



ALL AHEAD FULL

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

SPRING 2026



FROM THE BRIDGE

Greetings, Shipmates,

We made it through the tough stuff. Now think of the visiting ships in June and the fun you can have offering help and advising visitors to Baltimore for Sail 250! As a liaison for Sail Baltimore, you would be the host, representing The Baltimore Council, and be present for receptions, shopping trips, and entertainment for visiting ship's crews. Sound exciting? Call or email Mike Houck (your Membership Chair) with questions and available slots. A more complete explanation of volunteerism appears later in this issue.

As your council grows with Community Affiliate Members, our opportunity for learning expands. Baltimore based MITAGS (Maritime Institute of Technology and Graduate Studies) is offering a visit to their Ship Simulator (the bridge of a 1000' cargo ship going through the Suez Canal!). Picture standing in a Dry Dock next to the propeller, rudder and bow thruster of a container ship. Or watching the Coast Guard Aids to Navigation Cutter James Rankin place a buoy precisely in a previously determined navigation position. Watch your email and ALL AHEAD FULL for announcements of social and educational get together opportunities.

We have much to do and invite all members of the council to become of it.

Best wishes. ⚓

*Bruce Copeland
President and Life Member*

Shifting Priorities Backing and Filling



USS Constellation

By Alan Walden

Last year we received word that the Navy was preparing to build a new class of frigates the lead vessel of which would bear a grand old name, especially here in Baltimore: Constellation. But times they are a'changing and the project has been downsized considerably. As Secretary of the Navy John Phelan put it, "We are reshaping how the Navy builds its fleet."

The good news is that, as of this writing, the two ships on which construction is in its infancy, Constellation (FFG-62) and Congress (FFG-63) will likely be completed. But, under terms worked out with Fincantieri Marinette Marine, the Wisconsin shipyard that has the contract, four others have been cancelled.

According to a senior official this decision is an element of the Navy's desire to build and deliver new ship classes faster. "A key factor," he



NS Savannah

said," is the need to grow the fleet faster to meet tomorrow's threats." Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth made the same point, as follows, in his "Arsenal of Freedom" speech last November. "Speed to delivery is now our organizing principle. The sense of urgency has slipped too much, and when you look at what we face, we have to recapture it."

Following the cut to the Constellation program,

Shifting Priorities Continued from page 1

Marinette's current order book already included the last Freedom-class Littoral Combat Ship and four Multi-Mission Surface Combatants, for the Royal Saudi Navy, based on the Freedom design.

The Navy awarded the contract to build what would become the Constellation Class to Marinette in 2020 following about six years of deliberation, and based the program on an existing European design; the FREMM multi-mission frigate already among the latest warships of the French and Italian navies. But once the design work began major change had to be made in order to meet stricter U.S. survivability standards. The delays resulted in an estimated three-year setback in the delivery of the first ship from 2026 to 2029 at a cost of about \$1.5 billion; which led Nickolas Guertin, the Navy's former head acquisition executive, to quip, "Sometimes, you're just better off designing a new ship; turns out modifying someone else's design is a lot harder than it seems."



Nor is that all of the somewhat unsettling news to report.

There are fairly strong indications that the National Maritime Day ceremony, scheduled for Sunday morning, May 17th, on board the Nuclear Ship Savannah, will be the last. It seems that too little, if any, effort has been expended to keep the ship in Baltimore. And, adding insult to possible injury, there has been considerable difficulty in finding a permanent



SS John W. Brown



Pride of Baltimore II



USS Gettysburg (CG-64)

home here in Charm City for both the WWII era Liberty Ship John W. Brown and the topsail schooner Pride of Baltimore II, replica of the Chasseur, a privateer and War of 1812 commerce raider, and Maryland's seagoing ambassador. While none of the above is yet final, the implications are ominous.



To conclude on the bright side, the Navy has decided to hang on to some of its heaviest

surface warships awhile longer. Three of the TiCos (Ticonderoga Class cruisers) will remain with the fleet at least through 2029. USS Gettysburg (CG-64), USS Chosin (CG-65) and USS Cape St. George (CG-71). The brass hats feel that even though the Arleigh Burke Class destroyers have more modern electronics, the cruisers still offer a stronger and more desirable measure of command and control, and countermeasures in the event of a live fire engagement with the enemy. ⚓

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

Urgent to All Members of the Baltimore Council

As part of the nation's celebration of its 250th birthday dozens of ships will gather in Baltimore this spring to highlight the occasion. From June 24th to July 1st dozens of modern warships, and tall ships from around the world, will be here and we need your help to bid welcome to them and their crews; to demonstrate the hospitality for which this great seafaring port is duly noted.



If you are willing to commit the time and effort to this project,

to be assigned to a specific vessel for a day, or days, please contact Board Member Mike Houck at michaelpaulhouck@gmail.com and/or Nan Nawrocki, executive director of Sail Baltimore, at nan@sailbaltimore.org.



Remember: this appeal is directed to all members of this council. We hope to hear from you. ⚓

Not Just Kid Stuff Honors Presented



Whenever and wherever they are called upon to render service at a patriot event you can depend on the Sea Cadets of the Ft. McHenry/ Frigate Constellation Division, sponsored and supported by the Baltimore Council of the Navy League, to be front and center. As in years past



that was the case during the Wreaths Across America event at Dulaney Valley Memorial Gardens in Timonium. There, at the approach of the holidays in December, they turned out in force at the magnificent Circle of Heroes created by the owners to salute those who gave



their lives in service to the nation.

