



NAVY LEAGUE

of the United States
"Citizens in Support of the Sea Services"



Vol. VII, No. 23

Colorado Springs Council

Winter 2013

~~~~~ HALYARDS ~~~~~

CALENDAR

January 3 - Board meeting, 9 am, IHOP, N. Academy
January 14 – Council Dinner Meeting, 5:30 pm, Biaggi’s Ristorante, 1805 Briargate Pkwy. See page 4.
February 7 - Board meeting, IHOP, N. Academy
March 7 - Board meeting, IHOP, N. Academy
March 27 - Members’ Dinner Meeting TBA

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGES

2013 President Rod Gardner:

I want to thank everyone for all their support this year. The Colorado Springs Chapter has a great core of active members and I'd like to challenge everyone to get more involved. Polish up your Navy League elevator speech and spread the word to try to recruit new members! It's been a great year and a fantastic learning experience. I look forward to staying engaged and supporting where I can. Thanks again for this great opportunity the Council afforded me. - Rod Gardner

Rod, Thanks for your enthusiastic leadership! We realize your day job demands a lot of your time and attention but we look forward to your continued contributions to the Council and we hope to see you often!

2014 President Dick Cooper:

My goals this year: Let me share with you a brief look at where I would like the Council to be in December 2014. We share two challenges with the National Navy League of the United States: 1) we need to increase our membership, and 2) we need to increase our membership's participation. We need people like you to step up to help with social events, the Navy Ball (a huge event), youth programs, the USS Colorado Commissioning Committee – anything you are interested in. Back to where I would like our interests to take us together – with your help:

- Improve our contact with other military organizations
- Establish outreach programs to assist active duty and veterans that need help
- Hold an Amazing Navy Ball (Navy plays here Oct 4)
- Support our youth programs; hopefully, re-establish a Sea Cadet program

- Get members interested in attending the National Navy League Convention in San Diego, June 18-22 (that shouldn't be a tough sell!)
Looking forward to a good year – Dick Cooper

RECENT EVENTS

Past National President Dan Branch Passes

Past President of the Navy League of the U.S., Captain Daniel B. Branch Jr., USN (Ret), died October 21, 2013, of an infection while fighting mesothelioma cancer. Dan was a resident of Boulder and a champion of youth programs promoting science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Captain Branch, a 1959 graduate of the U. S. Naval Academy, was awarded the Legion of Merit and the Defense Superior Service Medal among other awards, and was the youngest captain of a nuclear submarine at the age of 34. He will be missed.



CAPT Dan Branch, USN (Ret)

Navy Birthday Ball

On October 12, 245 Navy folks and friends dined and danced the night away at the Antlers Hilton to the get-up-and-dance-provoking music and vocals of Zorian Sorrels and the New Century Big Band in celebration of the Navy's 238th birthday. Revelers enjoyed dinner, champagne, and an inspiring speech by RADM Kerry Metz, USN, Commander, Special Operations Command North. Hearty thanks and BZ for a job well done to the intrepid Rocky Mountain Navy Ball Committee chaired by LT Vanessa Jansen!



Zorian Sorrels and New Century Band at Navy Ball

Navy Memorial Refurbished

In October, Colorado Springs Council and Navy Operational Support Center (NOSC) volunteers refurbished the Navy Memorial Anchor in Memorial Park, dedicated to the “Sailors and Marines who honorably and faithfully serve our great nation in peace and war.” The Navy Anchor was formally dedicated on the Navy’s Birthday in 1997 and resulted from the leadership and efforts of many Navy League stalwarts such as Costas Rombocos, of the Shrine of Remembrance and Clarence Gianeralli, of Ideal Concrete. With the volunteers’ efforts and paint donated by Lowe’s, the anchor looks as shipshape as ever!



NOSC and Council volunteers’ “painting party”

2014 Board Officers Elected

At the November 5 Council Dinner Meeting, the 2014 slate of candidates for Board of Directors was elected. The officers will be installed at the January 14 meeting.

President	Dick Cooper
VP Programs, Secretary	Bunny Blaha
VP Membership, Legislative Affairs	Bill Lockwood
VP Finance/Treasurer, Youth Programs	Art Cyphers

