



# ALL AHEAD FULL

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

SPRING 2021



## FROM THE BRIDGE

Greetings, Mates,

I hope you are sailing on calm seas and have adjusted to the winds of change that have altered our course.

Although it appears the onslaught of the Covid-19 Pandemic is being brought under control we still have a way to go. But our mission remains, as always, All Ahead Full. We continue to maintain and honor our commitment to sponsor and support the Sea Cadets, JROTC programs, and the Navy and Coast Guard vessels, installations, units and personnel who are our principal concern.

Our attempt to “ZOOM: board meetings, including the annual meeting in December is proceeding apace thanks to the efforts of board members Chris Costello and Fr. John Novicki. We also urge you to visit our web site at [www.navyleaguebaltimore.org](http://www.navyleaguebaltimore.org) and a newly launched Facebook page in which our activities are well documented.

There also exists the strong possibility of another major U.S. Navy event in Baltimore in 2022 about which you will learn more in future issues. This event will require the efforts of not only this council, but also volunteers and sponsors. Baltimore, it seems, has risen very high on the Navy’s list of places to make things happen. Rightly so, of course. This is and has always been a seafaring city that provides an outstanding venue, whatever the occasion. And all of us, the city, the great state of Maryland, and the Baltimore Council stand ready to demonstrate our pledge of support to the sea services whenever the occasion arises.

In closing, I wish you all a renewed blossoming of joy and hope during this season of renewal. Don’t forget to save some of your time for “Fun in ’21.” And always remember, “Freedom isn’t Free.” Down through the centuries it has been bought and paid for by the men and women of the Armed Forces of the United States. God bless all of us, and our nation. ⚓

Joe  
BG Arthur J. Nattans, USA (ret)  
President & Life Member

## Moving Up

# The Promotion Ceremony



On a clear and cold January day the Sea Cadets were standing tall at Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine as two of their company advanced in rank and responsibility. Julia Knisley was promoted to Chief Petty Officer from her previous position as Leading Petty Officer. She, therefore, became Chief of Training and Indoctrination. PO2 Braedon Moyer moved up a notch to PO1 and accepted the post of Leading Petty Officer.



The event was lightly attended because of the constraints imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic. Nevertheless it was a proud moment for the cadets, their families and friends. LTJG Andrea Thomas, CO of the Fort McHenry Division/Training Ship Constellation was in charge of the event. Instructor Al Grice, Division Officer, was there to witness the ceremony. ⚓



This may be the photo of year thus far: The Baltimore Clipper (tops'l schooner) Pride of Baltimore II underway under all plain sail with the twin spans of the four mile long (Gov. William Preston Lane Memorial) Bay Bridge in the background. PoB II, Maryland’s sailing ambassador of good will, is a near-perfect replica of the War of 1812 commerce raider “Chasseur” that wrought havoc upon Great Britain’s merchant fleet during our 2nd War of Independence. She could outrun any vessel she couldn’t outfight. The bridge is, by the way, still one of the longest over water spans in the world.

## Welcome Aboard

# A Home Town Boy

At our March board meeting we were pleased to have as our guest CAPT Albert “Al” Seeman, now the commanding officer of the Navy Operational Support Center (NOSC) in Baltimore; also home to the Ft. McHenry Division and Training Ship Constellation units of the Sea Cadets. Al is a native Baltimorean and son of a Vietnam combat veteran. He is also both a “ring knocker” and a ship driver.

A 1997 graduate of the Naval Academy in 1997 his first sea duty assignment was Main Propulsion Assistant in USS Crommelon (FFG-37) on board which he completed deployments to the 5th Fleet and Eastern Pacific Area of Operations in support of United Nations Council resolutions and counter narcotic missions for Joint Interagency Task Force West. His follow on sea tour was as the Executive Officer in USS Monsoon (PC-4) where he was deployed two more times conducting



Council Pres. Nattans & CAPT Seeman

counter narcotic operations and special warfare operations for Naval Special Warfare Unit Four. Upon completion of his initial sea tours, CAPT Seeman attended the Naval Post Graduate School in Monterey, CA where he earned a Master of Science degree in Information Systems Management and a Master of Arts

degree from the Naval War College in National Security and Strategic Studies. Returning to sea for his Department Head tours, he was assigned as the Chief Engineer in USS Kauffman (FFG-58) and as Operations Officer (N3), and later as Chief Staff Officer, for Commander, Destroyer Squadron 28. He once again deployed twice to 5th fleet supporting Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom. Al also did a tour in Guantanamo Bay in the Office for the Administrative Review for Detainees and Enemy Combatants.

