



Navy League of the United States - Minnesota Council



The North Star

1st Quarter 2024



Minnesota Council Sponsor Titan, Prince of the North Wind for St. Paul Winter Carnival

This year, the Minnesota Navy League Council is taking advantage of a unique opportunity to partner with the St. Paul Winter Carnival and sponsor Ed Wiegert, Titan, Prince of the North Wind, in the 2024 Saint Paul Winter Carnival Royal Family.



The St. Paul Winter Carnival, which started in 1886, is the oldest winter festival in the United States. The carnival fosters a sense of community, pride and belonging to Saint Paul's unique history and heritage through fun and educational experiences.

The 136th Saint Paul Winter Carnival will run for ten days – from Thursday, January 25th, through Saturday, February 3rd, 2024.

Ed Wiegert, officially signed on the 2024 winter carnival by the Titan Organization back in early 2023.

After the Winter Carnival, the Royalty are busy across the state. Winter Carnival Royalty appear at 300+ events over the entire year. The Minnesota Council will use this as an opportunity to brand the Council across the state. We will do this through joint Titan/Minnesota Navy League collector card handouts, word of mouth, official magnets on the float or parade vehicles, buttons, pins, coins, and the official announcement of the royal family and their sponsorship by the Prime Minister at all formal events and in dozens of communities across the entire state.

The Council will capitalize on this to get word out on our fundraising efforts to refurbish the USS Minneapolis St. Paul (SSN 708) Sail and Rudder and move the USS Ward (DD-139) Gun to the new Minnesota Military and Veterans Museum at Camp Ripley.

Ed Wiegert, Titan LXIV, Prince of the North Wind and Minnesota Navy League Council works as the Director of Maintenance Operations at Johnson Brothers Liquor Company, was previously employed by Flint Hills Resources in the refinery turnaround process. Prior to that he was the owner of a framing subcontracting firm that focused on building specialty and luxury homes throughout the Twin Cities market. Leisure time includes repurposing classic wooden boats into luxury bars crafted to express the fine taste and hospitality of its new captain.

The Minnesota Council looks forward to the tremendous benefits to our Council and to all the people touched by the St. Paul Winter Carnival Royalty and to be able to reach so many communities and organizations to tell the great story of our Navy and the Minnesota Navy League Council. For more information on the Winter Carnival go to: <https://wintercarnival.com/>

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A Message from the Minnesota Council President



Shipmates,

Hard to believe 2023 is already coming to an end...but here we are. As I reflect back on my first full year as President of the Council, there has been a lot of positive traction. I want to thank, first and foremost, my colleagues on the Council who really make things happen. Without their continued leadership and investment of time, we wouldn't be where we are today.

Our work is more important now more than ever. With increasing economic pressures on the services and the programs we support, our advocacy continues to find "value". In his most recent meeting with President Biden, President Xi of China said he was going to unify Taiwan with the mainland - some believe it may be as soon as 2025.

Our sea services will play a key role in future military operations, our advocacy for them is crucial. To meet these demands, the Council focused on membership, education, and partnerships.

Over the past year, we saw an increase in our membership by over 10%. Next year, we're going to see if we can expand it another 20%. we'll continue to push ourselves out into various communities through parades, sponsorship, and fund raising in order to continue to do the important work of informing the public about the sea services.

We've continued to provide critical support to the Navy Sea Cadet program and see very positive results from the work that is being done in this space. It is truly inspiring to meet these young men and women who will someday be the backbone of the sea services. Next year will be a demanding year for the Sea Cadet program, if you are not aware of what they do, check out this link: <https://www.seacadets.org/>

Our sponsorship of the Duluth Air show, featuring the Blue Angels, had mixed outcomes. While it was good for the Council to show our support to Active Duty and Reserve units, we found ourselves at odds with the event planners. In the future, I am hopeful that we will find a way to make this a better experience for the Council and the teams that we support.

There was good movement on the modernization of the rules for the Council's endowment with the University of Minnesota. This educational fund has been a positive asset for the ROTC program in Minneapolis, and we hope to expand access to it via on-line education in the coming year.