Unfilled positions include Judge Advocate and VP for Community Relations. Volunteers are welcome to step forward and fill these vacant positions. In fact, some of us might not mind some help with our multiple duties! If you’re interested, please let us know! Due to exhaustive demands on his time, Roy Bebee asked to be relieved of Editor, Halyards, duties and new member Bunny Blaha

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volunteered. Thanks, Roy, for your years of service and a job well done! Attendees at the meeting enjoyed Famous Dave’s barbeque and a presentation on Cyber Security by Steve Haynes, Senior Advisor at the National Resiliency Center.

Veterans Day Celebrated

The Military Order of the Purple Heart, Navy League Council, VFW, NOSC, USMC League and several other Veterans Service Organizations conducted a Joint Services Wreath-Laying Ceremony on Veterans Day, November 11, at Memorial Park in Colorado Springs.



A large crowd celebrated the service of Veterans

Anchors Aweigh Fly-In

One hundred fourteen (114) Navy League members visited Members of Congress during the November 14 Navy League “Anchors Aweigh Fly-In” to stress the need for a budget resolution. Our council was ably represented by Bill Lockwood and Dick Cooper.



Rocky Mountain Region President Steve Kelly, Congressman Ed Perlmutter, Colorado Springs Council President-elect Dick Cooper, Rocky Mountain VP-Legislative Affairs Bill Lockwood.



Dick Cooper, Bill Lockwood, Steve Kelly, and Congressman Doug Lamborn

Pearl Harbor Day Proclamation

Pearl Harbor survivors and Colorado Springs Council members attended the annual Pearl Harbor Day Proclamation at the El Paso County Commissioners meeting in Colorado Springs on November 26, 2013.

America's oldest living Pearl Harbor survivor, Jim Downing (age 100), gave the invocation. Downing was a 28-year old Gunners Mate Third Class assigned to USS West Virginia (BB-48) when Japan attacked the U.S. fleet in Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. After watching a brief video recalling the events that day, Downing told Commissioners, "These pictures bring up pleasant and unpleasant memories. What's missing are the noises and the smells of that morning."

Also attending the proclamation was survivor Doug Huggins who was a 19-year old Seaman First Class assigned to the USS St. Louis (CL-49) at the time, and his wife, Ruth. Both gentlemen described their experiences on that infamous day and were thanked for their heroic service by the commissioners. Huggins concluded, "Thank God for our country. We came together at that time. I wish we could do it now."



Front row: Commissioner Amy Lathen, Mrs. Doug Huggins, Doug Huggins, Commissioner Sallie Clark, LT Jim Downing, USN (Ret.)

Back row: Commissioner Dennis Hisey, CDR Art Cyphers, USN (Ret); CDR Bunny Blaha, USN (Ret); CDR Dick Cooper, USN (Ret); Commissioner Peggy Littleton, and Commissioner Darryl Glenn

Pearl Harbor Observance

A snow-covered landscape beyond a wall of glass provided the background for the 72nd Anniversary Pearl Harbor Observance on December 7 at the Regional Development Center in Colorado Springs. A half dozen WWII Veterans attended and received warm applause including Doug Huggins and Jim Downing (who received an award in recognition of his 100 years), both veterans of the Pearl Harbor attack; Doris Purdy, USMC; Roland Durden, USMC; Bob Snider, USA; and Frank Evans, USN.

RADM Metz, described the surprise and sacrifices of that historic day to about 100 attendees. Widefield High School NJROTC members sharply posted the Colors and memorial wreaths, and Fort Carson 4th ID Band provided fitting pomp and ceremony with music and Taps.

El Paso County Commissioner Dennis Hisey read the County Proclamation declaring December 7th to be Pearl Harbor Day. The attendance of Colorado State Senator Bernie Herpin and Colorado Springs City Councilmen Andy Pico and Don Knight was also appreciated. The event was organized by John O'Donnell and Joe Poch. Sincere thanks to them and to all who contributed.



Several WWII Vets attended the Pearl Harbor ceremony

Navy Beats Army 34-7!

Several dozen members of our council, the Tailhook Association, USNA alumni, Navy recruiters, Sea Bees, and other Navy types had a merry time at the Fox & Hound Grill on December 14 cheering Navy's rout of Army, 34-7! A friendly interactive rivalry with the Army folks in another room boosted the enthusiasm! We made many new friends and connections that we will work on to benefit each other's organizations in 2014.



