

NAVY LEAGUE NEWS

F O R T L A U D E R D A L E C O U N C I L

April 2025



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Navy League Members
and Supporters,

I hope this message finds you all
in good spirits as we continue our
mission of supporting the men and
women who serve our nation.

First, I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to our March guest speaker, ENS Mesha S. Wallace, USN, Chaplain Candidate Program Officer. ENS Wallace delivered an inspiring and thought-provoking presentation, highlighting the invaluable role of chaplains in providing spiritual and emotional guidance to our service members. Her passion, dedication, and insight were truly uplifting, and we were honored to recognize her with a plaque and a Navy League coin in appreciation of her service.

Looking ahead, I encourage you to join us for our April 23rd dinner meeting, where we will welcome Lieutenant Commander Steph Wood, U.S. Coast Guard. LCDR Wood currently serves as the Executive Officer for Civil Engineering Unit (CEU) Miami, overseeing vital shore infrastructure maintenance across Coast Guard Districts 7 and 8. With an impressive career in engineering, logistics, and operations, she brings a wealth of knowledge and leadership experience. Her service and expertise make this an event you won't want to miss!

As always, thank you for your continued support of the Navy League and our mission to honor and assist those who defend our freedoms. I look forward to seeing you all on April 23rd for another evening of camaraderie, learning, and appreciation for our maritime services.

Fair winds and following seas,

Abiud Montes

President, Navy League Fort Lauderdale Council



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GUEST SPEAKER AT OUR APRIL 23RD DINNER MEETING LIEUTENANT COMMANDER STEPH WOOD, U.S. COAST GUARD

Lieutenant Commander Wood currently serves as the Executive Officer for Civil Engineering Unit (CEU) Miami. She is responsible for overseeing shore infrastructure depot- level maintenance throughout Coast Guard District 7 and District 8.

Prior to reporting to CEU Miami, she was a Program Reviewer in the Office of Budget and Programs (CG-821) at Coast Guard Headquarters and responsible for formulation and defense of the \$900M annual Human Resources, Medical, and Coast Guard Academy budget.

LCDR Wood previously served as Base National Capital Region (NCR) Facilities Engineer where she oversaw delivery of maintenance and logistics services throughout a 1.2M square foot facility for more than 4,000 Coast Guard employees. Her other assignments include, CEU Miami Strategic Operations Product Line Branch Chief, Base Miami Beach Facilities Engineer, and Student Engineer onboard Coast Guard Cutter SHERMAN, Alameda California.

Her awards include two Meritorious Service Medals, three Coast Guard Commendation Medals, two Coast Guard Achievement Medals, and various service, unit, and team awards. She earned her Professional Engineer License in 2019.

A native of Homosassa, Florida, she graduated from the Coast Guard Academy with a Bachelor of Science in Civil and Environmental Engineering in 2009. She also holds a Master of Science from Cornell University in Civil and Environmental Engineering.

LCDR Wood lives in Hollywood, Florida, with her husband, CDR Travis Gagnon (Executive Officer, Air Station Miami), and their three dogs Gabe, Kismet, and Smidge. She enjoys yoga and running in her free time.



MEMBERSHIP

Welcome to our newest Fort Lauderdale Council member Naia Montes. We look forward to seeing her at our dinner meetings and events throughout the year.

To join and maintain membership in a Navy League council, an individual must be a member in good standing with the Navy League of the United States. It is incumbent upon the member to maintain current national membership.

From page 2-10 of the Navy League of the United States Operations Manual revised November 6, 2021:

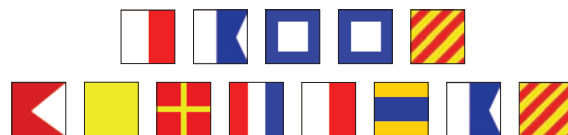
“II.D.6. A council may establish local dues or membership fees as it may deem to be appropriate but such dues or fees must be in addition to, not in lieu of, the national dues.”

