



GREATER CHARLESTON COUNCIL

Navy League of the United States

Greater Charleston Council Navy League 2024 Annual Newsletter

MISSION

- *Enhance the morale of sea service personnel and their families.*
- *Educate the public and Congress on the importance of our Sea Services.*
- *Support youth programs that expose young people to the values of our Sea Services.*

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Commissioning of Greater Charleston as a Coast Guard Community by the Commandant of the Coast Guard;
- Establishing an Annual Namesake Visitation Program for the USS Charleston, the Council adopted ship.
- Supporting multiple Youth Programs including JROTC Units, Sea Cadets, Collegiate awards and the National STEM program with Cybersecurity Competition sponsorship

BOARD of DIRECTORS

The beginning of 2025 inducted new board of directors. The board members are Jim Offutt, President; Nick Wong, VP; Mike McAllister, Treasurer; Greg Blackburn, Secretary and membership Todd Ashworth, Carrie Hobbs, Jim Lyons, Manny Lovgren and Wes Smith.

COAST GUARD COMMUNITY

The Coast Guard Community program is a global service-wide program recognizing cities or regions that provide exceptional support to local Coast Guard members. Municipalities earn the "Coast Guard Community" honor by making special efforts acknowledging the professional work of the Coast Guard men and women assigned and by making they and their families feel welcomed at their "home away from home," supporting morale and mission accomplishments. Charleston is proud to have become the 33rd Coast Guard City recognized by Congress. The Greater Charleston Council partnered with Charleston County applying for the designation on behalf of the cities and counties that make up the greater Charleston area to be officially designated as a "Coast Guard Community." The Commandant of the Coast Guard approved the request.



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NLUS Charleston hosted a celebratory event held at the South Carolina Ports Authority's cruise ship terminal for 300 invited guests including the Commandant of the Coast Guard and five other top ranking Coast Guard Regional commanders. The Coast Guard Cutter STONE was moored to the pier and provided tours to the invitees and more than 2,000 members of the general public.

CONTINUING COAST GUARD COMMUNITY GROWTH AND IMPACT

The U.S. Coast Guard in Charleston contributes significantly to the current and future economy of the Lowcountry, both through its financial impact and its missions focusing on safety, security and prosperity of the Port of Charleston and our Nation. The Service has announced plans to grow its forces in the region and over the next decade Charleston is poised to become the Coast Guard's largest homeport on the East Coast and a top regional employer.

The Commandant also dedicated the area of the old Navy base to become part of the existing Coast Guard base and conducted a high-profile "groundbreaking" ceremony in conjunction with the Community announcement event. Charleston is a strategically important homeport, and the Coast Guard is committed to pursuing significant support infrastructure investments to make Charleston a center of gravity for Coast Guard operations both regionally and around the globe.

COAST GUARD CUTTER CALHOUN COMMISSIONING AND HOMEPORTING

The commissioning of the Coast Guard Cutter CALHOUN was a major event for the newly-integrated Community. Charleston Navy League welcomed the cutter, its crew and families to its new homeport prior to the commissioning. On March 3, 2024, the Commandant approved the plan to relocate the commissioning ceremony for the USCGC CALHOUN from Baltimore, MD to Charleston, SC.

The ceremony date remained Saturday, April 20th and the Commandant attended to commission the Cutter. The change in location of the CALHOUN's commissioning was due to unfortunate engineering casualty issues that has limited the ship's ability for transiting from where it currently was berthed in Charleston up to Baltimore. Having the ship remain in Charleston allowed for the much-needed repairs to bring the ship to operational standards in a timely manner.

This change necessitated the reorganization of the Baltimore and Washington DC-based commissioning committee to merge with the Charleston Navy League Council to continue to carry out the execution of the commissioning activities, to include sponsorship, dinner program, commissioning gifts, and the ceremony. NLUS Charleston immediately modified the arrangements.

Former MCPOCG Vince Patton remained the chair of the committee. Jim Offutt was appointed vice chair and Mike McAllister took over as the lead treasurer of the committee. Many council members provided support. The council hosted a luncheon led by Paul Wilbur for all the former MCPOCG's that were present. We contributed to the crew party and sponsored and organized the Chairman's dinner.



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FAMILY EVENTS

Other events included supporting the Greater Charleston Coast Guard Birthday Day event at Joint Base Charleston recreation center and providing a petting zoo for family entertainment. The council also provided support for a family oriented Halloween event, a 9/11 stair climb memorial event for the Coast Guard and other first responder organizations in the region, numerous large cutter “welcome home” events following lengthy deployments, and a coordination and information-sharing event for a variety of organizations that support the military services in the Charleston region.

