# ALL AHEAD FULL

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

SUMMER 2026




## FROM THE BRIDGE

Happy Summer Shipmates. We're underway! Literally!

On Tuesday morning, 28 July, the Coast Guard buoy tender James Rankin (WLM-555) will set forth from Curtis Bay to place the Star-Spangled Francis Scott Key Buoy in the Patapsco River at the spot where 212 year ago, in September of 1814, on board a Royal Navy truce ship, Key watched the bombardment of Fort McHenry at the conclusion of which he wrote the poem that became the lyrics of our National Anthem. We, of the Baltimore Council, have been offered 20 billets for the event on a first -come, first-served. Details will be forthcoming.

Meanwhile, plans for Sail 250, Baltimore are being finalized. General Joe Nattans, the council vice president, and I attended the press conference May 28 detailing the list of 14 tall ships, US Navy ships and three participating countries air shows. It's going to be a worthwhile visit, so check out Sail250MD.org

Your Board is reaching out to the maritime economy in Baltimore to develop their participation in NLUS activities in support of the MERCHANT MARINE. This will accomplish several goals: 1. Lower our member's average age. 2. Enlarge our base for accomplishing Navy League goals. 3. Provide sources for member participation and education. You may expect further announcements in the coming months of new advances in pursuit of the many elements of the mission we champion: Support of the Sea Services; their ships and support facilities, and the men and women who serve this nation in its defense and commerce on the seven seas.

Again, we strongly advise one and all to visit the Sail250MD.org website to be certain not to miss any of what will surely be memorable events and activities to help celebrate the 250th Birthday of these United States.

Best wishes.

*Bruce Copeland*
*Council President & Life Member*

## Into the Future

# What Is and What Will Be



Into the Future

*By Alan Walden*

Officers of the Baltimore Council got an in-person eyeful of the newest in cyber-support of the Armed Forces during an early spring visit to the campus of BlackSea Technologies whose corporate offices are here in Charm City. Specializing in AI (Artificial Intelligence) enabled manned and unmanned maritime systems, BlackSea's charge is to deliver innovative solutions for national defense.

The Navy League was well represented by Council President Bruce Copeland, VP Joe Nattans, Secretary Mark White, and board members Mike Houck and USCG CPO Matthew Hines.

Of particular interest was BlackSea's flagship product; The Global Autonomous Reconnaissance Craft (GARC) designed to enhance fleet capabilities with endurance and reliability. The company also provides comprehensive mission solutions, including logistics, training, and support for autonomous operations worldwide. Targeting military clients, BlackSea aims to shape the future of maritime autonomy through advanced technology and skilled personnel.

It was an altogether fascinating visit and we have an invitation to all members to arrange for other such events in the future.

## Once a Year

# Special Occasions



Telfer and Copeland



In the early spring members of the Baltimore Council were invited to the U.S. Coast Guard Yard at Curtis Bay to witness the annual review of the Ft. McHenry Division of the United States Naval and Navy League Sea Cadets. The unit has grown considerably in recent years thanks to an active recruitment program sponsored and support by this council and its membership. The unit inspection was conducted by LT J. Ellars who took his time to carefully study the deportment and check the knowledge of each of the dozens of youngsters on deck. As you can see from the photos they come in all sizes, colors, and ethnic backgrounds and were well prepared for the occasion.

Of special interest to us was the presentation of special Awards for Honorable Service to two of the unit's former commanding officers, both of whom deserve credit for the success of the Sea Cadet program in Baltimore. Lieutenant Commander Rolanda Franklin, who also served as regional director, was unable to attend in person. But Lieutenant Paula Telfer was there to receive her accolade from the hands of Council President Bruce Copeland who was accompanied by board members Mike Houck and Alan Walden.



Jose Trujillo Penamiento



Amir Ahmed



Naidelyn Trujillo Pensamiento

Nor was that the only youth-oriented event in the recent past. The Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps programs at two Baltimore County Schools were high on our agenda.

On 13 May there was a major turnout for awardees, their classmates, families and friends at Franklin High School in Owings Mills. The Marine Corps JROTC unit there is ramrodded by Sergeant Major Jason Kappen, USMC (Ret.) and his staff. The gymnasium was packed as the Baltimore Council joined with other well-wishers to salute those selected as the best and brightest. The Trujillo Pesamiento siblings, Cadets Lieutenant Naidelyn and Lance Corporal Jose, received



Banks, Walden, Leon Ramirez, Crespo Cortes, and Kirby

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Copeland, Seeman, and Kappen

special certificates for outstanding performance. Cadet Sergeant Amir Ahmed was awarded the JROTC certificate, medal, and bar, as best of the best. Baltimore Council President Bruce Copeland and JAG Molly Seeman joined Past President Alan Walden in presenting the awards.

Two days later the action moved to the auditorium at Dundalk High School where a very active and smartly turned out Navy JROTC unit is administered by Assistant Principal Sarah Kirby and under the tutelage of Commander Michael Cody and Quartermaster 1st Class James Banks, both USN (Ret.). There, a special citation was presented to Cadet Ensign Victoria Leon Ramirez for honorable service, and the JROTC medal, bar, and framed certificate for exemplary performance, to Cadet Lieutenant Commander Nathaly Crespo Cortes, outgoing commanding officer of the unit. Alan Walden again made the presentations in company with Council President Copeland and board member Ted Knach. The latter was there in dual capacity; as an officer of the council and chaplain for the event.

As has been stated many times in the past, youth programs are a significant element of the Navy League's mission and it always a pleasure to fulfill that obligation.

