



ALL AHEAD FULL

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

FALL 2025



FROM THE BRIDGE

Greetings, shipmates and friends,

The Summer of 2025 has come and gone all too quickly, but your board has been hard at work throughout as a result of which it's time to mark your calendars for two special events.

1. Michael Houck (Membership Chair) has put in place a social gathering for members to meet and greet, share their common interests, learn more about us, and discuss how we may better serve our membership. All are invited to join us from **6:00 to 8:00 p.m. on Tuesday, 14 October**, at **Ryleigh's Oyster**, 4 W Padonia Road, Cockeysville, MD.

2. Plans are well underway for our **ANNUAL DINNER & BANQUET** on **Wednesday, December 3, 2025** at The **Center Club**, 100 Light Street, Baltimore (with reserved on-site parking). Join us for an enjoyable and exciting program. More specific details will follow in a mailing to all members.

Nor is that all that's kept us occupied. The Baltimore Council was well represented at the Change of Command at the Curtis Bay Coast Guard Yard on 13 June. (Details to follow later in this issue) And, on 26 July, the council presented two special Awards of Achievement to those selected as USCG Enlisted Personnel of Quarter (EPOQ).

The 2026 **Fly 250** event, celebrating the nation's 250th anniversary, remains in

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Marking the Spot The Annual Ceremony



By Alan Walden

It happens every year. A Coast Guard buoy tender sets sail from her berth at Curtis Bay and carries a special cargo to the precise point in Baltimore Harbor where the words to the Star-Spangled Banner were written during our second War of Independence from Great Britain. Upon arrival, a special channel marker is set in place, there to remain throughout the summer months as a reminder of our early history as a nation and the perils it faced. On 18 June it was USCGC William Tate (WLM-560), under the command of Lieutenant Cory H. Sonnega, that fulfilled the mission.

As the Korean War is largely and unfortunately overlooked by too many Americans, so the war of 1812-14 is largely ignored, even by historians. But not here in



Baltimore. With appropriate ceremony the buoy, its stars and stripes gleaming, was lifted from its cradle on the well deck and slowly and reverently lowered over the starboard side as the crew rendered a hand salute and the Anthem was played and sung.

Officers and friends of the Baltimore Council are always there, as are other invited guests representing the Armed Forces, law enforcement, and civilian government agencies. They were out in force this June to witness the event and hear, from a National Park Service ranger and historian, about what happened, and why we had to fight our old enemy a second time in order to be...

"Blest with vict'ry and peace, may the Heav'n rescued land, praise the Power that hath made and preserved us a nation!" ⚓

Fair Winds

New at the Helm



Obermeier, Grable, Tharp



Copeland, Tharp, Nattans



Nattans, Obermeier, Copeland

As most officers of the Armed Forces can attest, nothing is forever. Until retirement there are always new assignments, new challenges, new responsibilities. So it was in June at the Coast Guard Yard, Curtis Bay in Baltimore, in the change of command during which CAPT David J. Obermeier, his tour of duty completed, was relieved by CAPT Emily L. Tharp who became the 45th commanding officer of the only Coast Guard Yard in the United States. A 2001 graduate of the USCG Academy, Captain Tharp has enjoyed a highly successful career. Prior to her new posting she completed graduate studies at the Eisenhower School for National Security and Resource Strategy with a focus on maritime affairs.

The full-dress ceremony, long in tradition, was conducted by Rear Admiral Amy B. Grable, Assistant Commandant for Engineer and Logistics; in effect the Coast Guard's "Chief Engineer." RDML Grable is

responsible for all civil, aeronautical, naval, and industrial engineering, including logistics for the service's 25,000 facilities, 2,100 cutters and boats, and 200 aircraft. Like his successor, the departing CAPT Obermeier has a record of outstanding service. Most recently, The American Society of Naval Engineers recognized CAPT Obermeier's "extraordinary contributions to the maritime profession, to the United States Coast Guard, and to the Nation" through the presentation of the 2024 Gold Medal Award for Engineering.

