NAVY LEAGUE NEWS

FORT LAUDERDALE COUNCIL

May 2026



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As we reflect on our April 15th General Dinner Meeting, I want to extend my sincere appreciation to Ken Denison for an outstanding presentation. Ken brought to life a remarkable chapter of Fort Lauderdale's history, sharing the story of his parents driving to Washington, D.C. from Fort Lauderdale in securing the first Navy contract for minesweepers vessels that would go on to serve our nation during the Korean War. Even though the local newspaper said they were over their heads the Denison family proved the doubters wrong.

His remarks were not only informative but deeply personal, connecting our community to the broader legacy of naval service and innovation. It was a powerful reminder that Fort Lauderdale's identity is closely tied to our nation's maritime strength, and that the contributions made here at home have had far-reaching impact in defense of freedom.

Looking ahead, I am pleased to invite you to our next Navy League Dinner Meeting on Wednesday, May 20th at the Lauderdale Yacht Club. We are honored to welcome Matias A. Sueldo as our guest speaker. I am confident his experiences and perspective will offer another engaging and meaningful evening for our members and guests.

I encourage all Navy League members and our military community to join us for this special gathering. Your presence strengthens our mission and reinforces the bonds that unite us in service and support of the sea services.

I look forward to seeing you there.

Abiud Montes
President, Fort Lauderdale Council
Navy League of the United States

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Navy League Membership

Are you a “member in good standing” with the Navy League of the United States?

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. (navyleague.org) Members must ensure that their national membership remains current at all times. Local councils must remain in compliance with national policies to be considered in "good standing" and eligible to receive crucial funding, grants, or support from the Navy League of the United States.

From page 2-10 of the Navy League of the United States Operations Manual revised January 2, 2024: 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.

You can support the Fort Lauderdale Council by remaining a “member in good standing” with the Navy League of the United States. There are multiple membership opportunities beginning at $25 per year for an e-membership.

Enroll or renew today at navyleague.org.
Please remember to designate Fort Lauderdale as your preferred council.

Fort Lauderdale Council, Navy League of the United States

ftlnavyyleague.org

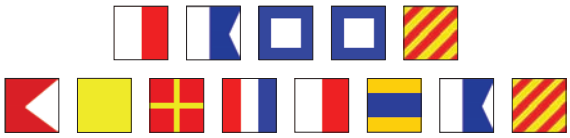
954-522-8995

GUEST SPEAKER AT OUR MAY 20TH DINNER MEETING
MATIAS A. SUELDO

Matias A. Sueldo is the founder of Silene Advisors, a boutique firm providing transaction and operations advisory services to buyers and operators of privately owned lower-middle-market businesses across the United States. Previously, Matias worked as a corporate and finance attorney in New York City. He represented investors and lenders in large, complex, multi-jurisdiction transactions, typically involving countries Europe and the Western Hemisphere, but also in Africa and Asia. Matias started his career as a law professor in Beijing, China.

While practicing law in New York City, Mr. Sueldo applied and screened for a direct commission into the Navy Reserve and was assigned to a reserve unit in southern New Jersey. He assumed a leadership position in the unit and, while drilling at the unit, completed officer training in Rhode Island and specialist training in Virginia. After moving to Denver, Mr. Sueldo used the opportunity to apply and screen for a reserve unit in San Diego supporting Naval Special Warfare. He assumed a leadership position in that unit as well and, shortly after drilling there, was mobilized to active duty with NSW. He spent about a year and half on active duty before returning to reserve duty in Denver.

NAVY LEAGUE OF THE UNITED STATES
FORT LAUDERDALE COUNCIL
MAY BIRTHDAYS



David Crane	5/9	Alicia Romano	5/12

SEA CADETS

Fort Lauderdale Division

Annual Sea Cadet Awards Banquet

Sunday, May 31, 2026, 5:45 PM

Sponsored by the Navy League
Fort Lauderdale Council

Club 19
Pembroke Lakes Golf & Racquet Club
10500 Taft Street
Pembroke Pines, 33026

Reservations Required
RSVP by Sunday, May 24th

RESERVE NOW

Adults - $45
Under 12 years - $20



USS FORT LAUDERDALE (LPD-28) SUPPORT COMMITTEE PARTNERS IN CREATING AWARENESS AND SUPPORT OF ENHANCING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR VETERANS, MILITARY AND THEIR FAMILIES

