

# BULLHORN

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NEWS FROM THE NAVY LEAGUE OF THE UNITED STATES PENSACOLA COUNCIL



Photo from Military Recognition Day provided by Katie Bodden

**JAN - MARCH 2024**

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Welcome to the Q1 edition of the Pensacola Navy League Bullhorn. As we say goodbye to the first quarter of the year, we are excited to update you on the latest happenings and initiatives within our community. In this issue you will find a letter from CDR Evan A Hipsley Jr., USN (Ret) the President of our council, a recap of 2023 from our previous President CMDCM Mark S. Curley, USN (Ret), photo highlights from 2023, recent Navy League events including Military Recognition Day, Admirals' Club and more! We look forward to keeping you up to date with all of our efforts throughout the year.



# PENSACOLA NAVY LEAGUE

"Citizens in Support of the Sea Services"

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January 5, 2024

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## Letter from the Council President

Greetings Friends and Members of the Pensacola Council Navy League.

On behalf of the Board of Directors (BOD), and myself, we hope you had a great holiday season.

Our Christmas Celebration [year-end] Event was held on December 5, 2023 at the Pensacola Yacht Club. An absolutely joyous and momentous event, it was pinnacled by the New Officer and Board Installation conducted by CAPT Tom Pruter, USN (Ret). Thanks Tom for officiating! We'd be remiss if we didn't thank **all those hard-chargers behind-the-scenes** that made our celebration happen - a true testament of the infectious volunteerism within our Community and Council.

Accordingly, your BOD immediately kicked into a higher bell and has been making great turns proceeding down-track on a myriad of 2024 events (navigate to the [EVENTS](#) tab for further information) and objectives. Every year we experience a few minor rudder adjustments to both Committee Composition and Leadership. We need more assistance/talent in these areas and would love for you to join the volunteer team; please reach out and let us know – email is preferred: [pensacolanavyleague@pensacolanavyleague.org](mailto:pensacolanavyleague@pensacolanavyleague.org).

**Navy League Goals:** 1) Educate the public and elected officials on the importance of a strong maritime component for our National Security, and 2) Support and advocate for members of the Sea Services including: U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. Merchant Marine, and the U.S. Navy.

**Membership Renewal:** If you haven't done so already, our dues renewal campaign kicked off January 1, 2024. To take advantage of Navy League benefits, including the Admirals' Club, and to both remain and be considered a member in good standing, please promptly remit your dues – watch your physical and electronic mailboxes for a reminder.

In closing, Thanks for all you do: *Citizens in support of our Sea Services.*

Here's to 2024!

Very respectfully yours and HooYah,

CDR Evan A. Hipsley, Jr., USN (Ret)  
**President, Pensacola Navy League**

# LETTER FROM 2022-2023 PENSACOLA NAVY LEAGUE LEAGUE PRESIDENT - MARK CURLEY

Greetings to our distinguished Pensacola Navy League members, future members, sponsors, partners and supporters. I hope this past year was one in which you hold fond memories of the many events that your Pensacola Navy League Council took the lead and paved the way in the local community and in recognition of our beloved military service personnel and the relentless support of their mission. All of the events the Pensacola Navy League held were in direct support of the NLUS mission, which is to support sea services. At every event, our focus is the military personnel and their families.

## 2023 Board of Directors - Pensacola Navy League



Events throughout 2023 that Pensacola Navy League either headed up or participated in are highlighted below.

Members showed up, rain or shine, for multiple pier-side departures and homecomings for the four USCG Cutters, (Dauntless, Diligence, Reliance and Walnut), all stationed at NAS Pensacola.

The Council sponsored and participated in the Decommissioning Ceremony for the USCG Cutter Decisive that included a long-held Coast Guard tradition of hosting a reception to celebrate the crew and their ship.

## Hellcat Hangar - Celebrating the USCGC Decisive



Members also volunteered for the Tall Ships of America port visit with festival events, day & evening sailings and tours.

The big event of the year by far was the Council serving as Pensacola's official host of the Spanish Navy Training Ship Juan Sebastian de Elcano on it's port visit from May 29 until Friday, June 2. The port visit was a significant success. Attendance for tours was fantastic. The Navy League reception at Seville Quarter was very well attended, A proclamation from the County was presented and gifts were exchanged. The port visit provided great exposure for the Navy League. The ship even delayed departure one day to allow for participation in the Fiesta of Five Flags events. Everyone had a great time. We expect to see The Elcano return to Pensacola soon.