Invited to witness the ceremony and offer our congratulations were the two senior officers of the Baltimore Council: President Bruce Copeland and Vice President Joe Nattans. We, of the Navy League, are pleased and proud to welcome CAPT Tharp to her new command and offer, to CAPT Obermeier, our sincerest wishes for "Fair Winds and Following Seas." ⚓

From the Bridge Continued from page 1

development. It is our intention to play a major role in this seminal event.

Finally, a note about the Merchant Marine, a key component of our mission to support the sea services. As a significant center of maritime commerce Baltimore should be heavily involved in the revival of ship building and the future maritime support facilities. To be properly positioned in that effort, this council is discussing a commercial membership development program. We'll have more information regarding advanced planning as it becomes available. ⚓

Best regards to all,

*Bruce Copeland
President and Life Member*

The Next Generation

Never a Dull Moment

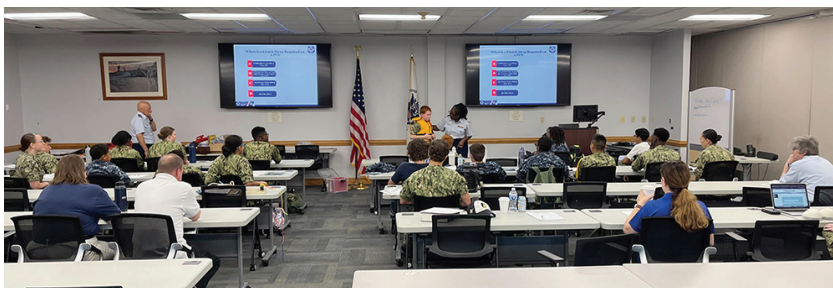
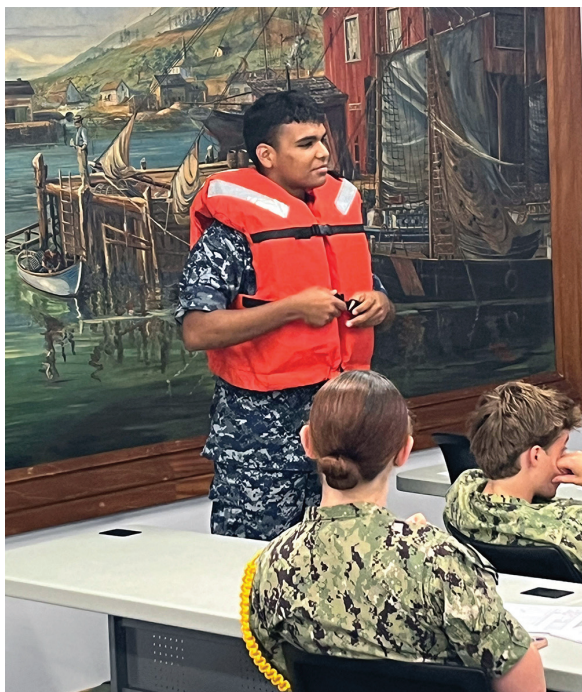
by ENS Claire Marie Filone

The Sea Cadets had a busy summer, with many new members of the corps attending their first training (Recruit Training or Navy League Orientation) and advanced training (including Medical, Field Operations, Master-at-Arms, Maritime Industrial Arts, and more) across the region and around the country!

As a Unit, the Fort McHenry Division participated in boating safety "Boat Maryland" training with the USCG, earning their MD boating certifications, completed drill weekends focused on drill movements as a Unit and Land Navigation, and participated in Fort McHenry's Defenders Day commemorating that special moment of War of 1812, the day on

which Francis Scott Key wrote the poem that became the lyrics of our National Anthem, the Star-Spangled Banner.