HENDERSON BEHAVIORAL HEALTH INTRODUCES THE POPPY PROJECT TO HONOR VETERANS AND SUPPORT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Henderson Behavioral Health
POPPY PROJECT
IN SUPPORT OF OUR VETERANS

USS Fort Lauderdale (LPD-28)
Support Committee

Public art initiative launches with May 21 kickoff event to introduce the first Pop-Up Poppy Garden at Tunnel Top Plaza

April 22, 2026

Henderson Behavioral Health (HBH) will introduce an exciting public art program, **The Poppy Project**, a visual display of remembrance and patriotism which honors veterans and military while raising awareness and funds for critical mental health services. Five-and 6-foot striking fiberglass poppy flowers will be presented in a garden setting as a remembrance of those who protect and serve our country and a memorable photo experience. **The public art unveiling is set for 5 p.m. on Thursday, May 21, at Tunnel Top Plaza in Downtown Fort Lauderdale** (Las Olas Boulevard and SE 6th Avenue) followed by other pop-up gardens being planned at select Fort Lauderdale parks and popular venues which will be announced at a later date.

"The Poppy Project is a powerful way for our community to come together in remembrance of those who have patriotically served our country and to honor them by supporting vital mental health programs and services," said **Dr. Steve Ronik, CEO of Henderson Behavioral Health**. "Through this initiative, we are not only honoring service and sacrifice but also ensuring that those who have served and continue to protect our country receive the care they deserve."



Suzanne Higgins and Patricia Du Mont with some of the oversized 6 foot poppies to be installed as part of Henderson Behavioral Health's public art program, The Poppy Project, a visual display of remembrance and patriotism which honors veterans while raising awareness and funds for critical mental health services.

USS FORT LAUDERDALE (LPD-28) SUPPORT COMMITTEE PARTNERS IN CREATING AWARENESS AND SUPPORT OF ENHANCING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR VETERANS, MILITARY AND THEIR FAMILIES
continued

The campaign will continue throughout the year, aligning with nationally recognized holidays including Memorial Day, Independence Day and Veterans Day. Also, the project will incorporate public art installations, sponsorship opportunities, special events and a virtual legacy wall where families can honor loved ones who have served.

Inspired by the poppy's historical significance as a symbol of sacrifice, rooted in the World War I poem "In Flanders Fields," and later adopted as a national emblem of remembrance, The Poppy Project brings this tradition to life in a local and meaningful way.

Funds raised will directly support Henderson Behavioral Health's VICTORY Program (Veterans in Counseling to Obtain Recovery), which provides free mental health services to veterans, active-duty service members, National Guard and Reserve members, and their families, including outreach and education across South Florida, workshops addressing mental health challenges impacting military families, and individual and relationship therapy offered both in clinical settings and within the community.

Since 2023, Henderson Behavioral Health has served hundreds of veterans, including more than 250 in 2025 alone, reflecting the growing demand for accessible, high-quality mental health care. As a vital safety net within the community, the organization continues to see increasing demand for veteran-focused services, highlighting the need for continued resources to support and expand access to care.

Ronik added, "Florida is home to more than 1.3 million veterans, one of the largest veteran populations in the nation, reinforcing the importance of initiatives like The Poppy Project in building awareness, fostering connection and expanding access to care."

The May 21 kickoff event at Tunnel Top Plaza is free and open to the public. Guests are invited to experience the inaugural Poppy Garden, learn more about the initiative and discover ways to support veterans in the community.

Henderson Behavioral Health's The Poppy Project is made possible through the support of key community partners, sponsors, and supporters including The Leo Goodwin Foundation, Arlene Pecora, the Henderson Behavioral Health Board of Directors, Florida Power & Light Company (FPL), Community Foundation of Broward, Riverwalk Fort Lauderdale and Galleria Fort Lauderdale.

For more information about The Poppy Project or to get involved, email Suzanne Higgins at shiggins@hendersonbh.org.

About Henderson Behavioral Health

Established in 1953, Henderson Behavioral Health (HBH or Henderson) is one of Florida's oldest and largest nonprofit providers of mental health and substance use disorder services, serving more than 25,000 individuals of all ages each year. Through a comprehensive approach that includes clinical care, housing, supported employment and advocacy, Henderson helps individuals achieve recovery and lead meaningful, independent lives. With programs and facilities throughout Florida, the organization provides a wide range of accessible, evidence-based services designed to treat the whole person. Henderson is fully accredited at the highest level by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (C.A.R.F.). For more information visit, hendersonbh.org or call (954) 777-1624.