Join the Navy League:

[Ftlnavyleague.org/JoinUs](https://ftlnavyleague.org/JoinUs)

<https://ftlnavyleague.org/joinus>

NAVY LEAGUE OF THE UNITED STATES FORT LAUDERDALE COUNCIL APRIL BIRTHDAYS



Kelly Apol	4/8	Andrew Scheer	4/18
Lawrence Denmark	4/8	Martha Bohler	4/21
Rosa Ryan	4/8	Oscar Romano	4/25
Lina Montes	4/10		

Dear Readership,

As you may know, the Navy League of the United States has a proud history spanning over 122 years, and while our core mission has remained steadfast, we recently recognized the need to update our Vision, Mission, and Goals statement to better reflect our current focus and direction.

Through a formal process that involved thoughtful recommendations and diligent edits, we are excited to announce the release of our newly approved Mission, Vision, and Goals statement. This update was endorsed during our January Executive Committee meeting and aims to more clearly express our commitment to supporting and advocating for the U.S. Sea Services.

We believe that these changes will better align our efforts with our core mission and enhance our impact within the community we serve. We appreciate your continued support as we move forward together in this important journey.

Thank you for your attention to this significant update. For your reference, we are including the previous language alongside the new approved language below:

New Language:

Vision Statement

The Navy League of the United States aspires to be the leading authority in supporting, educating, and advocating for the U.S. Sea Services — Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and U.S.-Flagged Merchant Marine — effectively engaging the American public and our national, state, and local government leaders.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Navy League of the United States is to promote and enhance U.S. global sea power while supporting America's Sea Services. We advocate for the vital contributions of our sea services — the United States Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and U.S.-Flagged Merchant Marine — in safeguarding the nation's security and bolstering its economic prosperity. Through support, education, and advocacy, we aim to strengthen the connections between the American public, government, and our maritime services by reinforcing that the United States of America is a maritime nation.

Goals

- Support service members, their families, and youth programs related to maritime service.
- Educate national, state, and local government leaders, and the public at large on the critical importance of maintaining robust sea services.
- Advocate tirelessly for the interests and needs of the sea services.

Previous Language:

Vision Statement

The Navy League of the United States will be the preferred resource for the education of both the United States Congress and the American Public on our sea services.

Mission Statement

The Navy League of the United States is an organization dedicated to informing the American people and their government that the United States of America is a maritime nation and that its national defense and economic wellbeing are dependent upon strong sea services — United States Navy, United States Marine Corps, United States Coast Guard and United States Merchant Marine.

Goals

- Educate national leaders and the nation.
- Support the men and women of the sea services.
- Provide assistance to sea service families.
- Support youth programs.

Best,



Christopher R. Townsend
52nd National President



FORT LAUDERDALE COUNCIL DAY AT THE RACES 2025, GULFSTREAM PARK

Saturday, March 8th, was our annual Navy League Day at the Races at Gulfstream Park, Hallandale Beach. This year, more than 40 attendees came out with family and friends to enjoy watching and betting on the races. The Ten Palms restaurant offers breathtaking views of the legendary Gulfstream racetrack and serves a spectacular all-you-can-eat buffet. This is always a fun social event and this year did not disappoint.



Jon and Anita Kotler with Oscar Romano



Council Member Elaine Nasta & Family



Council Member Alicia Romano



Desserts from the Buffet



Council Member Oscar Romano

THE IMPORTANCE OF ETHICAL LEADERSHIP IN MARITIME PROFESSIONS

By Abiud Montes, MGySgt, USMC (Ret.), President, Fort Lauderdale Navy League

The maritime industry is a cornerstone of global commerce and security, requiring highly trained professionals who uphold the highest standards of leadership and integrity. Recently, I had the honor of speaking at Northeast Maritime Institute (NMI) on the topic of Ethical Leadership—a subject that is more relevant than ever in today's complex and rapidly evolving maritime landscape.

Leadership in High-Stakes Environments

Ethical leadership is not just a theoretical concept; it is a guiding principle that shapes decision-making in high-stakes environments. Whether serving at sea, protecting national security interests, or managing global supply chains, maritime professionals must navigate challenges that test their integrity, resilience, and ability to lead under pressure.

At NMI, I had the privilege of addressing students who will soon take on leadership roles in the maritime industry. We discussed the importance of situational awareness, accountability, and ethical decision-making—qualities that define exceptional leaders at sea and ashore. The engagement from the students was outstanding, with thought-provoking questions and discussions that reinforced the need for continued mentorship and leadership training.