Al’s personal awards include the Meritorious Service Medal (4 awards), Joint Commendation Medal, Navy Commendation Medal (2 awards), Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal as well as various other unit awards and citations.

Al is a true believer in the mission of the Navy League and we are delighted to have him with us. ⚓

## Angels High!

# Look! Up in the sky!



By Alan Walden

It was 75 years ago that they flew for the first time. And since then The Blue Angels have been dazzling audiences nationwide and around the world with their amazing aerobatic skills. An old friend and former colleague, Don Ayers, a wonder with a

camera, encouraged me to write this when he took the photos while watching the Angels, their practice wonders to perform, over Southern California. The unit is the second oldest formal aerobatic team (under the same name) in the world; after the French Patrouille de France formed in 1931. Since the unit was created back in 1946 they have performed for

more than half a billion people including tens of thousands at major events here in Baltimore.

The Blue Angels’ Boeing F/A-18E Super Hornets are currently flown by five Navy demonstration

Angels High!  
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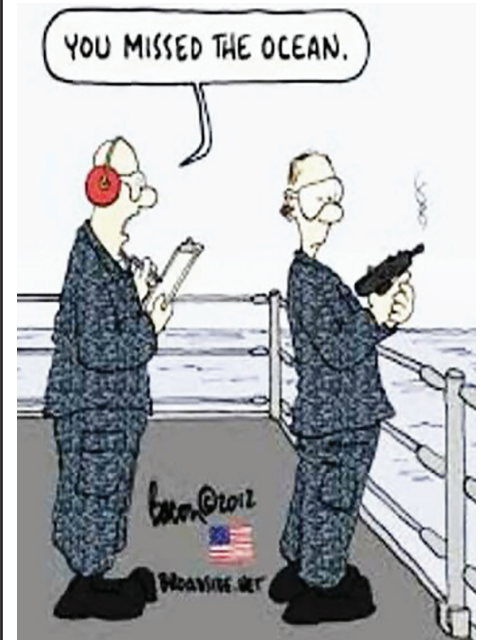
pilots and one Marine Corps demonstration pilot. Most of their show alternates between the Diamond Formation and maneuvers performed by the solos. The Diamond, in tight configuration and usually at lower speeds (400 mph), demonstrates maneuvers such as formation loops, rolls, and transitions from one formation to another. The solos showcase the high performance capabilities of their individual aircraft through the execution of high-speed passes, slow passes, fast rolls, slow rolls, and very tight turns. The highest speed flown during an air show is 700 mph (just under Mach 1) and the lowest speed, is 126 mph. The show's narrator flies Blue Angel 7, a two-seat F/A-18F Hornet, to show sites. The Blues use this jet for backup, and to give demonstration rides to VIP civilians. Usually, two back seats at each show are available; one goes to a member of the press, and the other to the "Key Influencer." (Often a member congress or someone else of celebrity).



Their mission? "To showcase the pride and professionalism of the United States Navy and Marine Corps by inspiring a culture of excellence and service to country through flight demonstrations and community outreach." And that they have done brilliantly for the past three-quarters of a century.

Happy 75th Anniversary to the Blue Angels!  
And thanks, again, to Don Ayres. ⚓

## Just for Fun



## Read On

# Worth The Time

By Alan Walden

Back to the bookshelves we go for two non-fiction selections that will immerse the reader in both World Wars.

At the risk of being accused of sexism I found it interesting that the authors of what I regard as the two definitive accounts of what led to the horror of World War I were both written by women: Barbara Tuchman's highly acclaimed "The Guns of August" and Margaret MacMillan's more recent "The War That Ended Peace." It is the latter that is the focus here; much of it devoted to the great naval race triggered by the advent of the Dreadnought era when the all big-gun battleship ruled the seas.

MacMillan is a superb historian and storyteller. But this is heavy going because of the need to keep track of dozens of principal players in this seminal drama of the early 20th Century. Impeccably researched it takes the reader into the palaces and parliaments of all the major powers of their time. And, as former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright observes, "tells the story of how intelligent, well-meaning leaders guided their nations into catastrophe" and "warns of the dangers that arise when we fail to anticipate the

consequences of our actions." After years of peace no one really wanted war; certainly not a world war. But no one, however well meaning, seemed able or, ultimately, willing to prevent it.