**JS Elcano departing Pensacola Bay. Photos taken by Matt Meilstrup, Port of Pensacola pilot and Navy League Board liaison for the US Coast Guard.**



The Council provided financial support to the local Sea Cadet unit "Independence Squadron" along with awards presentations, participation in drill weekends, fund-raising and technical equipment assistance.

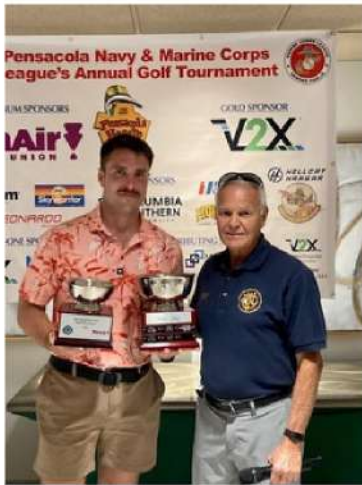
Throughout the year, the Council supported the five local High School's NJROTC Units in events such as the Annual National Drill Competition held here in Pensacola. We presented our college scholarship award and multiple Theodore Roosevelt awards during the annual Escambia County NJROTC Awards Ceremony.

**Joint NJROTC Award Program April 19, 2023 | Washington High**



(Left to Right: Cadet MCPO Mackenzie Wolf, Escambia, Cadet SCPO Chance McCurdy, Northview, Cadet SR McKinley Liechty, Pine Forest, Cadet SA Connor Gandy, Washington, Cadet PO1 Indigo Lambert, Escambia, PO2 Kaleb White, Pine Forest, Cadet PO2 Brian McCall, Washington, Cadet PO3 Andrea Baide, Escambia, Cadet SA Ora Bryanc, Northview, Cadet SN Karma Leonard, Pine Forest, Cadet PO1 Andrew Barnes, Washington, Capt. Tom Daniel USN (Ret) Navy League Board)

The highly successful Annual Navy League Golf Tournament was attended by a record number of participants, including Navy League members and military personnel. While building relationships, this tournament provided financial support for the annual Pensacola area Navy Ball.



The Admirals' Club hosted three "Meet the Boss" speaker series luncheons featuring military and community leaders. Typically, these luncheons are attended by over 60 Club members and military personnel. Join the Admirals' Club if you want an invite to these exclusive luncheons.

After a two-year hiatus due to COVID-19, the council celebrated the return of the Margaret Flowers Military Recognition Day Awards Luncheon. The ceremonial luncheon recognized 19 nominees from local military commands who, throughout the year, stepped up and volunteered their personal time in support of local charitable organizations. This prestigious annual event was attended by more than 300 military personnel, civilians and community leaders and is considered Pensacola's premier event for military recognition. The Emcee for the event was Mr. Dan Shugart, WEAR-TV3 Sports Director.

The Council hosted the popular Enlisted Recognition Breakfast, held at Seville Quarter's Heritage Hall. This event is held to recognize the hard work of each command's selected enlisted member.

### **2023 Enlisted Recognition Awards Breakfast at Heritage Hall at Seville Quarter**



The Military Spouse Appreciation Luncheon honored 13 military spouses whose commands chose to recognize publicly for their achievements and outstanding support. Each spouse was awarded plaques and gift bags for their stellar performance. The event's Mistress of Ceremonies was Ms. Sue Straughn, WEAR-TV3 News Anchor.

### **2023 Spouse Appreciation Luncheon**



The POW/MIA Remembrance Luncheon was co-hosted by the Council with the Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge, Pensacola Chapter. This event honors all former POW's and MIA's and featured a former POW as the guest speaker.

The annual BBQ Chicken Dinner was a huge success and a major hit with great food and great fellowship. This event is for all members and held to encourage new membership and to honor our own members and recognize those military personnel in attendance.

The annual Christmas Party wrapped up the year and was enjoyed by all who attended. Once again, we honor our military and all Navy League members while celebrating the holidays in a relaxed social setting. The new Council Officers and Board of Directors were sworn in during the celebration. With the end of 2023 comes the end of my two years serving as your President. I wish all of you well in the coming year. I will see you all at our Navy League events and around Pensacola. Continue supporting your Pensacola Navy League.