A Special Acknowledgment

I am especially grateful to Dr. Vincent Patton, EdD, Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard (Ret.), for his invitation and endorsement. Dr. Patton's leadership in maritime education and his commitment to developing the next generation of professionals set a powerful example for us all. His words following my presentation reaffirm the importance of fostering meaningful discussions on ethics and leadership in the maritime community.

The Role of the Navy League in Leadership Development

As President of the Fort Lauderdale Navy League, I see firsthand how leadership extends beyond the deck of a ship. Our organization is committed to supporting sea services, mentoring young leaders, and advocating for strong national defense policies. Events like the speaking engagement at NMI underscore the Navy League's broader mission—to educate, inspire, and connect professionals across maritime and naval communities.

Looking Ahead

The future of maritime leadership depends on continuous education, mentorship, and a commitment to ethical standards. Whether in the military, commercial shipping, or port security, leaders must be equipped to make tough decisions that prioritize safety, efficiency, and ethical responsibility.

I look forward to continuing these critical conversations, engaging with the next generation of maritime professionals, and supporting leadership development through the Navy League.

Fair winds and following seas!



Northeast Maritime Institute
32 Washington St.
Fairhaven, MA 02719



Vincent Patton, EdD · 1st

Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard, Ret.

March 8, 2025, Vincent was Abiud (Abi)'s client

Abiud was a guest speaker for my Leadership and Ethics class, covering the topic of Ethical Leadership. He did a fantastic job delivering the topic with confidence and authority. He definitely knew what he was talking about. My students were actively engaged during his presentation, and asked some very specific questions on the topic which he provided accurate and meaningful remarks. My students enjoyed his presentation. I will be more than happy to have him back! I

HONORABLE JOHN PHELAN SWORN IN AS 79TH SECRETARY OF THE NAVY AT NATIONAL ARCHIVES 25 MARCH 2025

WASHINGTON - The Honorable John Phelan was sworn in as the 79th Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV) at the National Archives, March 25, 2025.

“It is an honor to be sworn in as the 79th Secretary of the Navy on the hallowed ground of our National Archives in the presence of America’s founding documents,” said Phelan. “I am deeply grateful to President Trump and the Senate for the opportunity to lead the Department of the Navy as we revitalize shipbuilding, sharpen our warfighting culture and recruit America’s finest Sailors and Marines.”

Prior to his appointment, Secretary Phelan was the Founder and Chairman of Rugger Management, LLC, a private investment firm based in Palm Beach, Florida. Before launching Rugger, he was a co-Founder and co-Managing Partner of MSD Capital, L.P., a private investment firm for Michael Dell, and MSD Partners, a SEC-registered investment advisor that managed investments for a select group of third-party investors. Under his leadership, MSD posted double-digit net returns, generated over \$20 billion in profits, and grew assets under management to over \$30 billion.

Earlier in his career, Secretary Phelan was a Principal at ESL Partners, a Greenwich, Connecticut-based investment firm, where he helped the firm grow from \$50 million to over \$2 billion in assets. He also served as Vice President at the Zell-Merrill Lynch Real Estate Opportunity Funds.

Secretary Phelan holds an MBA from Harvard Business School. He graduated Phi Beta Kappa, cum laude with distinction from Southern Methodist University (SMU) with a B.A. in Economics and Political Science. He also earned a General Course degree in Economics and International Relations from the London School of Economics (LSE).

A committed patriot and philanthropist, Secretary Phelan served formally on the Board of Trustees of the Third Option Foundation (Chairman), Spirit of America and Aspen Art Museum (Chairman), and is a member of Business Executives for National Security (BENS). He also serves on the Board of Dean’s Advisors at Harvard Business School, the Investment Committee for the SMU Endowment, and the North American Advisory Board for LSE. In 2022, he received SMU’s highest alumni honor, the Distinguished Alumni Award. Secretary Phelan and his wife, Amy, have endowed free admission to the Aspen Art Museum and recently established the Phelan U.S. Centre at LSE.

The SECNAV serves the Department of Defense as the senior Navy leader. He is responsible for the well-being, readiness and development of nearly one million Department of the Navy (DON) Sailors, Marines, reservists, and civilian personnel and manages an annual budget exceeding \$265 billion. SECNAV has the authority under Title 10 of United States Code to conduct all DON affairs, including recruiting, organizing, supplying, equipping, training, mobilizing, and demobilizing. The Secretary also oversees construction, outfitting and repair of naval ships, equipment and facilities.