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH, held every May, aims to educate the public and encourage support for those affected, promotes mental wellness, highlights the importance of early intervention and advocates for better care for all. This project will support expanded mental health services for veterans, military and their families.



NAVY LEAGUE of the UNITED STATES
FORT LAUDERDALE COUNCIL

Sign up to participate in the

ANCHORS AWEIGH FLY IN

Advocate for America's Sea Services on Capitol Hill

June 1 - June 2, 2026

The Navy League's annual "Anchors Aweigh Fly-In" is a premier advocacy event where members have the opportunity to meet directly with Members of Congress and their staff to champion the priorities of the sea services. Last year's Fly-In was a tremendous success, with 56 participants conducting 145 meetings on Capitol Hill, ensuring that lawmakers understand the critical policies, budgets, and legislative needs that support a strong and lethal naval force.

By participating in the 2026 Fly-In, you'll receive training on key legislative priorities, collaborate with regional teams, and engage in impactful discussions with policymakers. Your voice plays a crucial role in shaping decisions that affect the future of our maritime forces—join us to make a difference!

Learn more...

https://members.navyleague.org/event-information?id=a0lVX000005sr4TYAQ

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

LT Rosa Ryan, USNSCC
Commanding Officer

A VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE
U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps, Fort Lauderdale Division

April was a busy month for the Sea Cadets of Fort Lauderdale Division. The highlight of the month was Mini-Boot Camp, which was held at High Taylor Birch State Park in Fort Lauderdale. The goal of Mini-Boot Camp is to ensure that Cadets are ready to attend Recruit Training during the summer. Classes were given by the Petty Officers. We also had training from the Fort Lauderdale Ocean Rescue Swimmers on the beach. The chow was prepared by Samuel and Maria Hernandez, and it received rave reviews from the Cadets and Staff. It was a great weekend of training and camaraderie for our Cadets and Staff!



On April 18th, Cadets trained at the US Coast Guard Station Fort Lauderdale. They underwent Physical Training testing, including running, sit-ups, and planks, to ensure they are qualified to attend Summer Training. They also participated in hands-on seamanship training aboard the Archer, the Council's 40 ft. Bayliner. They practiced "man overboard" drills and took turns at the helm while navigating the Intracoastal Waterway.

In April, our color guard presented the colors at our monthly Navy League dinner. The Cadets never fail to impress all in attendance.