Take care,  
Mark S Curley  
Past President, 2022-2023  
Pensacola Navy League

### **Pensacola Navy League Board Members at the 2023 Christmas Party**



# MILITARY RECOGNITION DAY

## FEBRUARY 8, 2024

Military Recognition Day honors military members who have demonstrated significant community service. The Pensacola Council recognized those members during a luncheon and ceremony, most recently held on February 8, 2024 at the Pensacola Bay Center. Each year honorees are nominated by their commands and each nominee is recognized, with one outstanding military community service leader selected for the prestigious Margaret Flowers Civic Award. Margaret Flowers is a retired civil service employee who left a legacy of service to both the U.S. Navy and her community.



This year's guest speaker was Chief Chip Simmons of Escambia County Sheriff's Office. He has been with the Pensacola Police Department since October 1986 and prior to that was a corrections officer for the Escambia County Sheriff's Office.

He was promoted to sergeant in February 1995, to lieutenant in November 1998, to captain in June 2002, to assistant chief in January 2005, and named chief in June 2010. The Pine Forest High School graduate has a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from Troy State University, a master's degree in public administration from Troy State University and graduated from the FBI National Academy in Quantico, VA.

Chief Simmons has been assigned to Uniform Patrol, Vice & Narcotics, Investigations, and TAC. Among his additional assignments have been a field training officer, SWAT commander and, since 2002, he has been the department's media spokesman.

He has had memberships on the Statewide Terrorist Network Group, Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force, U.S. Customs Blue Lightning Strike Force, as well as various youth and community boards.

Chief Simmons has received numerous department awards in recognition of his service to the community, including a Bronze Cross and the Gold Medal of Valor, which is the department's highest award for heroism. He also has been named to the Police and Firefighters Heroes Hall of Fame, the Pine Forest High School Alumni Hall of Fame, and received the Volunteer of the Year and Sports Lifetime Achievement awards from the Emerald Coast Youth Sports Association.

This event is the Pensacola Council's largest and proudest of the year! If you weren't able to make it this year, we look forward to having you there in February 2024!

**If you have questions about this annual event, please contact the Navy League office at (850) 436-8552 or email [pensacolanavyleague@pensacolanavyleague.org](mailto:pensacolanavyleague@pensacolanavyleague.org)**



Photos from the event provided by Katie Bodden



# MEET THE BOSS LUNCHEON

## MARCH 12, 2024



Photos from the event provided by Julie B. Connerley

On March 12, we hosted our first Admirals' Club Luncheon event of the year where members heard directly from a distinguished leader in naval aviation, CAPT Douglas White, (USN) Commodore of Training Air Wing Six.

With his extensive experience and valuable insights, CAPT Douglas White provided us with his unique perspective on the vital role of Training Air Wing Six (TRAWING6) in shaping the future of naval aviation right here in Pensacola, FL. His leadership ensures that TRAWING6 remains at the forefront of naval aviation training, preparing the men and women of the United States Navy to meet the challenges of tomorrow with confidence and proficiency.

CAPT Douglas White's remarkable career serves as an inspiration to all who aspire to serve their country with honor and distinction. His leadership and dedication to excellence are a testament to the values of the United States Navy and the proud tradition of service that he represents.

Our next Meet the Boss Luncheon is scheduled for May 23, 2024.

**If you are interested in joining the Admirals' Club to attend these exclusive events, please reach out to our office to find out more about upgrading your membership.**

**Pensacola Council Navy League of the United States**

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# USCG NEWS

**THE PENSACOLA COUNCIL OF THE NAVY LEAGUE FORMALLY ADOPTED THE COAST GUARD CUTTER DAUNTLESS ON JANUARY 25, 2024!**



Navy League representatives with the Dauntless CO, CDR Aaron Kowalczyk and ENS Looney following the ship's adoption.



Left to Right: Evan Hipsley, Dan McCort, Mike Harbison, Vic Hall, & Matt Meilstrup

President Evan Hipsley, Jr. read the proclamation in front of the assembled crew and Navy League representatives. By adopting units, Navy League councils provide support through awards, invitations to attend events, financial support, scholarships, ship visits, emergency support, family support and more. We had been trying to arrange this adoption for well over a year but the ship's busy schedule didn't permit it until now. Given this summer's lay up of the Dauntless, it was crucial to complete this recognition. It was also a great opportunity to honor EM2 Patrick Reeder, the ship's Sailor of the Quarter. Thank you to the Regional President Dan McCort, Vice Presidents Vic Hall and Matt Meilstrup and Mike Harbison for representing.