The DON consists of two uniformed Services: the United States Navy and the United States Marine Corps. There are nearly one million personnel in the DON. Together, alongside allies and partners, the Department defends freedom, preserves economic prosperity, and keep the seas free and open.



Mr. John Phelan is sworn in as the 79th Secretary of the Navy by Mr. Jon Harrison, Chief of Staff of the Department of the Navy, March 25, 2025.



United States Naval Sea Cadets Corps

FORT LAUDERDALE DIVISION & TRAINING SHIP RADFORD

Sponsored by the Fort Lauderdale Council of the Nay League of the United States

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 21101, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33335-1101

Headquarters: 300 S.W. 25th Street, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33315



LTJG Rosa Ryan, USNSCC

Commanding Officer

A VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps, Fort Lauderdale Division

March was an active month for our Sea Cadets. On March 1st, we participated in the annual Waterways Cleanup at Dr. Von D. Mizell-Eula Johnson State Park in Dania Beach. Cadets and Staff picked up a significant amount of trash from the beach and the intracoastal waterway. This was followed by a delicious Barbecue lunch served by our Sea Cadet Staff. It was an excellent opportunity for our Cadets to give back to our community.



A VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps, Fort Lauderdale Division continued

On March 8th, we had special training at Maritime Professional Training, where Cadets learned first aid, nautical knot tying, and navigation on the ship's bridge simulator. It was an exciting morning for the Cadets to learn about careers in the Merchant Marine. Thank you to Crystal Craft and the MPT team for providing our cadets with a fabulous training opportunity.

On March 15th, American Heart Association instructors trained our Cadets and Staff in CPR and first aid at Sea Cadet Headquarters. Cadets and adult volunteers earned their AHA Certification in both CPR and First Aid. It was a fun and educational morning for all.



A VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps, Fort Lauderdale Division continued

Our Cadets presented the colors at the Navy League Dinner on March 19th and heard from guest speaker ENS Mesha Wallace, USN, the Navy Chaplain from Navy Talent Acquisition Group Miami. ENS Wallace spoke about her career as a Chaplain in the United States Navy. It was a fascinating presentation. On the last weekend in March, we had liberty for all hands for Spring Break! It was a fun and educational month for our division.



FORT LAUDERDALE HIGH SCHOOL NJROTC MILITARY BALL HONORS A LEGACY OF SERVICE AND PARTNERSHIP

By Abiud Montes, MGySgt, USMC (Ret.), President, Fort Lauderdale Navy League

On the evening of March 20, 2025, I had the honor of attending the Fort Lauderdale High School NJROTC Military Ball — a memorable celebration hosted by the Flying Battalion, proudly led by Chief Daniel Tyson.

The evening was filled with tradition, professionalism, and pride as the cadets demonstrated the discipline and excellence that defines their program. From the ceremonial presentation to their poised presence, it was clear these young leaders are being shaped by strong mentorship and values rooted in service.

This year's event held special meaning, as it marked over 50 years since the Flying Battalion was established in 1973. What made this milestone even more meaningful is the fact that the Fort Lauderdale Navy League was the founding sponsor of the NJROTC unit. It was through the League's support and vision that the program came to life more than half a century ago — and it continues to thrive today.

I was humbled to receive a certificate of appreciation for sponsorship and support, presented during the ball on behalf of the Fort Lauderdale Navy League. This gesture was not just a recognition of recent efforts, but a tribute to a partnership that has stood the test of time.

We are deeply honored to continue supporting the Flying Battalion and to witness firsthand the legacy that began with our League's commitment so many years ago. The cadets of today carry forward a proud tradition — one that we are privileged to be a part of.

Here's to continued service, leadership, and the enduring partnership between Fort Lauderdale High School NJROTC and the Fort Lauderdale Navy League.





SEA CADETS BY THE NUMBERS

380+ TOTAL UNITS
IN 47 STATES,
Guam, & Puerto Rico

11,000+
CADETS SERVED ANNUALLY
AGES 10-18

**3,000+ VOLUNTEERS FROM ACROSS
THE NATION SPEND OVER 238,000
HOURS VOLUNTEERING EACH YEAR.**



TRAINING



UNIT



REGIONAL

Our volunteers hail from diverse backgrounds. Many of our volunteers are active duty, reserve, or retired servicemembers. Over 360 of our volunteers are serving active duty and reserve in the U.S. Military. Our volunteers serve in a variety of areas including in their local units, during advanced trainings, and for their regional staff.