We've advanced our relationships with key partners over the past twelve months. We saw a great turn out with the Association of the US Army (AUSA) through the annual Army Navy Game watch party. Going into next year, there are continuing opportunities with AUSA as well as the US Air & Space Forces Association, General EW Rawlings Chapter. One area where we've seen the most growth is with our partnership with the Minnesota Military Veterans Museum (MMVM). For more information on the MMVM can be found here: <https://www.mnmilitarymuseum.org/>

A Message from the Minnesota Council President (Continued)

Recently, I traveled to Washington DC with the MMVM Director, Randal Dietrich and Capt. Brooks Berg, USN Ret, (SSN-708 Restoration Team Leader), to meet with the Director of the Navy History and Heritage Command RADM. Sam Cox, USN Ret, and his staff. The conversation revolved around the sail restoration of SSN-708 and the movement and restoration of the USS Ward gun mount located on the State Capitol grounds. The conversations were very productive and I am optimistic that these two historically significant items will be a major draw for the new museum when it is completed in 2026.



Placing wreath at Navy Flag at Fort Snelling
National Cemetery for Wreaths Across
America

Areas for improvement could (and should) be focused on increasing the outcomes you get from your membership. While our “Fleet Talks” didn’t gain much traction, I’m hoping our expanding partnerships with other organizations and a dedicated focus to member social events will help.

Looking to the new year, we are planning to host quarterly member events as opportunities to increase participation. In April, the Council will have the opportunity to showcase Minnesota as we host the Navy League Regional Conference.

This will be the first time we have the honor to welcome our regional partners and national Leadership. I hope you all attend. This is going to be a great event and opportunity to hear how the Navy League is evolving and what the future holds for us as we continue our advocacy for the sea services.

Later on in the year, we will host events at a Twins game, along with our annual Navy Ball, Army-Navy watch party, and our continued participation with Wreaths Across America.

The coming year is shaping up to be a busy one.

In your service,
Smokin’ Joe



Minnesota Council VP Updates



VP Legislative Affairs

On the national scene there was big news from Capitol Hill this past week. Senator Tuberville has finally withdrawn his holds on hundreds of military promotions thus ending his stalemate.

Both the House and Senate passed the 2024 National Defense Authorization Act, and it was signed into law by President Biden on December 22nd. The result of House and Senate NDAA negotiations also provided the authorizations needed for

the AUKUS agreement to go forward, a program for training Taiwanese military forces, and appoints an Inspector General to oversee future aid to Ukraine. The topline of the agreement comes in at \$874.2 billion, with a 5.2% pay raise for servicemembers.

US Congress will not approve any Ukraine aid before the end of the year. In a joint statement on December 19, Senate leaders said that any military support for Ukraine will be deferred until 2024 as Republicans continue to insist on stringent border concessions.

The COP28 climate summit concluded in Dubai as global leaders seek to find ways in which the world can mitigate the impacts of climate change. One such strategy, which seems to be building momentum, is a global fund temporarily administered by the World Bank which would help developing countries cope with the impacts of climate change and also transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy. The Navy and Air Force of the United States are working on new innovative technologies to help reduce their global carbon footprint through the use of more nuclear power and alternative fuels development. Numerous wealthy nations have already pledged large sums of money to support the fund.

On a positive note, the Navy League hosted a tremendously successful Congressional Shipbuilding Breakfast. Members of Congress in attendance included Senator Roger Wicker, Congressman Joe Courtney, Congressman Rob Wittman, Congressman Keith Self, Congresswoman Young Kim, Congressman Trent Kelly, Congresswoman Jennifer Kiggans, and Congressman John Garamendi. Military leaders, industry representatives, Navy League members, and Congressional staff filled out the remaining 100+ attendees. The Navy League has a major focus and emphasis supporting building and replenishing the Navy fleet to a 355 ships level from its current level of 293 by the end of 2024. The largest Navy's in the world currently are China with 790, Russia with 598 and North Korea with 519 vessels in service.

Finally, your voice counts to your elected officials. Now more than ever they need to hear from you directly. Here is a link to finding out who represents you where you live: <https://www.usa.gov/elected-officials>. There you can enter your address and see who represents you at the Federal, State and Local level in every state. Call and drop your House Rep.'s, Senators, and local officials a note to share your views. Nothing gets their attention faster than a note that begins with, "As a voting constituent in your district/state, I'm writing today to share my thoughts regarding..."

Have a Happy Holiday everyone!



Minnesota Council VP Updates



VP Adopted Units

The final quarter of the year focused on three key events. The Minnesota Navy League hosted five members of the crew of USS Minneapolis Saint Paul during Veterans Day weekend.