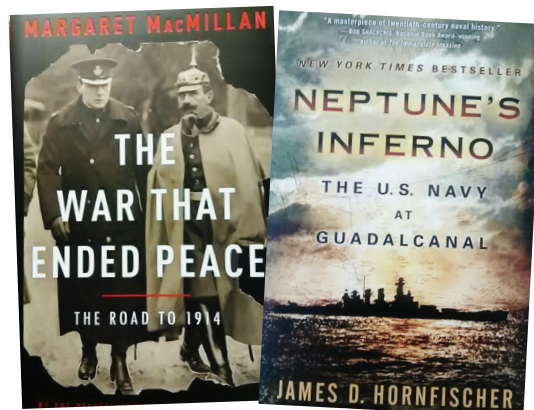
We turn now to the early days of World War II and "Neptune's Inferno," James D. Hornfischer's masterful account of the U. S. Navy and Marine Corps at Guadalcanal. Despite our stunning victory over the Japanese at Midway in June of 1942 the United States was still counterpunching after having been caught flat-footed at Pearl Harbor. Our biggest worry was the enemy's attempt to control the Solomon Islands and to use them as a base for the invasion of Australia. And so, on 7 August of '42, 82 ships manned by 42,000 sailors and carrying 16,000 marines arrived at what became Neptune's Inferno. Month after gruesome month we lost. And we kept losing - until we won. The initial landings were relatively easy. But the

fighting from then on was murderously hard as General Alexander Vandergrift's marines held on by their fingernails.

At sea, we were overmatched in every department. The Japanese had more and bigger ships, better night optics, better torpedoes and, at the outset at least, better leadership. The notorious Tokyo Express kept coming down The Slot at the end of which Ironbottom

Sound earned its reputation day after bloody day. But, in the end, the Japanese were in full retreat, Australia was safe. Though still outnumbered and outgunned the United States Navy

and Marine Corps had gained the initiative and were on the offensive. Heroes and those of lesser light abound in Hornfischer's brilliant account of Neptune's Inferno. I couldn't put it down and, I daresay, neither will you. ⚓



# Short Takes



The Navy has announced plans to install hypersonic missiles on its troublesome Zumwalt class destroyers now that Congress approved a study of the issue in the 2021 budget. The Zumwalts have been beset by propulsion and armament problems from the outset. Even now the lead vessel of the class, USS Zumwalt (DDG-1000), commissioned in Baltimore in 2016, has yet to be deployed. Nor is that the only controversy surrounding the ships. While military experts feel hypersonic warheads, designed to fly at speeds above Mach-5 (Five times the speed of sound) are at the cutting edge of technology some independent experts sharply disagree. David Wright, a physicist at MIT and author of a new analysis says the highly touted superweapon is “a mirage,” more fancy than fact.



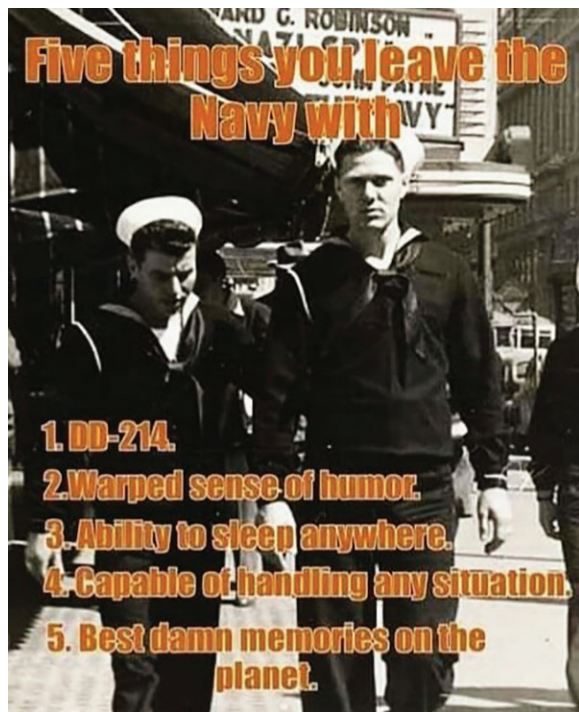
The Navy has decided to hold a series of daylong stand-downs to address extremist ideologies that leaders say have infiltrated the military ranks. Sailors and non-uniformed employees will be required to reaffirm the oath they took when they signed up or hired on. Furthermore they will be invited, during virtual or in-person learning sessions that must be held by 6 April, to discuss what actions betray that oath. According to VADM John Nowell, Chief of Naval Personnel, the stand-downs will focus on the “damaging effects of extremism” and how to eliminate it. Nowell wrote, “As public servants, we took an oath to the Constitution and we will not tolerate those who participate in actions that go against the fundamental principles of the oath we share, particularly actions associated with extremist or dissident ideologies”



VADM John Nowell Jr.



