



# ALL AHEAD FULL

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE BALTIMORE COUNCIL, NAVY LEAGUE OF THE UNITED STATES

SPRING 2022



## FROM THE BRIDGE

It might seem a bit odd to learn the incoming President of the Baltimore Council of the Navy League of the United States was born and bred in England. But it's nowhere near as odd as the fact that a popular past president of the Australian Veterans of Foreign Wars actually served in Germany's Afrika Korps during World War II. "Fair do's," as the Aussies say.

One of the proudest moments of my life was taking my oath as a citizen of this great country. Another was my election as President of the Baltimore Council of the Navy League. That said, it is a formidable prospect to step into the shoes of General Joe Nattans and Alan Walden, who have for so long manned the helm with grace, energy and admirable efficiency. Their experience and wise counsel will be of particular importance in the coming year. For it is one in which the United States face and its allies face extraordinary challenges – war at the edge of NATO's eastern flank; China flexing its muscles in the Pacific, resurgent terrorism in the Middle East.

The maritime services of the United States will be deeply involved in meeting these challenges, likely involving longer deployments in ever more dangerous waters. This, in turn, underlines the importance of the work of the Navy League in supporting the men and women of the sea services and their families. Here in Baltimore, in addition to our regular activities

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## Bravo Zulu

# The Best is Yet to Come



CPO Emessiene

It is always a pure pleasure to acknowledge the remarkable accomplishments of members of the Fort McHenry Division/T.S. Constellation units of the United States Naval Sea Cadet and Navy League Cadet Corps, sponsored and heavily supported by the Baltimore Council. Recently we were informed that senior members of the corps, having decided to pursue careers in the sea services, had been signally honored by acceptance to some of the finest military and maritime schools in the nation.

Cadet Chief Petty Officer Seven Emessiene was faced with the happy choice between either the United States Military Academy at West Point or the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis.



Knisley, Moyer, Emessiene



He chose the latter. And Cadet CPOs Julia Knisley and Braedon Moyer are now able to choose from among a number of the top maritime academies.

Meanwhile, the Sea Cadets continued with their educational pursuits some of which took place at MITAGS (Maryland Institute of Technology and Graduate Studies) on the campus of the National Maritime Institute located in Linthicum near BWI-Marshall Airport. Classes and seminars were provided courtesy of the Engineering Society of Baltimore, the Navy Operational Support Center at Whetstone Point, and Sail Baltimore. This was a welcome in-person opportunity for the cadets who'd been confined, during the Covid-13 emergency, to mostly "virtual" learning. ⚓



## Sail Ho!

# A Welcome Arrival

By Alan Walden

A handsome visitor from afar will be sailing into Baltimore this month. The full-rigged ship Stad Amsterdam will be the first tall ship to grace the Inner Harbor this year. She's a relatively new vessel whose origins can be traced to a member of the Amsterdam Municipal Council who, in 1995, asked "Wouldn't it be great to build another of those great sailing ships from the past, as a symbol of the commercial spirit of the city?"

Meticulously hand-crafted, based on plans of authentic nineteenth-century clipper ships, work on the steel (rather than wood) hull began shortly thereafter at the Oranjewerf dockyard. The frame, once completed, was



Stad Amsterdam

then moved to Amsterdam's Dutch Maritime Museum, where the rest of the ship was built.

Radiant woodwork, lavish copper trimmings, an impressive circular staircase, all grand and graceful details. A tribute to modern Dutch craftsmanship as well as respect for the authentic atmosphere of a Victorian clipper ship.

As a training vessel and passenger ship, Stad Amsterdam transports guests across the world's seas each year in a style all her own. She also takes part in Tall Ships Races and sailing events and is chartered out for business events. Stad Amsterdam will arrive in Baltimore on 12 April and remain for a full week; through 19 April. She'll be open to the public and well worth a visit.

Welkom aan boord! ⚓

From the Bridge  
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– the youth programs, support for the U.S. Coast Guard, and the like – we have been charged by the Navy to take the lead in organizing and raising funds for the commissioning of the Arleigh Burke class destroyer USS Carl M. Levin (DDG 120), a major event scheduled to take place in Baltimore early next year.