Shipmates and friends enjoy Army-Navy game

Outreach Programs

In December the Board approved the donation of \$100 gift cards to one sailor-in-need at each of NMCB-17, NOSC, and Navy Recruiting Divisions 4 and 5. The surprise gifts surely helped brighten the holidays for some deserving sailors!

Youth Programs Report

The Council provided assistance for the activities of the four NJROTC units in the Colorado Springs area and presented Theodore Roosevelt Awards to outstanding Naval scholars in each unit. The units are invited to and eagerly provide color guard details, wreath escorts, etc. for Navy League-sponsored patriotic ceremonies in support of Veterans' Day, Pearl Harbor Day, Navy Birthday, Homeless Veterans Stand Down, etc. Two applicants for NROTC scholarships were interviewed

WHAT'S NEW

2014 Dues are due!

To join or renew, send \$15 per person or \$25 per family to: NLUS Colorado Springs Council-Membership
P.O. Box 2035 Colorado Springs, CO 80901-2035
(Must also be a member of Navy League of the U. S.)
Application at www.navyleague-coloradosprings.org

Honorary Members Nominated

Pearl Harbor survivors, Jim Downing and Doug Huggins, have been nominated as Honorary Members of our council for their "heroic service to the United States at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on December 7, 1941." Mr. Downing was commissioned in the field during the war and retired from the Navy in 1956 as a Lieutenant after 24 years of active duty. Mr. Huggins separated from the Navy in 1946 as an Electrician's Mate First Class with 6 years of active service. Council members will vote on the Honorary Member nominations on January 14.

January 14 Council Dinner Meeting.

Biaggi's Ristorante, 1805 Briargate Pkwy. Social hour starts at 5:30 pm, dinner seating at 6 pm. Installation of 2014 Board of Directors. Vote on Honorary Member nominations. Guest speaker: RADM Linda Fagan, USCG, Deputy Director of Operations, USNORTHCOM. **Anyone interested in Navy League and the sea services is welcome! Please RSVP to bunny_blaha@msn.com or 471-8527 ASAP!**

New Improved Council Bylaws

Board members have spent months updating our Bylaws to more accurately reflect how we operate. The revised Bylaws will be provided to the membership by email for review and voted on at the March Council meeting.

Commissioning Committee Update

The USS Colorado Commissioning Committee is underway and steaming! A letter of support was received from Governor John Hickenlooper, bank accounts have been opened, and our council made a seed donation of \$500, matching the Denver Council's contribution. Jason Clark, a financial advisor, has stepped up to assume the chair of the fundraising sub-committee.



New Kid on the Block

Last August, Council President Rod Gardner appointed Milady "Bunny" Blaha to fill the vacant Board position
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of VP for Programs for the remainder of 2013. At the membership meeting in November, she was elected to continue in that position and serve as Secretary for 2014.

Bunny claims Texas as home, although she hasn't lived there since she joined the Navy in 1974, and she's a Texas Aggie! Bunny is a retired Navy Commander. She was the Navy's 4th female helicopter pilot and was a Helicopter Aircraft Commander flying SH-3G Sea Kings and CH-53A Sea Stallions. She received her MS at Naval Post Graduate School in Manpower, Personnel and Training Analysis and was a proven sub-specialist.

For several years, Bunny has been an active volunteer and board member in organizations that support Veterans, including Veterans Affairs Homeless Programs, Colorado Veterans Resource Coalition/Crawford House, Veterans Trauma Court/Peer Mentor Program, Pikes Peak National Veterans Cemetery Committee, El Paso County Homeless Veterans Coalition/Stand Down, Fort Carson Army Community Services, and Pikes Peak Chapter/Military Officers Association of America (MOAA). In November 2013, Bunny received the MOAA Community Hero Award for her service to Veterans.

Bunny has 3 sons; 2 attend UCCS (one of whom was until recently a USMC Rifleman), and one is a Naval Aircrewman/Aviation Electronic Warfare Systems Operator. She has been in Colorado Springs for 10 years



New VP for Programs and Secretary, Bunny Blaha

BOARD OF DIRECTORS		
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