## **CELEBRATING THE SAILOR OF THE QUARTER WITH USCGC DILIGENCE**



The Pensacola Council of the Navy League of the United States was in action on February 7, 2024 in support of CDR Cain, skipper of the USCGC Diligence as the ship celebrated their Sailor of the Quarter awards onboard the ship. Our Pensacola Navy League representatives were treated to a tour of the vessel and had the chance to meet with the crew.

We are lucky to have opportunities throughout the year to welcome USCG ships to their homeport of Pensacola. Keep an eye out for emails from our office with details on upcoming USCG events you can participate in as a Pensacola Navy League Member.



# 2024 QUARTER 1 HIGHLIGHTS

## 2023 GOLF TOURNAMENT CHAMPIONS NASC MWR - TROPHY PRESENTATION



CAPT Dean-o Fournier, USN (Ret) and Mark Vanderhaden NL Council & Assistant Vice President of Project Management, Pen Air Credit Union presented the 2023 Golf Tournament trophies to the winning command. The larger trophy is the traveling trophy and the smaller is the trophy that NASC gets to treasure forever! Also presented by Mark Vanderhaden, was a \$250 check for the NASC Command MWR.

In the picture left to right CAPT Dean-o Fournier, USN (Ret), Mark Vanderhaden NL Council & Pen Air FCU Assistant Vice President of Project Management, AWS1 Ryan Turley, USN, Team Captain, AWS2 Zach Moore, USN, and CO of NASC CAPT Brad "Redman" Arthur, USN.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### MAY 2024

Military Appreciation Month

May 15 | Spouse Appreciation Luncheon

May 17-19 | Pensacola Navy Days

May 23 | Admirals' Club - Meet the Boss Luncheon



Pensacola proudly announces its inaugural Pensacola Navy Days celebration, scheduled for May 17th-19th in Downtown Pensacola. This three-day event aims to honor the valor of past and present military personnel stationed at Naval Aviation Station Pensacola and surrounding military installations.

"Pensacola has long stood as a beacon of military pride, tracing back to the founding of the Pensacola Navy Yard by the U.S. Navy in 1825," said Retired Navy Capt. Tim Kinsella, Chairman of

Navy Days. "Navy Days serves as a poignant testament to the deep-seated reverence our community holds for its military service members, their families, and our esteemed veterans."

**Event Highlights** For more information on event schedules, volunteer opportunities, and sponsorship, please visit [pensacolanavydays.com](http://pensacolanavydays.com):

- **Gallery Night - Friday, May 17, 5 - 9 p.m.** Downtown Pensacola's popular Gallery Night will be themed for Navy Days/Military Appreciation to honor the men and women serving our country. Wear red, white and blue and join in the festivities.
- **Navy Days "Night at The Museum" Gala - Friday, May 17, 6:30 - 10 p.m.** The National Naval Aviation Museum plays host to this black tie/service mess dress affair featuring special guest speaker [Admiral Harry Harris USN \(Ret.\)](#). Tickets are now available for [purchase](#).
- **Navy Days 4K Run/Walk - Saturday, May 18, 8 a.m.** This unique 4K (2.4 miles) race starts at Community Maritime Park and loops through Downtown to Veterans Memorial Park and back. Come for the race and stay for the parade! [Registration is now open](#).
- **Navy Days Parade - Saturday, May 18, 9:30 a.m.** Gather along Pensacola's waterfront for this exciting parade featuring military equipment, squadrons, Sailors of the Year, bands and drill teams, with the support of many of Pensacola's best Mardi Gras Krewes. The parade starts at Veterans Memorial Park and ends at Community Maritime Park.
- **Navy Days At Community Maritime Park - Saturday, May 18, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.** The celebration continues with a day filled with activities for the whole family including a Kids Fun Zone with free activities, food trucks, military vehicles on display, tours of Navy vessels, ROTC demonstrations and a military/veterans' fair.
- **Blues on the Bay Concert - Sunday, May 19, 6 - 8 p.m.** Pack a cooler and blanket and join us at the Community Maritime Park Amphitheater for a free concert featuring the Modern Eldorados.