The local Sea Cadet Leadership also hosted the largest League Cadet-only training in June, offering NLO, Aviation, and Field Operations. The almost 100 Cadets were there, as was Baltimore Council President Bruce Copeland who conducted a seminar on the Navy League and its commitment to the corps of cadets, both the USNSCC (U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps) and the NLSC (Navy League Sea Cadet Corps). The Baltimore Council - NLUS regards, as one of the most significant elements of its mission, sponsorship and full support of youth programs. ⚓



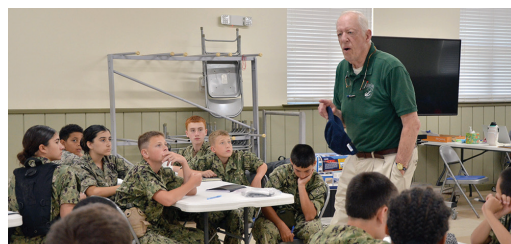
In the classroom



At Fort McHenry



Defenders Day



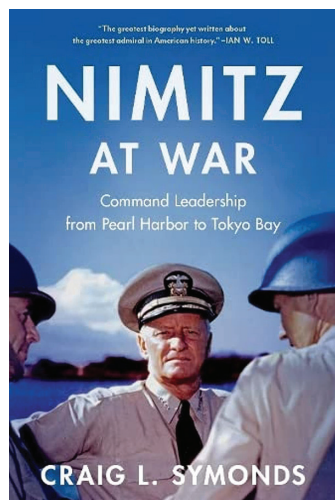
With Bruce Copeland

The Reading List

Take Your Pick

By Alan Walden

Having taken time this summer to dig into my growing pile of unread books I found one gem, and one disappointment. This is, mind you, a personal evaluation of what appears between the covers. You may feel otherwise, but here goes.

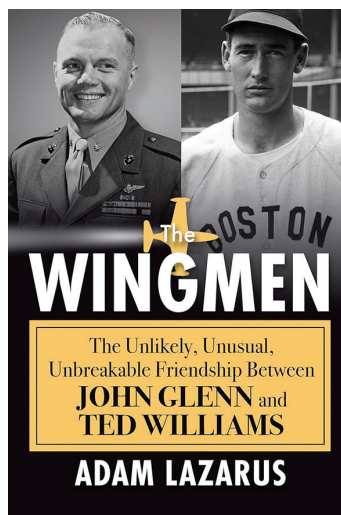


"Nimitz at War, Command Leadership from Pearl Harbor to Tokyo Bay" is Craig L. Symonds' dazzling biography of the man personally chosen by then President Franklin D. Roosevelt, to win World War II in the Pacific. If ever there were was the right man, in the right place, at the right time, it was Chester W. Nimitz.

Though lower in rank than many other Navy flag officers (even ADM Ernest J. King, Chief of Naval Operations, regarded him as a desk admiral) he proved to be precisely who was needed to, as FDR ordered in the wake of the December 7th calamity "Get out to Pearl Harbor and stay there until our ships sail into Tokyo Bay."

Symonds, a superb naval historian, tells the story of Nimitz's brilliance with a storyteller's brilliance of his own; the challenges of dealing with an array of often fractious subordinates and allies he had to cajole, handle, even threaten and, less often, implore to get the job done over millions of square miles of ocean, against a determined and resourceful enemy. The always cantankerous Marc Mitscher, the hot and cold running Frank Jack Fletcher, the headline grabbing "Bull" Halsey, the army's General Holland "Howlin' Mad" Smith, the French, the Dutch. And there was always Douglas MacArthur who endlessly insisted that he was first among peers in the Pacific. Nimitz had to spend an inordinate amount of time finessing himself out of that battle of wits.

As General Mike Hagee, 33rd Commandant of the Marine Corps, says "Nimitz's genius lay in



his ability to convince others they could do great things" So they did, and so they do in this 400+ page adventure story. For that's what it is; a page turning, heart stopping yarn of greatness under immense pressure. If you've already read it, you know what I mean. If you haven't, now's the time.