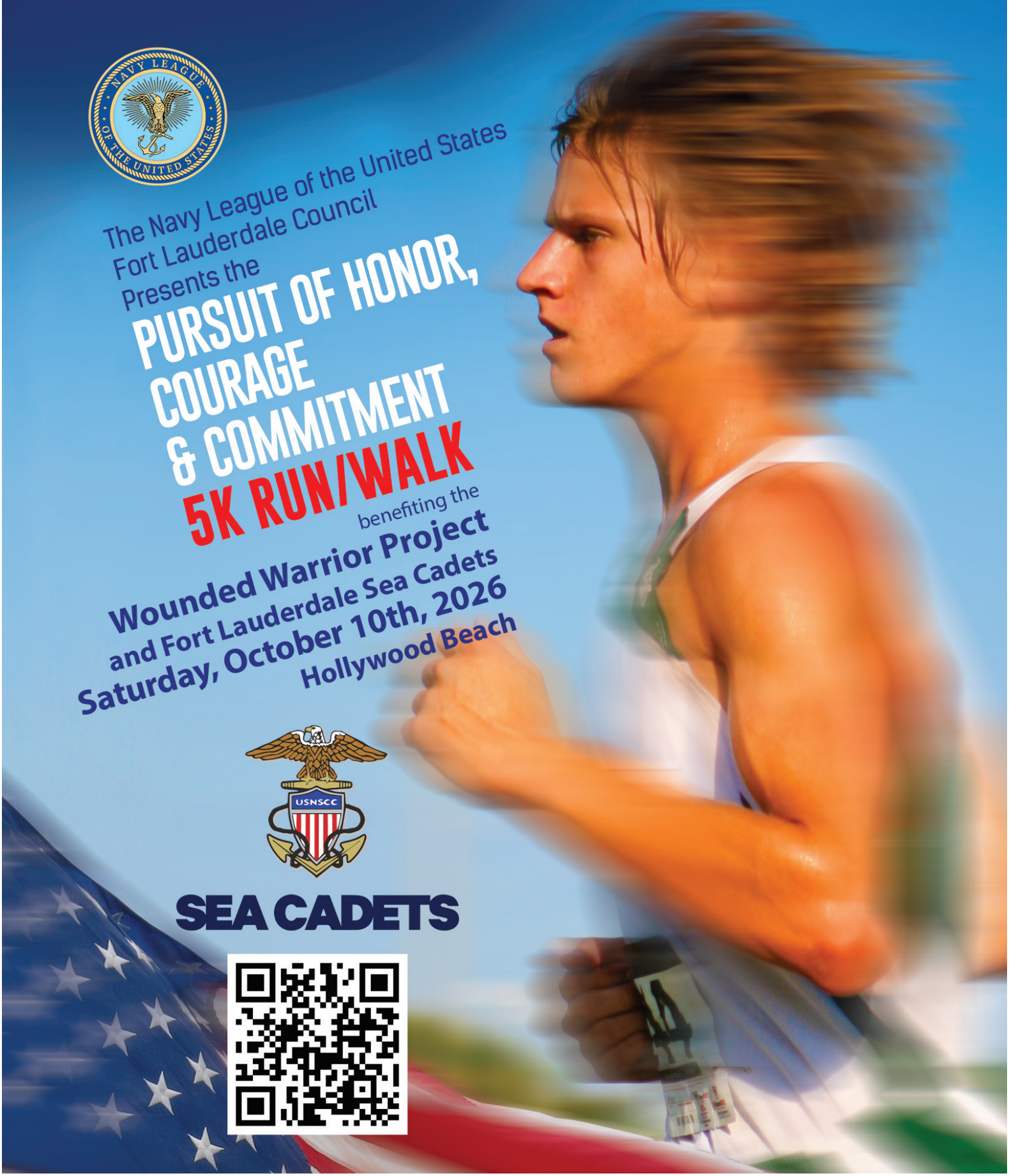






The last Saturday of the month, we trained at Sea Cadet Headquarters, where Cadets did “make-up” PT testing and learned about signaling with Semaphore Flags from our former Sea Cadet Rodriguez-Strupler, who is currently serving in the United States Coast Guard. It was a jam-packed month of fun and challenging training for the Fort Lauderdale Division Sea Cadets.




The Navy League of the United States
Fort Lauderdale Council
Presents the
PURSUIT OF HONOR,
COURAGE
& COMMITMENT
5K RUN/WALK
benefiting the
Wounded Warrior Project
and Fort Lauderdale Sea Cadets
Saturday, October 10th, 2026
Hollywood Beach
USNSCC
SEA CADETS
Register at:
honor5K.org
Managed by:
Precision Running Events
PRECISION RUNNING EVENTS
Proud Supporter of
WOUNDED WARRIOR PROJECT®



Support Sea Cadet Funding in 2026 Defense Appropriations!

1827 actions taken | 173 needed to reach next goal

The Issue

The U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps is a federally supported youth program that provides hands-on training to approximately 8,000 participants each year. The program develops skills in shipbuilding, cybersecurity, aviation, skilled trades, and maritime operations. Nearly half of graduating cadets enter military service.

Congress authorized $4.3 million in supplemental funding for the Sea Cadets in the FY 2025 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), but these funds were not appropriated due to the passage of a full-year continuing resolution. In December 2025, Congress again authorized $4.3 million for the program in the conferenced version of the FY 2026 NDAA. However, members of the House and Senate must still approve this funding in the conference report for the Department of Defense Appropriations Act, which has not yet been released.

The House-passed defense appropriations bill fully funds the Sea Cadets under the Recruiting and Advertising section of the Navy's Operations and Maintenance Budget. The Senate's draft does not include this provision. Until negotiators agree to include Sea Cadet funding in the final appropriations bill, the program's funding remains uncertain.

The Solution

If enacted with the relevant provision, the FY 2026 Defense Appropriations Bill would make available the $4.3 million authorized in the FY 2026 NDAA for the U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps. The appropriations process determines whether authorized funds can be spent. As of December 2025, a conference report for the appropriations bill has not yet been released. Ensuring that the conferenced bill includes Sea Cadet funding will secure the program's financing for next year, provided the House and Senate pass the negotiated bill.