*"Representing those who have distinguished themselves in combat from every generation and branch of the Armed Forces."*

# 2024 HEROES AMONG US

*Speaker Series*

## 2024 SCHEDULE

### GULF WAR AIR CALVARY NIGHT

**30 MAY**

Seville Quarter  
130 E Government St.  
Pensacola, Florida

PAUL EPSTEIN, CAPTAIN USA

### TET OFFENSIVE NIGHT

CHRIS LAMBERT, LANCE CORPORAL USMC

**27 JUN**

Seville Quarter  
130 E Government St.  
Pensacola, Florida

### COAST GUARD NIGHT

**25 JUL**

Seville Quarter  
130 E Government St.  
Pensacola, Florida

ERIC GLEASON, CAPTAIN USCG

### MARINE RECON NIGHT

STEVE BRUSH, SERGEANT USMC

**29 AUG**

Seville Quarter  
130 E Government St.  
Pensacola, Florida

### OPERATION COMMANDO SABER NIGHT

**26 SEP**

Seville Quarter  
130 E Government St.  
Pensacola, Florida

GILBERT AHL, COLONEL, USAF

### VIETNAM GUNSHIP NIGHT

PERRY UNRUH, CAPTAIN USMC

**31 OCT**

Pensacola Veterans Memorial Park  
Bayfront Parkway near 9th Avenue,  
Pensacola, Florida

Donations for the "Veterans in Distress Fund" can be sent to: EDWARD M. ROUSE, CPA, 98 Weed Street, Pensacola, FL 32514. Checks payable to: HEROES AMONG US. All proceeds collected go to the Veterans in Distress Fund, supporting veterans in need.



HEROES AMONG US: awarded the 2015 George Washington Honor Medal by the Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge.

This Speaker Series is made possible by the generous support of Seville Quarter.

# MEET YOUR 2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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1st Vice President | RDML Victor Hall, MSC, USN (Ret)  
2nd Vice President | CAPT Thomas Daniel, USN (Ret)  
3rd Vice President | CAPT Matthew Meilstrup, USCG (Ret)  
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Carol Monroe  
RADM Donald Quinn, USN (Ret)  
Edward Rouse  
Bobby Riggs  
Mark Vanderhaden  
CDR David Van Der Like, USNR (Ret)

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FORCM Robert Anderson, USN (Ret)  
Nan Harper  
MSGT Harry White, USAF (Ret)



**CAPT Matthew Meilstrup, USCG (Ret)**  
**3rd Vice President**

**Background:** Matt graduated from the U. S. Coast Guard Academy (CGA) in 1992 with a B.S. degree in Marine Science. He served the USCG for 29+ years including time aboard nine different ships and is now the Harbor Pilot for the Port of Pensacola.

**Hometown:** Mishawaka, Indiana

**Fun Fact:** Matt was the head tennis coach at the Coast Guard Academy for 3 years!



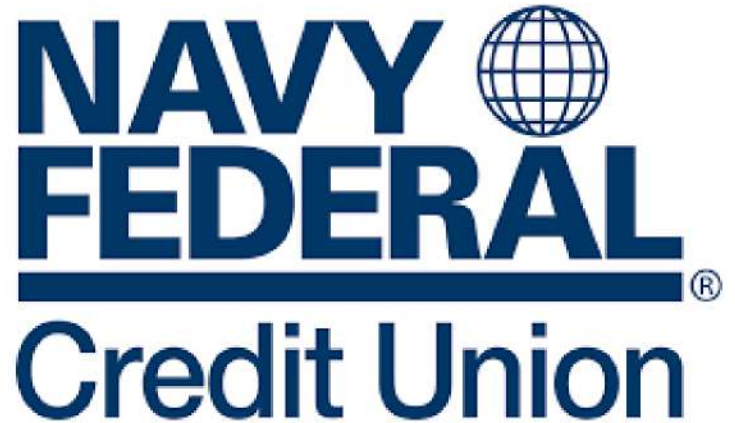
**Carol Z. Monroe - Director**

**Background:** She has worked in military education for more than 31 years and is currently the NAS Pensacola Site Director and online advisor to the College of Aviation undergraduate studies for Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University Worldwide.

**Settled in:** Gulf Breeze, Florida

**Fun Fact:** She has served on the board of the Pensacola Navy League for 10 years and served as the editor of the Bullhorn newsletter for nine years.

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