Far less to my liking was "The

Wingmen: The Unlikely, Unusual, Unbreakable Friendship between John Glenn and Ted Williams" by Adam Lazarus. For one thing the title is an exercise in hyperbole. Yes, the fighter pilot/astronaut/U.S. Senator, and the (arguably) greatest hitter in the history of baseball knew each other. They even flew several missions together in Korea; primarily bombing runs. But their "friendship" was mostly quite formal and long distance. There were years when they were not in contact at all. And unlike Symonds, Lazarus is a poor storyteller. His prose is stuffy, pedantic, and awkward. The pages, especially early on, are littered with too much information about people not central to the narrative. The first forty plus pages, for example, make no mention whatever of "Teddy Ballgame."

I read it from cover to cover. And though I learned a few things I hadn't known before, it was a chore. ⚓

"The leader who awaits perfection of plans, material, or training, will wait in vain, and in the end will yield the victory to him who employs the tools at hand with the greatest vigor."

— Craig L. Symonds

Just for Fun



"Where'd I learn to make coffee? Navy. Why?"

I Kidd You Not

“Shiver Me Timbers!”



By Alan Walden

Among the scores of Arleigh Burke Class destroyers in the United States Navy DDG-100 is a class by herself, so to speak. There's no secret technology involved, no special weaponry; looks just like all her sisters – except for one thing. She is the only U. S. surface warship authorized to display not only the Stars and Stripes, but also the Jolly Roger, the dreaded black banner of those long-gone days of the 17th and 18th centuries when the Spanish Main was a favored hunting ground for the seafaring miscreants of song and story. And like most bizarre things that happen inside the Navy, it starts with an honored tradition, one dating back to

World War II. All in fun, mind you.

By now you've probably figured out it must be the name. But USS Kidd is not named for William, the infamous buccaneer. Instead, it honors Rear Admiral Isaac C. Kidd, commander of Battleship Division One, who died aboard USS Arizona during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. The first American flag officer to fall in World War II. Posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor, he is still on board.

For obvious reasons RADM Kidd picked up the nickname “Cap” while attending the U.S. Naval Academy, a reference to the pirate who was captured and hanged in 1701. When



RADM Isaac Kidd

a Fletcher Class destroyer was named for Rear Admiral Kidd in 1943 its crew, with the blessing of his widow, immediately adopted the pirate theme. It was she, Inez Kidd, who convinced the Navy to formally bestow upon that first USS Kidd (DD-661), now a museum ship in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, permission to fly the pirate flag. And it wasn't long before the crew began calling themselves “the Pirates of the Pacific,” picking up downed naval aviators, and returning them to their carriers in exchange for a “ransom” of ice cream or other sought after treats.

And so it is for DDG-100: She not only flies the pirate flag when entering and leaving port but also underway between the East and West coasts and during multinational exercises. Furthermore, the skull and crossbones can be seen on the rear of the Kidd's gun mounts, on its internal doors and, I'm willing to bet, on a fair number of its hands.

To conclude: As has often been said “to err is human. But to ‘Aaarrrrrr’ is pirate.” Unfurl the Jolly Roger, and on to the next adventure – but only on USS Kidd. ⚓

Coming Up

- 10/13** Columbus Day*
Indigenous Peoples Day
- 10/14** Membership Gathering
- 10/27** Navy Day (1775)*
Also the birthday of Theodore Roosevelt
- 10/31** Halloween
- 11/2** Begin Standard Time
(All clocks and watches back one hour)
- 11/4** Election Day*
- 11/11** Veterans Day*
- 11/27** Thanksgiving
- 12/3** Baltimore Council Annual Meeting & Banquet
- 12/7** Pearl Harbor Day (1941)*
- 12/14** Hanukkah begins at sundown
- 12/21** Winter Solstice (First day of winter)
- 12/25** Christmas
- 12/26** First Day of Kwanzaa
- 12/31** New Year's Eve

* Show the colors



Executive Editor
Navy League-Baltimore Council
9 Hamill Road, Unit E
Baltimore, MD 21210-1751

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 and/or posted in the comments section on our web site: 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.