



GREATER CHARLESTON COUNCIL

Navy League of the United States

Annual 2025 Newsletter

MISSION

- Enhance the morale of sea service personnel and their families.
- Educate the public and Congress on the importance of our Sea Services.
- Support youth programs that expose young people to the values of our Sea Services.

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Organizing and supporting the Navy 250th birthday ball
- Namesake Visitation Program for the USS Charleston
- Supporting multiple Youth Programs including JROTC Units, Sea Cadets, Collegiate awards and the National STEM program with Cybersecurity Competition sponsorship
- US Coast Guard Community - USCG Cutter homeport support

BOARD of DIRECTORS

The 2025 board of directors are Jim Offutt, President; Nick Wong, VP; Mike McAllister, Treasurer; Greg Blackburn, Secretary and members Todd Ashworth, Carrie Hobbs, Jim Lyons, Manny Lovgren, Bob MacPherson and Wes Smith.

Celebrating 250 years of the U. S. Navy with a Ball on October 18, 2025

The event is being held at the Trident Technical College in North Charleston. In January 2025 the Charleston Council assumed responsibility for hosting the annual event and is helping a group of active duty Navy volunteers to manage the arrangements and build financial support and sponsorships. The Council's Navy Ball Committee also hosted a successful golf tournament in July to raise funds to benefit the Ball. Funds raised for the event goes towards reducing the ticket prices for Active Duty, Reserve, Civilian and Retired service members attending the Ball.



GREATER CHARLESTON COUNCIL

Navy League of the United States

Initiating planning for an annual U.S. Coast Guard Ball

Building on the success of the Navy Ball, the Council took the lead on initiating an inaugural USCG Ball to be held in 2026 – a celebration of the region’s official status as a Coast Guard Community which the Council arranged in 2024. Importantly, the Council partnered with the Coast Guard Foundation and the Propeller Club of Charleston to marshal the resources needed to ensure success in what will be a major new event for the area.

Commissioned and Adopted Units

We made significant contributions to the MWR accounts for USS PETERSON, RALPH JOHNSON and CHARLESTON whom we recently commissioned. We have adopted USCGC HAMILTON, JAMES, STONE and expect to adopt CALHOUN whom we commissioned in 2024.

USS CHARLESTON LCS – 18 Namesake Crew Visit

Our fourth attempt was finally successful in getting crew members from the ship based in San Diego CA to visit the namesake city of LCS-18. We began planning the visit in 2020 but were derailed by COVID. Starting again in 2024 two planned visits were overcome by operational requirements.

Finally, we met the crew at the Charleston airport on July 21 2025. The contingent consisted of the Commanding Officer, CDR Meghan Gray and nine crew members. The crew made quite an impression around town as they moved very smartly in their tropical white uniforms.



GREATER CHARLESTON COUNCIL

Navy League of the United States

Our first stop was North Charleston to visit Mayor Burgess. This was followed by lunch at the Blind Tiger pub and then a tour of the American College of the Building Arts in downtown Charleston.

A reception for the crew was sponsored by the Daughters' of the American Revolution and hosted by Mary Ann Warwick at her house on Johns Island.

The next day included another visit to downtown and the Old Exchange Building and Charleston Battery.

Moving to Mt. Pleasant, lunch was at the Tavern and Table Restaurant with the Palmetto Military Support Group Board and Charleston Battery Soccer Executive team. A visit to the USS YORKTOWN at Patriots Point was a chance for the Commanding Officer of the USS CHARLESTON to give a briefing to board members and the volunteers who serve on the YORKTOWN Museum. The next day, the crew visited the Citadel NROTC unit, had a tour of the campus and talked about the ROTC program.

We next visited the USCG Cutter JAMES where the Charleston crew toured the ship and lunched with the JAMES crew.

The final event of the day was a visit the River Dogs baseball team and the ship's mascot at their Stadium with a tour of the facility.





GREATER CHARLESTON COUNCIL

Navy League of the United States



The next morning, the crew gathered at the Pinnacle Financial Partners facility in Charleston with the community and business leaders and leaders from local military commands. Commander Gray gave a ship's briefing to the gathered audience about the history and capabilities of the USS CHARLESTON.

The crew visited the USCG Maritime Law Enforcement Academy (MLEA) where they gained a firsthand look at MLEA's training operations - including underway evolutions with the Non-Compliant Vessel Pursuit School and walk-throughs of mock LE boarding platforms.