**36% OF CADETS REPRESENT
ETHNIC MINORITIES**

**23% OF CADETS COME FROM
INNER CITY COMMUNITIES**

23% OF CADETS ARE FEMALE

IN A TYPICAL YEAR:
**1,000 CADETS FINISH HIGH
SCHOOL AND GRADUATE
FROM THE USNSCC**

These remarkable young men and women often choose to serve in the military, attend universities and trade schools, or serve their local communities through frontline careers.



Cadets make great decisions about their futures
IN A TYPICAL YEAR:

U.S. NAVY

- **250** Enlist in the U.S. Navy*
- **130** Matriculate to the United States Naval Academy**
- **100+** Are Accepted to Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps (NROTC)*

*Source: NRC Analytics 2010-2018

**Source: USNA OIR 2010-2018

OTHER***

- **150** Enlist in other military branches
- **30** Matriculate to other service academies
- **30** Accepted to other ROTC programs
- **300+** Attend 2-4 year universities

***Source: Graduating Cadet Surveys 2015-2019

360+ MILITARY VOLUNTEERS
INCLUDING 230+ ACTIVE AND RESERVE
VOLUNTEERS FROM THE U.S. NAVY

ACCORDING TO THE U.S. NAVAL ACADEMY:
10% – 12%
OF EACH INCOMING CLASS OF MIDSHIPMEN
ARE FORMER U.S. NAVAL SEA CADETS.

While cadets are not required to join the military after graduation:

**OVER 650 FORMER CADETS CHOOSE TO
SERVE THEIR COUNTRY EVERY YEAR.**

500 of these cadets choose to serve in the United States Navy



**EACH SEA CADET SAVES
THE U.S. NAVY
\$14,000**

IN RECRUITING & LIFE-CYCLE COSTS
-Former CNO Gary Roughead

Cadets who achieve the rank of E-3 as Sea Cadets
are eligible to graduate U.S. Navy and U.S. Coast
Guard recruit training as an:

E-3 / SEAMAN

*This encourages cadets to both join the U.S. Navy and remain in
service longer while reducing life-cycle training costs per sailor.*



U.S. NAVAL
SEA CADET CORPS
www.seacadets.org

The following statistics represent typical annual data from the U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps.

U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps, Spruance Division

Buy-a-Brick Fundraiser



Architect's rendering of 300 SW 25th Avenue, Fort Lauderdale – North elevation

The **Navy League of the United States, Fort Lauderdale Council** invites you to become a permanent part of the new **Mary N. Porter Sea Cadet Training Center** by purchasing a commemorative brick; an easy way to leave a lasting family legacy.

Your custom brick could be engraved with your family name, a cadet or former cadet's name and year of graduation, your business name, your organization name, or you could choose to engrave a brick in honor of someone special, a veteran, or in memory of a loved one.

**Engraved symbols are an additional \$5. Choose from the symbol gallery:*

<https://www.brickrus.com/products/symbols/>

Ask us
about
custom
logos



Engraved bricks are available in two sizes:

4 x 8 = \$100/\$105* donation

8 x 8 = \$225/\$230* donation

Use the online ordering system at: www.brickrus.com/donorsite/seacadets

or

Please **complete and mail the attached order form** with your check made payable to:

NLUS-FLC (Navy League of the U.S. Fort Lauderdale Council)

PO Box 350625, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33335-0625



(All donations are tax-deductible)

Yes, I would like to reserve a permanent commemorative brick for the Mary N. Porter Sea Cadet Training Center.