## Semper Paratus

# All Hands On Deck




Copeland with award

Most often, when the Baltimore Council is called to attend a special ceremony, it is to honor members of the Armed Forces who have earned recognition for outstanding performance. So it was at Curtis Bay during an All Hands event for the crew of the Surface Forces Logistics Center whose headquarters is at the Coast Guard Yard. But, on this occasion, the tables were turned as we were honored by them, the SFLC, for fulfilling the key element of our mission: Support of the Sea Services. Council President Bruce Copeland was there to accept an elegant plaque and, as you will see in the photo that accompanies this narrative, he was both surprised and delighted to accept it from Captain Andrew Pecora and Command Master Chief Dereo Foster, both of whom will be moving on and up to new assignments. We will miss them and the strong and agreeable relationship we enjoyed. Master Chief Foster is being reassigned and CAPT Pecora, his tour of duty completed, has been succeeded by CAPT Robert Mohr. While on the subject:




The Coast Guard is moving ahead with the creation of a New Special Missions Command to coordinate and oversee its specialized Maritime Security Response forces. The USCG commandant, Admiral Kevin Lunday, says the concept is based on the need to ensure that elite units are better trained, equipped, and organized to deal with the increasing challenges of counterterrorism, disaster response, and port security missions; not only in the United States but overseas as well. The new command is expected to be formally established on 1 October at its headquarters in Kearneysville, West Virginia.

## "Heave Ho, My Lads!"

# The Port that Built a City and State

A bright and mild Sunday, 17 May, brought almost a thousand visitors to Pier 13 on the Canton waterfront for the annual celebration of National Maritime Day. There, on the quarterdeck of NS Savannah, the only nuclear powered cargo/passenger vessel ever to show the flag, a lively and meaningful ceremony took place to honor the Helen Delich Bentley Port of Baltimore, the tens of thousands who work the docks and handle the cargo and, especially, the Merchant Mariners, the officers and crews who, for well over two centuries, have worked the ships that carry goods, services, and personnel, to and fro', in peace and war.

Baltimore Council board member Alan Walden was there to fill his role as perennial Master of Ceremony and the dais was filled with officials of the city, the state, the port administration and others who spoke of the vitality of the port and its people and what may be coming in the future. Of particular concern is the need to establish a permanent home for Savannah and the Liberty Ship John W. Brown; with leases about to expire it is an issue that requires vigorous attention and public support.

The most reverent moment came late in the ceremony as wreaths were dropped into the harbor in memory of those who gave their lives in service to the port and the nation. ⚓





Pride of Baltimore II






S.S. John W. Brown



Walden



Del. Kathy Szeliga with Walden



Fireboat Salute



## Never Forget

# They Gave Their All

The unofficial beginning of the summer season dawned foggy and wet as reverent Americans gathered to pay tribute to those who offered their last full measure to the nation and its citizens. Here, in Baltimore, it began on Sunday, 24 May, at the Veterans Memorial of Calvert Hall College High School in Towson. Brigadier General Joe Nattans, vice president of the Baltimore Council and a distinguished alumnus, was the principal speaker and was joined by past president Alan Walden both of whom presented remarks in honor of the men and women we salute on Memorial Day.



Calvert Hall Memorial


Nattans

The following day the action moved to Dulaney Valley Memorial Gardens in Timonium and its Circle of the Immortals for one of the largest and most elaborate of Memorial Day ceremonies in Maryland. There, many hundreds gathered to offer their dedication to our heroes of the past. As he has for the past 37 years Walden again appeared as Master of Ceremony in company with John and Jack Mitchell, owners of the site.


Nattans and Walden


John Palesr, CHC Class of '65


At Dulaney Valley Memorial Gardens

A multi-force color guard began the hours long ceremony with remarks presented by an array of public officials and representatives of organizations whose mission is in support of the families of those who were lost while in service to the United States. As Walden explained "There are three related holidays. Armed Forces Day for those who wear the uniform, Veterans Day for those who wore it, and Memorial Day for those who never got out of uniform." There followed the special tribute to "The Loved and Lost," 16 in all, including two who had been finally identified as having died in combat during WWII.


Walden as MC



The Loved and Lost plaques

Music, in abundance, was provided by the 229th Maryland National Guard Band, the Adjutant General's own, and the harmonies of the Sweet Adelines chorus. And, as always, this very special event closed with a 21-gun salute and the mournful tones of taps echoing in the distance.




Walden w/ Brig. Gen. Craig Hunter, Ass't Adjutant General, MD Nat'l Guard

# Coming Up

7/4 Independence Day (1776)*

8/4 U.S. Coast Guard Birthday (1915)

8/7 Purple Heart Day

8/14 V.J. DAY (1945)*

9/11 Patriot Day*

Rosh Hashannah begins at sundown

9/17 Citizenship Day

Constitution Day*

9/20 Yom Kippur begins at sundown

9/22 Autumnal Equinox (First day of fall)

*Hoist the Colors

# Just for Fun




# Remembering Our Mission

**The NAVY LEAGUE come 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 maritme nation and that a strong Navy is the most cost-effective means of ensuring peace.**

**PRIDE • SERVICE • PATRIOTISM**

# From the Editor

### SAIL 250

A full report on the Sail 250 celebration in Baltimore will appear in the Fall 2026 issue of All Ahead Full.

sail 250 MARYLAND & AIRSHOW BALTIMORE
JUNE 24 - JULY 1, 2026

### SAVE THE DATE:

The Annual Meeting and Banquet of the Baltimore Council-NLUS will take place on Wednesday, 2 December 2026. Further information will be forthcoming.

As always comments and observations regarding this publication are welcomed. They may be sent to the editor at arwmedia@aol.com and/or posted in the comments section on our website: 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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