Kimsey Ritter of Milton, Georgia. They have a daughter, Emma (13), and a son Blake (8).



Membership Renewal

Dear Member,

We at the Atlanta Metropolitan Navy League Council hope you and your loved ones are healthy and safe.

If you have not already taken the steps to renew, your Navy League membership expired at the end of last month on March 31, 2024. Your membership is crucial to furthering our mission, supporting youth programs, and providing care to those enlisted and defending our seas.

Renewal is easy; visit the Navy League's [Become a Member page](#). Enter the email address associated with your current membership and click "Reset Password." **NOTE:** You must enter the same email address on file for your membership. You will soon receive an email from the Navy League. **Be sure to check your spam folder.**

Your support allowed us to host RADM Tim Moon, USN (Ret) National Chairman, U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps, as the wonderful guest speaker at the Youth Awards Banquet last May. We also recently had an excellent packing session with Project Mail Call, sending packages to active duty forces on USS *Eisenhower*, *Roosevelt*, *Philippine Sea*, *Carney*, and *Dunham*.

Your membership is essential for our national security. We thank you and count on you for your continued support.

Navy League National Mission Statement Quote:

"We are civilians who recognize the United States is and always has been a "maritime nation" and we know the vital importance of our Sea Services to our national security. We welcome all patriots who want to keep our Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and U.S. Merchant Marine as a key part of America's strength! Our mission is simple, but essential: Serving the Sea Services, their families, and promoting youth programs that help to ensure the next generation of leaders."



Atlanta Metropolitan Navy League Council • AtlantaNavyLeague.org • contact@atlantanavyleague.org