



Casco Bay Council Navy League of the United States

Summer Newsletter

July 2026

To our Members and Friends of the Casco Bay Council –

First of all – Happy 250th Birthday to us all! We hope that you'll be able to celebrate this significant milestone in our nation's history with friends and family in a meaningful way. This "experiment in democracy" has its flaws, but continues to be the model that the rest of the world would like to emulate. And as a member of the Casco Bay Council of the Navy League of the United States, you are helping to support those serving our country as part of the Coast Guard, Navy, Marine Corps, and US-flagged Merchant Marine, keeping our country safe and strong every day.

We would like to keep you informed about what your Council is up to, and how you can help!

The current Board to the Casco Bay Council of the Navy League of the United States is comprised of the following:

President – Linda Grotton

Secretary/Treasurer – Doug Thacker

Membership – Attapol Sookma, CDR, USN (RET)

Legislative Affairs and Youth Programs – Rusty Robertson CDR, USN (RET)

Social Media – Rod Hooper CWO5, USN (RET)

The Board would like to wish "Fair Winds and Following Seas" to Jerry and Laurie Zinni as they leave Maine for Virginia to be closer to family. Jerry has served as this Council's Vice President for many years, and was also our main conduit to the Navy at SupShip Bath. Laurie worked closely on Youth Program initiatives and was the catalyst behind much of the festivities at our annual Navy Ball. We wish them all the best on their new adventures.

We have vacancies at several positions, and we would encourage and appreciate anyone wanting to help to contact the Board through our website, www.navyleaguemaine.org.

Here is some of what your Council has been doing, along with some upcoming items:

Navy Ball

The 2026 Maine Navy Ball will be held 24 October, and we will once again be at the St. John's Community Center in Brunswick. The Planning Committee has been working hard to ensure that this event will be as special as those in years past. **Cook's Lobster and Ale House** will be creating another wonderful menu, and the **Volunteer Jazz Band** has agreed to return to provide the music. We are pleased to announce that retired Commander Shelby Nikitin will be our Guest Speaker. CDR Nikitin had an interesting Naval career, highlighted by her tour as Commanding Officer of USS Thomas Hudner, DDG-116, in which her crew engaged and repulsed multiple threats during a deployment in the Red Sea as part of the Gerald R. Ford Carrier Strike Group.



Watch for further information and please plan to attend this year's Navy Ball – it promises to be another wonderful event.

Meet-and-Greet

Back on 15 May, the Casco Bay Council held a Meet-and-Greet at Flight Deck Brewery. We provided a coupon for members to select one of the many great beers on tap, plus we provided delicious pizza. The aim was to try and get old and new members out, socialize, and develop relationships amongst our broad and varied membership. Although lightly attended, those that came out had a very good time and we hope to have another social event in the future.

USS Augusta

The Casco Bay Council continues to support the USS Augusta, LCS-34. We provided critical support to her 30 September 2023 commissioning in Eastport,

Maine, and since have helped host visits to Maine by members of her San Diego-based crew. We are currently coordinating an upcoming visit by CDR Zachary Smith, CO of LCS-34, Command Senior Chief Christopher Ruff, and other members of the Augusta crew, allowing them to get better acquainted with their namesake city and the State of Maine. In addition to official visits with city officials, the crew will visit Acadia National Park and be hosted by Council President Linda Grotton at a lobster bake in Round Pond.



USS Maine

Your Council recently made official our adoption of the USS Maine, SSBN741, in partnership with the Council in Washington State. The submarine is based at Naval Base Kitsap in Bangor, Washington, and we have supported crew and family activities such as pre- and post-deployment parties. She was built by General Dynamics Electric Boat, and commissioned on 29 July 1995, and she maintains a very active deployment schedule utilizing a two-crew rotation to maximize her time at sea.

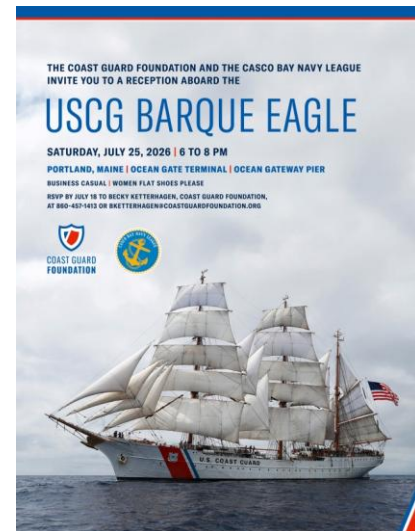
US Coast Guard

The USCGC Eagle is planning to make a port call in Portland this July as part of America's 250th Birthday celebration, and we are co-sponsoring a reception along with the Coast Guard Foundation to welcome them! Information regarding the reception was sent out to members in the Maine/NH area at the end of May. The reception will be held Saturday, July 25th from 6-8pm aboard the Eagle at the Ocean Gateway Pier in Portland. The event is business casual. Women should wear flat shoes. RSVP is required by July 18th. Please contact Becky Ketterhagen of the Coast Guard Foundation.

bketterhagen@coastguardfoundation.org

The Casco Bay Council also helps the Coast Guard recognize their best and brightest by sponsoring a dinner honoring Sector Northern New England's Sailor of the Year and Junior Officer of the Year. As summer is the Sector's most active season, this dinner is usually held in the Fall.

Additionally, through this Council's Stickney Scholarship, we are working on ways to help defray the costs of continuing education for junior Coast Guard members and their families. Awarding of such funds has encountered some "hurdles" from the USCG Office of the Judge Advocate, but along with the senior leadership of Sector Northern New England, we are looking at various work-arounds.



Military Appreciation Day at the Portland Sea Dogs

Working closely with the Portland Sea Dog's organization, the Casco Bay Council has again purchased tickets for service members and their families to attend the game on Sunday, 5 July against the Pittsburg Pirates affiliate Altoona Curve. It is Military Appreciation Day and we want to show those who wear the uniform of their country – and their families – that they are truly appreciated and deserve a day at the ballpark courtesy of the Navy League.

Youth Programs

In our area, we support two sea service-related youth programs: the US Naval Sea Cadets and the Navy Junior ROTC. The Sea Cadets meet at the Brunswick Naval Aviation Museum and at Coast Guard Base South Portland, making good use of the facilities and personnel at each. We also work closely with the NJROTC unit at Massabesic High School, which accepts students from several area schools. Each year this Council awards the Navy League's Theodore Roosevelt Award to a NJROTC student that has shown great commitment and leadership within the program, and this year we presented that award to Cadet Leelou Lord. The presentation was made during the unit's end-of-year awards program.

Members of both youth groups participated in our Navy Ball as parking security, greeters and color guard.

And finally . . .

Your membership in the Navy League of the United States is what allows us to do what we can for the service members and their families in our area. By renewing your membership, participating and contributing at our annual Navy Ball, and being engaged in activities make this happen. The Casco Bay Council is active in many areas and our support of the Sea Services here in Maine is important, and we could use your help and your input. Positions on the Board are open as well as opportunities to serve on specific committees. We hope to have a chance to meet more of our members at events coming up in 2026, so check the website (navyleaguemaine.org) or the [Facebook](#) page routinely!

Not a member of the Navy League or the Casco Bay Council, but would like to join?

JOIN

Casco Bay Navy League | [41 Cove Road](#) | [Readfield, ME 04355 US](#)