Thus it is time to ramp up our efforts to recruit new members of the council. Membership is not solely confined to civilians. It is open to veterans of all services, reservists (even active reserve personnel) and to members of the National Guard. Membership application forms are easily available on the Navy League website. ([www.navyleague.org](http://www.navyleague.org)) We, therefore, urge you to step up. We need you, as do the men and women who serve this nation on the seven seas. ⚓

Guy Hawtin  
President, Baltimore Council  
Navy League of the United States

## The Milestone

# Eight Decades and Counting



Donna and Joe Nattans

It was a boisterous and happy crowd that gathered at Calvert Hall College High School to celebrate the birthday of one of the longest lived and active members of the Baltimore Council of the Navy League. Arthur J. "Joe" Nattans was the man of the hour having just concluded his 80th year of making his mark on Planet Earth. And his family and friends turned out en masse to mark the occasion.

Having achieved near legendary status at Calvert Hall where the Nattans, pere, fils, et al have spent their formative years, it was altogether appropriate that the event take place there. It is the oldest Christian Brothers primary and secondary school in the United States.

Not only a linchpin member of our council, (he is the



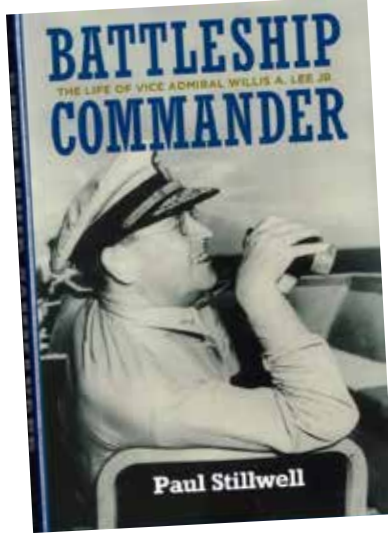
"My Three Sons"

immediate past-president) Joe has been a prominent member of the Baltimore business community and an officer in the Maryland National Guard. Former commanding officer of the First Battalion of the storied 175th Infantry Regiment Joe, as he retired, was raised to the rank of brigadier general. He is also a Chevalier in the Order of Knights Templar and a former commander of the Military Order Foreign Wars. And, within the Navy League, he's taken on a new and major assignment as head of the campaign that will lead to the commissioning of U.S.S. Carl M. Levin, a spanking new Arleigh Burke Class destroyer, and event currently scheduled to take place in Baltimore in February of 2023.

To paraphrase a line from the film *High Society*, "What a swell party it was." ⚓

# Read On

## Battleship Commander



Lee receives Navy Cross from Halsey



U.S.S. Washington Opens Fire

By Alan Walden

If ever there was a fighting admiral who deserved to be better known it's "Ching" Lee. And, long overdue, his story has been told in painstaking but highly readable fashion by author and historian Paul Stilwell, already known for such works as "Unsolved History," "The Korean War: Fire and Ice," and "History vs. Hollywood."

Admiral Willis A. Lee got his nickname from a lifelong interest in Asia and because of his surname which, at the time, was construed as Chinese in origin. Sailor by choice and a gunner to the core Lee was appointed to the Naval Academy from Kentucky 1904. While a midshipman, he won his letter on the Rifle Team, qualified as an expert rifleman, was awarded the Gold Medal for small arms efficiency as a Second Classman, and was a member of the Naval Academy rifle Team which participated in the National Rifle Match at Camp Perry, Ohio in 1907. There it won the National individual match and the National pistol match. But it was his performance during the Second World War that

wrote his name into naval legend and became the basis for "Battleship Commander."

From 1939 through '42, as he helped prepare the U.S. Navy for it war, he emphasized the need to equip its ships with anti-aircraft batteries and, more importantly, with radar for the tactical advantage it would provide, especially during night action. In 1942 came the naval battles of Guadalcanal. From the bridge of USS Washington (BB-56) and with USS South Dakota (BB-57) in company Lee, as commander of the First Division of Fast Battleships, became embroiled in a shooting match with a powerful Japanese task force that included the sister battleships Kirishima



and Hiei, among the fastest and most powerful in the Imperial Japanese Navy. The Americans took the worst of it at first. But Hiei's superstructure was battered, mostly by 5" guns from U. S destroyers and she was sunk by torpedoes from U.S. carrier aircraft. Still, the overall outcome was in doubt, especially when South Dakota was disabled. That's when Lee ordered all other ships to stand clear as Washington came charging through the melee for a point blank encounter with Kirishima. When the smoke cleared the Japanese battleship was a smoldering mountain of scrap, sinking to the floor of what became known as Ironbottom Sound. For the first and only time in WWII a U.S. battleship had sunk an enemy battlewagon in a one on one fight to the finish.