A recent LCS-18 deployment included an embarked USCG Law Enforcement Detachment (LEDET), further highlighting the strength of our joint mission. The MLEA expressed being grateful for the Navy partnership and look forward to continued collaboration in advancing maritime security.



Support to the waterfront

Charleston will soon become the USCG's largest cutter homeport in the nation. The USCG obtained part of the old Navy base and is building out the new space including several pier upgrades.



GREATER CHARLESTON COUNCIL

Navy League of the United States

The Greater Charleston Council was pleased to support the USCG Ombudsman Recognition event in April 2025 with tokens of appreciation for the nine Ombudsman that attended. The Council also supported the September USN Ombudsman event by providing flowers and certificates to 19 ombudsmen in attendance.

We were privileged to help support the USCG 235th birthday celebration at a nearby USN recreation facility. The event was attended by more than 400 USCG members and families. This year the Council funded an ice cream truck – a big hit on a warm August day.



The Greater Charleston Council takes the lead in organizing a variety of volunteer organizations to support crewmembers and their families when major cutters return from lengthy deployments. In August the Charleston Council worked with Palmetto Military Support Group, Towns4Troops, First Command Financial and the USCG Auxiliary to welcome back the USCGC HAMILTON to her homeport following a lengthy and record-breaking counter-drug deployment.

Together, we provided food and drink for the crew and their friends and families as well as sign-making materials to ensure that everyone received a warm "welcome home."

Naval Nuclear Power School

The Greater Charleston Council supports the Naval Nuclear Power School every Monday by participating in a four-hour Naval Heritage session for new arrivals. The program includes an introduction to the propulsion systems on board the USS YORKTOWN followed by a series of discussions that include submarine development and operations during the Cold War and beyond.

The participants also get exposure to naval history and nuclear power development. Board member Bob MacPherson developed and delivered the submarine presentation based on his experiences as a Submarine Engineering Technician during the Cold War.

The Council also supports the school's awards program by taking part in graduation ceremonies providing certificates that recognize the outstanding performers in each class.



GREATER CHARLESTON COUNCIL

Navy League of the United States

Navy Ombudsman

An Ombudsman is an official representative of the Commanding Officer and plays a vital role in establishing and maintaining current and correct communication. This is an important function, especially when a ship is deployed. In September we presented flowers and letters of appreciation to the area Navy Ombudsman at the 55th Anniversary of the Navy Ombudsman Program celebration at the Charleston Naval Weapons Station. Twenty of the Ombudsmen were recognized from the Charleston area commands.

Navy League Charleston Board Member Michael McAllister recently joined Rear Admiral Martin Muckian (Commander, Submarine Group TWO) and CAPT John Fitzpatrick (NPTU Charleston) in recognizing the most recent graduates of the Nuclear Power Training program aboard USS YORKTOWN. He presented the First Light Award to MMN3 Owen Boles, EMN3 Marissa Edwards, MMN3 Hunter Patton and EMN3 Martin Ramirez-Correa. BZ to these distinguished graduates!



Youth Programs

The annual Citadel NROTC awards ceremony allows our Council to recognize the outstanding Navy and Marine Corps graduates each year by providing uniform swords to each of those individuals.

We also support five JROTC units by awarding the Theodore Roosevelt medal to an outstanding cadet.

Our Council supports two Sea Cadet units. One, the Yorktown Division where we helped arrange their use of the USCG Base on Tradd Street in Charleston. The second is the Palmetto Division in Columbia. For both units, the Greater Charleston Council works with corporate sponsors to provide much-needed financial aid to support Sea Cadet unit activities.



GREATER CHARLESTON COUNCIL

Navy League of the United States

Social Media

Under the title "Greater Charleston Navy League" our Facebook and Instagram pages track our Council activities and provide military information of interest to the local community.