Cmdr. Justin Neff, Command Senior Enlisted (Senior Chief) Ariel Ampier, plus the Sailor of the Year, Junior Sailor of the Year, and Blue Jacket of the Year attended many events over a whirlwind 3-day timeframe.

On Friday, November 10, the crew was recognized on the floor of the Minnesota Gophers Men's Basketball. After this the crew visited the Marine Corps Ball hosted by the Como Park High School Marine Corps JROTC program.

On Saturday, November 11, the five members of the crew participated in three events. In the morning they appeared on KARE 11 Saturday, interviewed by veteran TV host Belinda Jensen who comes from a Navy family. The crew then participated in the drill weekend of the Twin Cities Squadron; a naval sea cadet unit sponsored by the Minnesota Navy League. They assisted with gun safety training, Cmdr. Neff spoke to the cadets about the Navy and USS Minneapolis Saint Paul, and had chow with the cadets. Later that evening they attended a banquet with the Naval Academy Glee Club and attended their concert at Orchestra Hall in Minneapolis.



USS Minneapolis Saint Paul crew attended the Minnesota Viking Game.

On Sunday, November 12, the crew attended the Minnesota Vikings Salute to Service game. They appeared with the Joint Service Color Guard during the National Anthem. Prior to the game they took pictures with fans outside the stadium, including the Vikings drumline. On Sunday evening they closed the weekend with a dinner hosted by the Board of Directors of the Navy League.

USS Minnesota continues its two-year maintenance availability. The good news is that they undocked from the drydock at Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard on time in mid-October and are now pier side on the tail end of their maintenance period. We anticipate sea trials in the new year with delivery back to the fleet and availability for national security tasking.

Supporting our local commands, our council raised \$7,000 from corporate and individual sponsors to subsidize tickets for junior sailors to attend the Minnesota Navy and Marine Corps Ball on October 28. The Council strongly believes in supporting our active duty and reserve Sailors based here in Minnesota.



Minnesota Council VP Updates



VP Community Engagement

Proclaiming the amazing news about the Navy League through local and state parades has been very exciting! Vice President of Community Engagement, Joyce Lacey has participated in many events this quarter, including parades, Military Appreciation Day at the Minnesota State Fair, Turkey Youth Bingo, speaking events at the Optimist Club, Ashby Lions Club and Sons of Norway, the Army/Navy Game Viewing Party and laying wreaths for Wreaths Across America at Fort Snelling National Cemetery.



Youth Turkey Bingo in Celebration of Military Families Month was held at the American Legion Peterson Tripp Post 357 in Ashby

Joyce also represented the Navy League by volunteering at the Alzheimer's Walk, MS Society Bike Rides, serving Veteran's Dinner on Veterans Day,

registering participants for Youth Turkey Bingo during Military Family month in November, as well as serving Thanksgiving Dinner at Union Gospel Mission. She also registered to roll a mile a day to Stop Soldier Suicide and provided a voice for those soldiers who return from service with PTSD.

She delivered poinsettias for Minnesota Veterans Homes and Hospitals and delivered over eighty gloves, scarfs, hats and socks to the Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans for Christmas.

She represented the Navy League in playing Mrs. Santa Claus for the Christmas Party on children's wing of the hospital and assisted with the American Cancer Society Relay for Life Winter event and helped lay wreaths at Fort Snelling National Cemetery for Wreaths Across America.

She also helped sew quilts for Quilts of Honor, honoring our veterans and volunteered with the Honor Flight from Fargo to DC for our veterans. Additionally, she assisted with Heroes Day at the Minnesota State Capitol September 16.

She had the opportunity to share information about the Navy League at the Over the River Holiday Festival in Fergus Falls December 2 and will be representing the Navy League serving Christmas Dinner at Union Gospel Mission.

Upcoming Parades include the St. Paul Winter Carnival King Boreas Grande Day Parade January 27th at 2:00 pm and the Vulcan Victory Torchlight Parade February 3rd at 5:00 pm.



Delivering Poinsettias to Veterans Home in Fergus Falls



Minnesota Council VP Updates



VP Youth Programs

The Cadets and Midshipmen in the various youth programs we sponsor – Naval Sea Cadets, Navy and Marine Corps Junior ROTC, and Navy ROTC – all have one thing in common: for their hard work as students, they have earned a Winter break following their Fall academic semester. Nearly all of them will be taking a Winter break, except for a few hard-charging Sea Cadets.