Lee finished the war as commander of all fast battleships in the Pacific and received the Navy Cross from Admiral William F. Halsey who recommended that Lee be his, Halsey's successor should the occasion arise. All documented in Stilwell's finely crafted and even handed biography. "Battleship Commander" was published late last year by U.S. Naval Institute Press. ⚓

## Short Takes



Baltimore's Cruise News: The Carnival Pride has made her last voyage from Charm

City and succeeded by the more up-to-date Carnival Legend. And Royal Caribbean is back in business here for the first time since the pandemic struck. Enchantment of the Seas made her first post-Covid voyage from the Baltimore Cruise Terminal on December 23rd bound for the Bahamas.

The Port of Baltimore has again received the highest security rating from the United States Coast Guard. According to former Maryland Transportation Secretary Greg Slater, "The port

is constantly improving and evolving its security operations, and achieving this top rating for 13 consecutive years reflects that commitment."

The POTUS was in Baltimore in November following passage of new Federal Infrastructure legislation. A visit during which he and others had the chance to see the four huge Neo-Panamax cranes being installed at the Seagirt Marine Terminal. When fully operational they'll be able to handle two super-sized cargo vessels simultaneously. ⚓



## The Mouse That Roared

As an apolitical organization this council steers a wide course around partisan issues. But when freedom and independence are at risk the United States, as a nation, steps up. So it is altogether appropriate for us to join in support of the freedom fighters of Ukraine who, confronted by naked aggression, are fighting in defense of their right to survival. Democracy is itself under siege. It must not fail. ⚔



## Celebrity Aside

### Just One of the Guys

By Alan Walden

Much has been written about members of the Hollywood elite who put their careers on hold to serve the nation during the maelstrom that was World War II. Foremost among them was Jimmy Stewart who, as pilot of a heavy bomber and an air group commander, earned a general's star. But mostly overlooked is Cesar Romero who, in 1942, set his celebrity aside and enlisted in the United States Coast Guard as an apprentice seaman. Having already appeared in fifty films The "Latin from Manhattan" as he called himself, wanted to do his part.

After 10 weeks at the Coast Guard's West Coast boot camp, in Alameda, California, Romero boarded the only Coast Guard vessel on which he would serve, the Coast Guard-manned transport Cavalier. His duty was operating deck cranes, swinging 18,000-pound barges and other landing craft from the deck over the side of the vessel during invasions as well as bringing craft and cargo on board. He would reload craft back on board the ship and hoist aboard injured and battle casualties. At general quarters, he