Dressed in a panoply of the uniforms they wear on various occasions, the young men and women of the United States Naval and Navy League Corps of Cadets, some of whom will become the next generation of seagoing guardians of the republic, placed floral wreaths at the gravesites and monuments. It was a solemn and moving demonstration of the patriotic spirit imbued in the cadets by their officers, instructors and the active service personnel who assist with the training. Their discipline and performance was, and is, bedrock solid, as is their commitment to the corps and what it represents.

They made us proud. They always do. [🔗](#)

New Faces of 2026 The Commandant

A full-dress ceremony was held on 15 January as Admiral Kevin E. Lunday took the oath of office as the 28th Commandant of the United States Coast Guard. In his remarks ADM Lunday made clear his intentions for the next two years as he reaffirmed the USCG's enduring role as a vital instrument of national power responsible for "controlling, securing and defending the U.S. border and maritime approaches."



Admiral Kevin Lunday

"Every day," he said, "Coast Guard men and women carry out missions that protect our homes, save lives, and protect national security." And, in closing he added, "I am humbled to serve alongside them while ensuring they have what they need to succeed, today and in the future."

The Baltimore Council joins other well-wishers in the timeless toast: "May success follow his flag." [🔗](#)

Just for Fun



Close, But No Cigar We're Number 11

The Port of Baltimore is not quite where Jonathan Daniels, Executive Director of the Maryland Port Administration, hoped it would be this year.

According to Daniels, before the Francis Scott Key Bridge collapse, Baltimore ranked No. 9 in the country in terms of total tonnage. But even though it has regained some of its status, we've missed the top ten for the second straight year. Not that the news is all bad. Last year, for example, included a near record high in container cargo. And, Daniels says things are looking up. "Going into 2026,

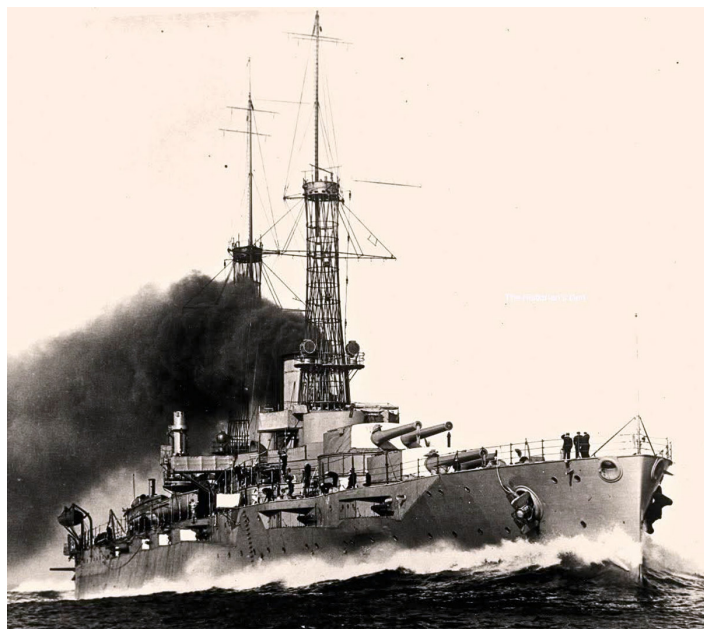
things are in place allowing us the opportunity to enter into that top 10 tonnage port again." For one thing Baltimore has long been an automobile hub as Ro Ros (Roll on, Roll off,) packed with thousands of vehicles, regularly unload in Charm City because of its proximity to the Midwest.

Meantime, a new report from the National Transportation Safety Board concludes that a single loose wire, JUST ONE, caused the cargo ship MV Dali to lose power, collide with one of the FSK Bridge's main supports, and collapse the entire center span. ⚓



FSK Bridge Collapse (2024)

Oops! Red Faces in the Sunset



USS New York (BB-34)

By Alan Walden

It was December, 1941, not long after the enemy attack on Hawaii. The old pre-treaty battleship, USS New York (BB-34), was underway

not far from the Panama Canal when the lookouts reported seeing a bright object in the cloudless twilight sky. The officer of the watch, then summoned, gave the order to open fire on what he



Sub Chaser (PC-815)

believed to be a Japanese plane. The anti-aircraft gunners banged away for several minutes until the navigator intervened. "I suggest you cease fire," he said quietly. "You're shooting at the planet Venus." And, he added, "I believe it's out of range."

You think that's bad?

Also, during early World War II, the brand-new sub chaser PC-815 received on board, as her first commanding officer, U.S.

Navy Reserve Lieutenant L. Ron Hubbard. Yes, him: the science fiction writer cum founder of the Church of Scientology. Shortly thereafter, during exercises off the coast of Mexico, he mistook an image in the mist for a legitimate target at which, for more than two days, he fired everything that could shoot. The guns only fell silent when the "target" was identified as an inhabited Mexican Island. LT Hubbard was subsequently dismissed from the service. ⚓

Coming Up

4/3	Good Friday
4/5	Easter Sunday
4/9	Passover Ends
4/15	Income Tax Filing Deadline
5/8	V.E. Day (1945)*
5/10	Mothers' Day
5/16	Armed Forces Day*
5/22	National Maritime Day
5/25	Memorial Day** U.S. Army Birthday
6/6	D-Day (1944)*
6/14	Flag Day (1777)*
6/19	Juneteenth
6/21	Summer Solstice (First Day of Summer) Fathers' Day
7/4	Independence Day (1776)*

*Show the Colors

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

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.



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