Introducing the new Navy League of the United States Facebook Group! Our parent organization has created an online community where our members from around the globe can connect and share with each other the many ways they support the sea services. Just follow this link to sign-up and join: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/754492162035273>. Members can also search “Navy League of the United States” in the Facebook search bar and find the group that way. The group is public so anyone can find it, but admission is private, so members will need to request to join the group. To request access, you must provide your name, member ID number and like the Navy League Facebook page. Any request received with incomplete answers will be declined. If you have any questions, contact [membership@navyleague.org](mailto:membership@navyleague.org).



**NATIONAL**

## AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH

Established in 1926 as Negro History Week, President Gerald R. Ford expanded the celebration in 1976 to include the entire month of February. This year, Navy commands are encouraged to coordinate and reflect on the theme: "A Century of Black Life, History, and Culture."

**AFRICAN-AMERICAN SAILORS**

fought on every kind of Union warship, accounting for **10 TO 20%** of each ship's crew

**8 MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENTS**

**CIVIL WAR 1861 - 1865**

**MAR 1861** 12 prior-enlisted black servicemen were commissioned as ensigns

**MAR 1862** 13<sup>th</sup> was made a warrant officer

**1<sup>ST</sup>** group of black servicemen to complete officer training in the Navy and led the way for future African-Americans.

**BY THE END OF THE WAR** 64 African-Americans had become officers in the Navy

**THE GOLDEN THIRTEEN**

**WORLD WAR II 1939 - 1945**

**DORIS MILLER**

**1942** The **1<sup>ST</sup>** African American to receive the **Navy Cross**

To the act of bravery during Pearl Harbor (December 7, 1941)

**EDNA YOUNG**

**1948** The **FIRST** black woman to become a petty officer

**WESLEY A. BROWN**

**1949** The **FIRST** black man to graduate the **UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY**

**CLASS OF 1949**

**ADMIRAL J. PAUL REASON**

**1942** The **1<sup>ST</sup>** black Naval officer to receive **4 Stars**

**Atlantic Fleet**

**CARL BRASHEAR**

**1949** The **FIRST** African American to become a **U.S. Navy Master Diver**

**DECEMBER 1996**

**THE FIRST** African American to command a **NAVY SHIP** (USS Paulson, *R. Chevalier* (DD-717))

**NAVY WARESHIP** (USS Paulson) (DD-717)

**NAVY WARESHIP UNDER**

**NAVY WARESHIP COMMANDER** (USS Paulson) (DD-717)

**NAVY WARESHIP COMMANDER** (USS Paulson) (DD-717)

**HONORARY NAVY FLEET** (Third Fleet)

**VICE ADMIRAL SAMUEL GRAVELY JR.**

**34 YEARS OF SERVICE (1965 - 1999)**

**1970**

**ADMIRAL MICHELLE HOWARD**

**THE FIRST** African American woman

to command a U.S. Navy ship

to be promoted to two-star and three-star admiral

to serve as Vice Chief of Naval Operations

to be a four-star general

**1982 - PRESENT**

**AFRICAN AMERICANS** continue to serve with distinction

now comprising **17%** of our active duty Navy total force end-strength

**PRESENT DAY**

ORGANIZATIONS, INSTALLATIONS, AND VESSELS SPONSORED  
AND OTHERWISE SUPPORTED BY THE BALTIMORE COUNCIL-NLUS



# Coming Up

- 4/2 Good Friday
- 4/4 Easter Sunday
- 4/8 Holocaust Remembrance Day
- 4/12 Ramadan begins at sundown
- 5/6 National Day of Prayer
- 5/10 Mothers' Day
- 5/31 Memorial Day (Colors at half-staff until midday, full hoist thereafter)
- 6/6 D-Day (1944)
- 6/14 Flag Day (Show the Colors)
- 6/20 Fathers' Day
- 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**



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