Website: greatercharlestonnavyleague.org

Facebook: @greatercharlestonnavyleague

Instagram: [greatercharlestonnavyleague](https://www.instagram.com/greatercharlestonnavyleague)

Community events:

Palmetto Cyber Defense Competition

PCDC, Eastern defense forum: Navy League Charleston Council was a PLATINUM Level (\$2700) Sponsor for the Palmetto Cyber Defense Competition held at Trident Technical College in North Charleston 12-14 APR 2025. The goal of annual PCDC events is to energize South Carolina Colleges, High Schools, and their students to focus on the development of technical skills in the areas of networking and cyber security in preparation for exciting careers in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). PCDC contributes to build the cyber-capable workforce in the South Carolina Lowcountry. In sponsoring PCDC, the Charleston Council did so in recognition as well of how indispensable strong cybersecurity is for all USN/USMC/USCG afloat, airborne, space borne and ashore operations.

Community Hero Award

Council member Mike McAllister was recognized as a "community hero" at a recent Charleston Battery military appreciation night. He accepted a \$1,000 donation on behalf of the Charleston Council during the event at the Charleston RiverDogs. The halftime ceremony noted the Navy League's support of the Sea Services in the Low country and the successful campaign to have Greater Charleston officially designated as a "Coast Guard Community." Thank you to the Charleston RiverDogs, the Charleston Battery organization and their title sponsor The Ideal Life for supporting the important work of community charitable organizations and congratulations to Mike!



GREATER CHARLESTON COUNCIL

Navy League of the United States

Local Publicity

The Greater Charleston Council was recognized by The Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce for its signature namesake visit of the USS Charleston in “The Advocates”

USS Charleston Visit Reinforces Our Region’s Critical Role in National Defense

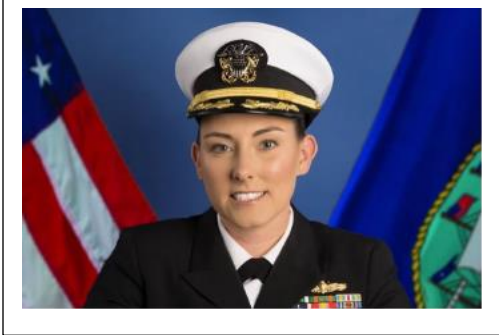
Charleston’s connection to the military is more than symbolic, it’s active, enduring and deeply rooted in both our history and our future. This past week, we had the distinct honor of welcoming (nine crew members from) the USS Charleston (LCS-18) back to its namesake city. The visit offered an opportunity to strengthen the bond between ship’s crew and our region, while spotlighting the evolving mission of the Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) class and the strategic role our community plays in supporting national defense. The USS Charleston is the sixth ship named after the historic City of Charleston. The original USS Charleston was a row galley that served in the United States Navy from 1798 to 1802. The Littoral Combat Ship is a class of relatively small, fast and agile warships designed for operations in near-shore or littoral environments. These vessels are intended to counter threats like mines, submarines and small surface craft, and can operate independently or as part of a larger naval force. LCS ships are known for their modular design, allowing them to quickly adapt to different missions with interchangeable mission packages.





GREATER CHARLESTON COUNCIL

Navy League of the United States



The ship's Commanding Officer, Commander Meghan Gray, along with nine members of her crew, traveled from San Diego, California, where the USS Charleston is home ported, to visit Charleston. During their visit, Commander Gray and her crew met with several city leaders and toured the city. Commander Gray provided an excellent overview of the evolution of the LCS class since the first ships were commissioned and discussed the challenges faced by the class as new mission sets are introduced.

One significant change in the LCS class is the increase in crew size, expanding from approximately 40 sailors to about 100 to support new mission sets and maintenance requirements. The USS Charleston has adapted to the evolving demands of the LCS class with great success and has performed admirably in the Pacific Fleet theater of operations.

Looking to the future, the USS Charleston will increase its coordination with the United States Marine Corps and employment of unmanned air and surface vehicles in the littoral environment. Additionally, in 2026, the ship will shift its home port to Bahrain. We wish the officers and crew of the USS Charleston much success as they operate in the increasingly hostile environment of the Red Sea.

Special thanks to the Navy League for coordinating the highly successful visit, as well as to our outstanding hosts: Pinnacle Bank, Charleston RiverDogs, City of Charleston, City of North Charleston, Joint Base Charleston, USCG Sector Charleston and Patriots Point. Military affairs are more than a pillar of our regional identity; they're a strategic part of our region's economic and civic future. If you're interested in getting more involved with the Chamber's military advocacy efforts, I welcome your partnership. Reach out to me directly at dbrown@charlestonchamber.org and let's continue strengthening the bonds between our business community and those who serve.