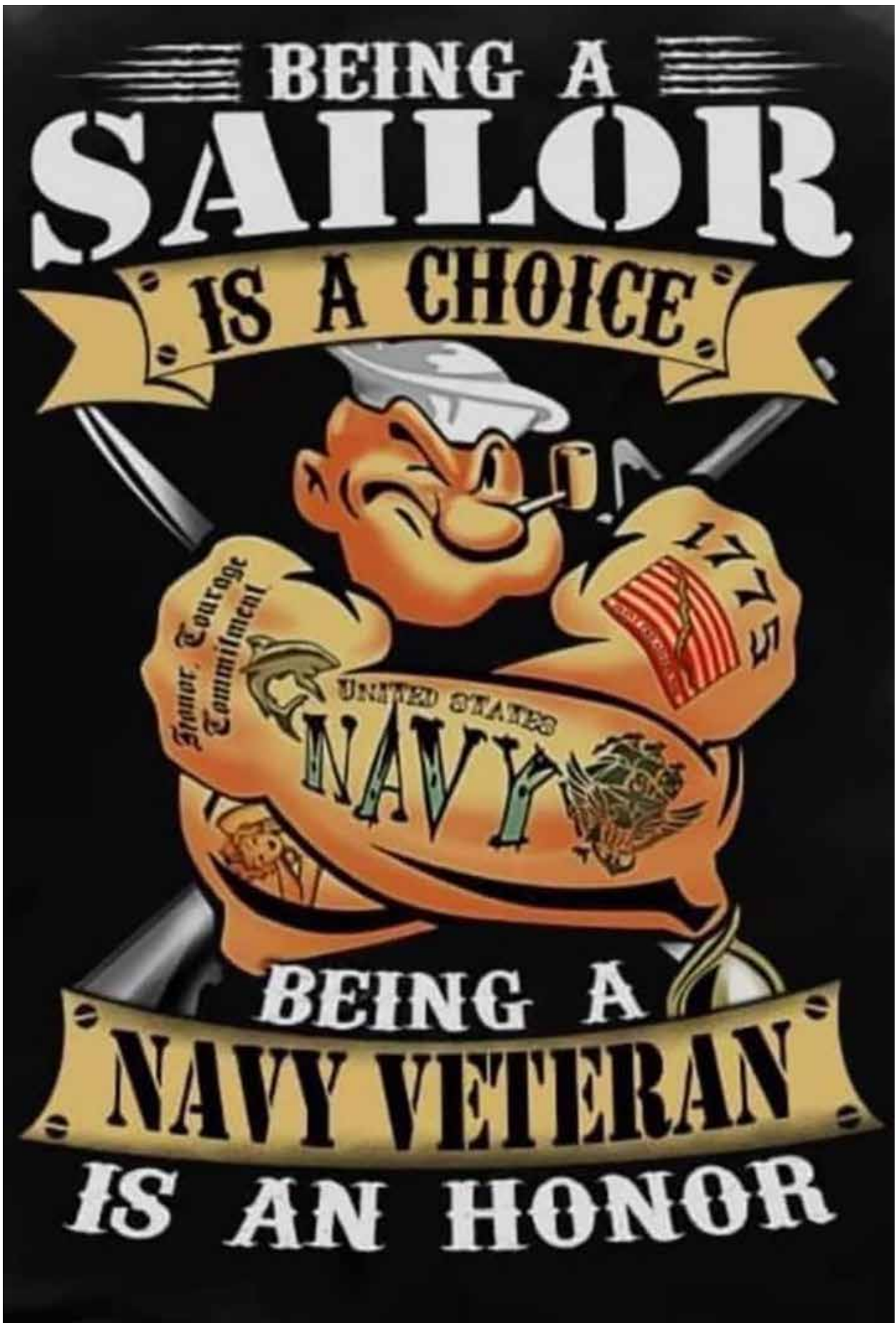


also served as "First Powderman" on a forward five-inch gun. He requested that combat duty and got it by beating out competition from men 10 to 20 years his junior. Out of his bunk long before dawn he, like his shipmates, swept down

his quarters, emptied trash, and got things squared away for the day. He always obeyed orders and slept in ordinary enlisted bunk space. He helped organize variety shows for the crew. But that was only a small part of his contribution to the war effort. On

board Cavalier he was in action at Saipan and Tinian where he donated blood to save the lives of wounded marines. As Cavalier's captain would later say, "he's a man with an extraordinarily fine character." In October 1944 Cavalier returned to Pearl Harbor and, for the remainder of his Coast Guard career Romero participated in morale events and war bond rallies, often speaking at war production plants.

When the war ended, Romero had risen to the top of the enlisted ranks: Chief Bosun's Mate. Not because of celebrity, but because he had served well and with honor. Probably best known for his six "Cisco Kid" films in the 1930s and '40s and for his role as "The Joker" in the Batman television series in the 1960s, Cesar Romero died in 1994 at the age of 86. A Hollywood star to be sure. But, as a wartime "Coastie," he was "just one of the guys." ⚔



# Coming Up

- 4/10 Palm Sunday
- 4/15 Good Friday  
Passover begins at sundown
- 4/17 Easter Sunday
- 4/28 Holocaust Memorial Day (Yom ha'Shoah)
- 5/8 Mother's Day
- 5/21 Armed Forces Day (Show the Colors)
- 5/30 Memorial Day (Colors at half-staff until noon, then fully hoisted)
- 6/6 D-Day (1944)
- 6/14 Flag Day (1777-Show the Colors)
- 6/19 Father's Day
- 6/21 Summer Solstice (First day of summer)

## Remembering Our Mission

The NAVY LEAGUE came into being in 1902 with the express purpose "to enlighten the people on naval matters and tell them what a Navy means to the country and what it ought to mean to them."

We have always conveyed the philosophy of two of our founders, **PRESIDENT THEODORE ROOSEVELT** and **ADMIRAL ALFRED THAYER MAHAN** that America is a maritime nation and that a strong Navy is the most cost-effective means of ensuring peace.

**PRIDE • SERVICE • PATRIOTISM**

## From the Editor

As always comments and observations regarding this publication are welcomed. They may be sent to the editor at [arwmedia@aol.com](mailto:arwmedia@aol.com) and/or posted in the comments section on our web site: [www.navyleaguebaltimore.org](http://www.navyleaguebaltimore.org). You are also invited to visit the web site to peruse past copies of All Ahead Full and find out more about the Navy League, the Baltimore Council, and our 120 year old mission in support of the sea services.



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