Why You Should Take Action

If appropriated funding is not provided in FY 2026, the Sea Cadet program may face reduced training opportunities and higher costs for participants. The program relies on federal funding to maintain robust training and keep participation affordable for families. Its mission is to support national security workforce development and provide career pathways in defense and maritime industries. The Sea Cadets have historically received funding in appropriations legislation, and continued support is essential to sustain this critical program.

Act Now!

Sign up with Facebook

or

To register to participate in the Navy League Quorum Action Center and our Voice to Congress campaigns, please enter your information below.
Fields with an asterisk (*) are required.

First Name *
First Name

Last Name *
Last Name

Address *
Street Address, City, and State

Email *
Email

Council

By registering with the Quorum Action Center, you agree to receive the Legislative Affairs Weekly Roundup email. You may unsubscribe from the Weekly Roundup at any time by following the links provided in each email.

Sign Up



https://navyleague.quorum.us/campaign/seacadets/

APRIL 15TH DINNER MEETING
GUEST SPEAKER: KEN DENISON

Our April 15th dinner meeting was especially memorable, thanks to guest speaker Ken Denison. More than 100 attendees listened as he shared insights into the Denison family's history, their ties with the U.S. Navy, and impact on the development of Fort Lauderdale's yachting industry. The Denison story is one that deserves to be told and left many wanting to know more. We hope to see more of Ken in the future!

We would also like to thank dinner guest, Captain Michael Baker, USN who delivered the invocation and the cadets from the Fort Lauderdale Division who presented Colors.

Our last dinner meeting before we break for the summer months will be on Wednesday, May 20th at the Lauderdale Yacht Club. We will return on Tuesday, September 22nd for Sea Cadet Night.







Navy League of the United States
Fort Lauderdale Council

Social Calendar 2026 - 2027

Wednesday, May 20, 2026, Dinner Meeting, Lauderdale Yacht Club
Guest Speaker: Matias A. Sueldo

Sunday, May 31, 2026, Sea Cadet Awards Banquet, Pembroke Pines

Tuesday, September 22, 2026, Dinner Meeting, Lauderdale Yacht Club
Sea Cadet Night

Saturday, October 10, 2026, Pursuit of Honor, Courage, & Commitment 5K, Hollywood Beach, Honor5K.org

Wednesday, October 21, 2026, Dinner Meeting, Lauderdale Yacht Club
Guest Speaker: TBD

Wednesday, November 18, 2026, Dinner Meeting, Lauderdale Yacht Club
Guest Speaker: TBD

Tuesday, December 15, 2026, Holiday Celebration Dinner/Toys for Tots Drive
Guest Speaker: TBD

Saturday, January 23, 2027, Seven Seas Gala, Westin Fort Lauderdale Beach Resort
Guest Speaker: TBD

Wednesday, February 17, 2027, Dinner Meeting, Lauderdale Yacht Club
Guest Speaker: TBD

Wednesday, March 17, 2027, Dinner Meeting, Lauderdale Yacht Club
Guest Speaker: TBD

Wednesday, April 21, 2027, Dinner Meeting, Lauderdale Yacht Club
Guest Speaker: TBD

Wednesday, May 19, 2027, Dinner Meeting, Lauderdale Yacht Club
Guest Speaker: TBD

Dinner Meetings and Events Web Page:

COMMUNITY AFFILIATES







EDITORIAL STAFF

Lynn Atkinson, Editor
Jim Black
Elaine Hogg
Elaine Nasta
Oscar Romano

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2nd Vice President – Aaron Bresnahan
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FORT LAUDERDALE COUNCIL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Peter Apol
Lynn Atkinson
Jim Black
Pat Du Mont
Elaine Hogg
Alan Stotsky

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Wednesday, June 3, 2026 3:30 PM EDT
Join Zoom Meeting:
Meeting ID: 899 9626 3102
Passcode: GoNavy

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Wednesday, May 20th, 2026
6-7 PM Cocktails • 7-9 PM Dinner Buffet
LAUDERDALE YACHT CLUB
1725 SE 12th Street
Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33316

Guest Speaker

MATIAS A. SUELDO

Guests $55 per person
RSVP Required! Limited Seating!
No later than noon, Friday prior to the meeting.
Call 954-522-8995 or Online at www.ftlnavyleague.org/events

visit us on the web at www.ftlnavyleague.org