**4" x 8" -
\$100/\$105***

Indicate below how you want your **4 x 8-inch** brick engraved.
One character (letter, number, punctuation mark or space) **PER SPACE**
*additional \$5 charge for engraved symbols

← Symbol →

← 21 characters per line or 18 characters with symbol/clipart →



**8" x 8" -
\$225/\$230***

Indicate below how you want your **8 x 8-inch** brick engraved.
One character (letter, number, punctuation mark or space) **PER SPACE**
*additional \$5 charge for engraved symbols

← Symbol →

← 21 characters per line or 18 characters with symbol/clipart →



In addition to the text above, I would like to include an **engraved symbol** from the
BricksRUs symbol gallery: _____

* Please add \$5 for engraved symbols

<https://www.brickrus.com/products/symbols/>

Total Amount Enclosed: _____

Donated by: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____



Please return this order form with your check made payable to:
NLUS-FLC (Navy League of the U.S. Fort Lauderdale Council)
PO Box 350625, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33335-0625



(All donations are tax-deductible)

THE NAVY LEAGUE OF THE UNITED STATES, FORT LAUDERDALE COUNCIL WAS FOUNDED IN 1959 AND HAS BEEN DESIGNATED BY THE INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE AS A 501(c)(3) CHARITABLE ORGANIZATION, FEI#59-1412425. A COPY OF THE OFFICIAL REGISTRATION AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES BY CALLING TOLL FREE WITHIN THE STATE: 1-800-435-7352. REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL OR RECOMMENDATION BY THE STATE OF FLORIDA



CAPITAL CAMPAIGN FOR THE MARY N. PORTER SEA CADET TRAINING CENTER



BUILDING LEADERS

BEGINS WITH YOU.

A capital campaign to fund the construction of the Mary N. Porter Sea Cadet Training Center

- ____ Yes, I want to support the Capital Campaign to build a new Sea Cadet Training Center in Fort Lauderdale. My gift will enable the Navy League of the U.S. to provide a home for excellent youth programs that foster leadership, academic skills and civic responsibility.
- ____ Please contact me about naming opportunities at the new Mary N. Porter Sea Cadet Training Center.



I would like to make a one-time tax-deductible contribution in the amount of:

● \$100 ● \$500 ● \$1,000 ● \$5,000 ● \$10,000 ● \$25,000 ● \$50,000 ● Other \$

Make check payable to the Navy League of the United States - Fort Lauderdale Council.

Fill out the form below if you are paying with a credit card. Contributions are tax deductible as provided by law.

Credit Card ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ American Express

Card #

Exp. Date Security Code

Name on Card

Signature

Address

City State Zip

Phone Email

Signature

I would like to make the following pledge:

Name (as you would like to be recognized)

In honor of

In memory of

\$ is enclosed.

Total amount of \$ to be paid as follows:

Amount \$ on (date)

Amount \$ on (date)

Amount \$ on (date)

Amount \$ on (date)

NAVY LEAGUE OF THE UNITED STATES - FORT LAUDERDALE COUNCIL

P.O. Box 350625 | Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33335-0625 | 954.522.8995 | seacadetbuilding@gmail.com
www.FTLNavyLeague.org | www.FTLSeaCadets.org

THE NAVY LEAGUE OF THE UNITED STATES - FORT LAUDERDALE COUNCIL, FOUNDED IN 1959, IS RECOGNIZED BY THE INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE AS A 501 (c)(3) CHARITABLE ORGANIZATION. A COPY OF THE OFFICIAL REGISTRATION AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES BY CALLING TOLL FREE WITHIN THE STATE, 800-435-7352. REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL OR RECOMMENDATION BY THE STATE.

SPEAKER AT OUR MAY 14TH DINNER MEETING
DAMIAN VALDEZ
ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE, FLORIDA PANTHERS



Damian Valdez enlisted in the U.S. Navy in 2016 as an Electricians Mate (Nuclear) with 15 months of sea time serving aboard two Virginia Class fast attack submarines responsible for reactor operations, electrical power generation/distribution, and shipboard electrical equipment. He was the RPOC (Recruit Chief Petty Officer) in his boot camp division which consisted of leading 86 sailors to graduation in bootcamp. He then attended the infamous 'Nuclear Pipeline' to become a nuclear reactor operator. First up was Nuclear Field "A" School in Charleston, SC which consisted of learning the intricate methods of Electrical engineering designed by MIT. Following graduation, he attended Nuclear Power School (NPS) in Charleston, SC where students learned the dynamic complexities of Nuclear Engineering and design. Upon graduating, he attended Nuclear Prototype which consisted of becoming a certified nuclear reactor plant operator onboard a S5G live nuclear reactor plant by the Department of Energy (DOE). He then spent time as a nuclear instructor certifying students at Nuclear Power School. Upon his Staff tour, he

served aboard the PCU Indiana (SSN 789) in Norfolk, VA conducting Alpha, Bravo, and Charlie Sea trials to commission her and became certified on an S9G reactor. Shortly after becoming a plank owner, he was transferred to the USS Washington (SSN 787) embarking on pre-deployment workups and her maiden EUCOM deployment to the North Arctic region focusing on Russian deterrence and intelligence. After 22 successful missions and POTUS's authorization for extensions, the USS Washington was awarded the title for tracking the most foreign submarines on a single deployment. Following his sea tour, he assisted in reactor division ashore at Submarine Squadron 6 in Norfolk, Virginia.