LEADERSHIP SUPPORT

The council organized a Charleston Coast Guard Leadership meeting at which we discussed new ways to help local CG units with awards, ship arrivals, infrastructure advocacy and recurring events.



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NAVY COMMUNITY

NAVY BALL

Each year the Navy celebrates naval tradition with the Navy Ball worldwide, it is a formal event, keeping in the highest tradition of the navy, naval history and ceremony. This year, in addition to participating, the Greater Charleston Navy League utilized the Ball as its entry into the national membership recruitment program, organized by the headquarters of NLUS in Washington DC.

The Council worked with business sponsors and active-duty members of the local Naval Support Activity to arrange financial support for the Ball. As a result of Navy League assistance, the Navy Ball was one of the best funded in local history and was a tremendous success for the approximately 200 attendees. The enhanced sponsorships also set the stage for a spectacular 250th Navy Birthday Ball to be held in 2025.

NAVY NUCLEAR POWER TRAINING COMMAND

Council representatives attended the Celebration of the 75 years of Naval Nuclear Propulsion at the Naval Nuclear Power Training Unit (NNPTU) on the morning of Thursday May 30. Navy League Charleston helped with the arrangements and the presentation of a special plaque to commemorate the occasion. These efforts were well received by the command and the crowd of about 200 people who attended.

The Navy spent several billion dollars in building the state-of-the-art training facilities, amassing an array of facilities including a new \$200 M onshore simulator.

The council arranged for a plaque on which the Navy League congratulated the last three commanding officers on their accomplishments in transitioning the site set up from the two S5W plants of old SSBNs (ballistic submarines) to the two new 688 class, attack submarines.

The number two admiral in the Navy, Admiral Houston attended. He is the director of the Naval Nuclear Power Program at the Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA) at the Washington Naval Yard. His title is NAVSEA 08. He liked how everything went.

YOUTH PROGRAMS

The Council provided financial support for AFCEA's Cybersecurity Conference and Competition focusing on engaging high school and college aged students interested in careers in cybersecurity. The support in 2024 paved the way for more direct involvement in 2025.

The Council worked with local business sponsors to provide financial support for two Sea Cadet divisions in the coastal SC area, providing critical funding for uniforms, ceremonial items, travel, and other expenses to maintain high levels of professionalism and interest in the Sea Cadet programs.

Supporting the National goals for education and engagement of secondary and post-secondary education, the Council awarding outstanding members of 5 Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, JROTC programs throughout the Greater Charleston area with the National President Teddy Roosevelt Excellence Award.



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At the Collegiate level, the Council presented ceremonial uniform swords to leading Navy and Marine Corps ROTC graduates of the Citadel, South Carolina's military college. "Top ROTC cadets were recognized at the Citadel on 28 March 2024. A Navy League Board of Director member presented the ***Navy League Honors Award***. The award is presented to the top two academic performers of the personnel within the enlisted commissioning programs at the NROTC department, one Navy and one Marine Corps.

Also, the Navy League participated in the **Annual Awards Convocation** at the South Carolina Corps of Cadets on 4 May, 2024 inside McAllister Field House on the Citadel campus. The award is entitled ***CNO Distinguished Midshipman Graduate*** and is presented to the NROTC Midshipman who demonstrated the highest standards of leadership, scholarship and military performance. The Charleston Chapter purchases two officer swords every year which are then presented to the top Navy and top Marine Corps midshipmen."

MILITARY COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

Council representatives attended The Palmetto Military Support Group's Military Affaire of Charleston, an annual black-tie dinner honoring and celebrating our military community. The Military Affaire of Charleston was held February 8, 2024, at the Trident Technical College Conference Center on the Mary Thornley Campus in North Charleston. The purpose of the event is for community and business leaders to thank the men and women of Charleston's military community for their service to our nation and for all they do for our community. Proceeds from this event were distributed to the military leadership in attendance in the form of gift cards that they can take back to their units/squadrons for morale or to present to service members for outstanding performance.

Organized a coordination and information-sharing event involving a variety of non-profit and governmental organizations that support the military and veterans. The meeting was supported by Pinnacle at their Charleston office and attended by senior military leaders so that they could provide feedback on the value and impact of supporting organizations.