He has since joined the of Florida Panthers in January of 2023 after completing his time in service and obtaining his bachelor's degree in criminal justice from Nova Southeastern University. Damian is currently an Account Executive on the New business sales team after being the first to be promoted within from the C.A.T.S. Academy (career advancement in ticket sales) inside sales program. He has also had the privilege to join the short list of 'Million-dollar sellers' in the sports industry. He is currently working on his Master of Business Administration degree from NSU.



HONORING SERVICE AND INSPIRATION: MARCH GUEST SPEAKER ENS MESHA S. WALLACE, USN

The Fort Lauderdale Council of the Navy League was honored to welcome Ensign Mesha S. Wallace, USN, Chaplain Candidate Program Officer (CCPO), as our distinguished guest speaker for the March meeting. ENS Wallace delivered an inspiring and heartfelt presentation that deeply resonated with our members, reminding us of the critical role chaplains play in supporting the spiritual and emotional well-being of our service members.

With a message rooted in dedication, faith, and service, ENS Wallace captivated the audience with her insights on the Chaplain Corps and the vital mission of providing moral and spiritual guidance to those in uniform. Her passion for service and commitment to uplifting our nation's Sailors and Marines was evident in every word she shared.

In recognition of her outstanding presentation and service, the Fort Lauderdale Council proudly presented ENS Wallace with a plaque of appreciation and a Navy League coin, symbolizing our gratitude and support for her mission. It was truly a privilege to hear from such a dedicated and inspiring leader.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to ENS Wallace for her time, her words of encouragement, and her unwavering commitment to supporting those who serve. We look forward to following her journey as she continues to make a meaningful impact as a Chaplain Candidate.

Fair winds and following seas, ENS Wallace!





Navy League of the United States Fort Lauderdale Council

Social Calendar 2025

April 22-29, 2025, Fleet Week, Port Everglades

Wednesday, April 23, 2025, Dinner Meeting, Lauderdale Yacht Club

**Guest Speaker: LCDR Steph Wood, USCG, Executive Officer,
Civil Engineering Unit (CEU), Miami**

Wednesday, May 14, 2025, Dinner Meeting, Lauderdale Yacht Club

**Guest Speaker: Guest Speaker: Damian Valdez, Account Executive,
New Business Sales, Florida Panthers**

Sunday, June 1, 2025, Sea Cadet Awards Banquet, Club 19, Pembroke Lakes

Wednesday, September 17, 2025, Dinner Meeting, Lauderdale Yacht Club

Annual Sea Cadet Night

Wednesday, October 15, 2025, Dinner Meeting, Lauderdale Yacht Club

Guest Speaker: TBD

Wednesday, November 19, 2025, Dinner Meeting, Lauderdale Yacht Club

Guest Speaker: CAPT Willie L. Carmichael, Chief of Staff, USCG District 7

Wednesday, December 16, 2025, Dinner Meeting, Lauderdale Yacht Club

Guest Speaker: TBD



GARY PIRTLE
Sales Associate
gpirtle@Realty100.com
ardenpalmbeach.com
gpirtle.realty100.com



Hard Work Gets Results

954-658-7128 Mobile



BUYING • SELLING • REFINANCING

Real Savings & Rewards For Our Nation's Heroes



•No Mortgage Insurance

•100% Financing

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Wednesday, May 7, 2025 3:30 PM EDT
Join Zoom Meeting:
Meeting ID: 899 9626 3102
Passcode: GoNavy

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GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Wednesday, April 23, 2025
6-7 PM Cocktails • 7-9 PM Dinner Buffet
LAUDERDALE YACHT CLUB
1725 SE 12th Street
Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33316

Guest Speaker

LCDR STEPH WOOD, USCG

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