To advance to the next rank, a Sea Cadet must complete a study course, serve a required length of time in their current rank (generally 6 months), and attend a week of training. Just as in past years, several Winter training events will be available around the country for Sea Cadets who desire to complete a week of Sea Cadet training during the Winter break. Examples this year include Recruit Training, Petty Officer Leadership Camp, Medical/EMT, Search and Rescue, and Ceremonial/Honor Guard. Advancements in rank are a big accomplishment for our Sea Cadets, with their parents and other guests often attending the advancement ceremonies.

On December 17 I had the privilege of attending the Sea Cadet Chief Petty Officer pinning ceremony for Maximus Schantzen, a member of the Twin Cities Squadron of the Naval Sea Cadets. Just as in the Navy and Coast Guard, advancing to the rank of Chief Petty Officer is an impressive accomplishment. Cadet CPO Schantzen is Twin Cities Squadron’s first Cadet Chief Petty Officer since 2016, and only their 27th CPO since record-keeping began in 1992. (The Twin Cities Squadron was organized in 1969, seven years following the national program’s founding in 1962.) On average, only about 5% of Naval Sea Cadets attain the rank of Chief Petty Officer. This is comparable to the percentage of Boy Scouts who attain Eagle Scout, while also being comparable in accomplishment.



Cadet CPO Schantzen's parents pin his Cadet CPO insignias on his shirt collar tabs

A special guest at this pinning ceremony was Master Chief Petty Officer James Beadle, the Command Master Chief for the Northern Plains Region of the Navy’s Talent Acquisition Group which encompasses Minnesota, Iowa, North and South Dakota, Nebraska, and portions of Wisconsin and Illinois. (Over the past several years the Navy has begun referring to recruiting as talent acquisition, with the formal Navy-wide name change occurring in October 2023.)

The Sea Cadet’s Chief Petty Officer creed is very similar to that in the U.S. Navy, which begins, “I am a Chief Petty Officer. I lead by example and demand the same from my Sailors. I hold myself and

others accountable for the highest standards of performance, safety, and integrity...” CPO Schantzen’s parents pinned his Cadet CPO insignias on his shirt collar tabs, and then MCPO Beadle placed the CPO cover upon CPO Schantzen’s head. Both actions follow longstanding U.S. Navy tradition.

Like with all formal ceremonies, this event began with the Sea Cadet Color Guard posting the Colors.



USS Minneapolis - Saint Paul News

USS Minneapolis-Saint Paul – The Holiday Season.

MAYPORT, Fla. (December, 1st , 2023) – The Freedom-variant littoral combat ship USS Minneapolis-Saint Paul (LCS 21) has completed this quarter after having successfully entered the ship yard, beginning much needed repairs, and completing multiple warfare area certifications. While the ship is moving forward, the crew is also enjoying some much needed recovery time following a truly packed 2023.

USS Minneapolis-Saint Paul kicked off the year’s final quarter by entering dry dock for repairs in the ship’s lifecycle, known as Post Shakedown Availability. This phase has provided time for our Wayfinders to diligently train within their rates, and ultimately certify within the following warfare areas: Anti-terrorism (AT), Damage Control-Industrial (DC-I), Navigation (MOB-N), Surface and Air warfare (SUW/AW), and Fleet Support Operations-Medical (FSO-M).

USS Minneapolis-Saint Paul’s most exciting event of this quarter was the crew’s namesake visit to Minnesota on Veteran’s Day Weekend. Five members of the crew flew into the Twin Cities on the evening of November 10th. The attending service members were: CDR Justin Neff (CO), CSEL Ariel Ampier, HT1 Terry Oliver (Sailor of the Year), ET1 Adam Rowicki (Junior Sailor of the Year), and EN2 Makayla Lewis (Blue Jacket of the Year).



USS Minneapolis Saint Paul Crew at U of M Basketball game with Goldie Gopher

Ensuring no wasted time, our Wayfinders headed straight into the festivities by attending the University of Minnesota Golden Gophers basketball game, where they received recognition at center court during halftime. Immediately following the conclusion of the game, the crew attended the Como Park’s Marine Corps JROTC Birthday Ball. During this event, the crew witnessed Cadet Anthony Landaverde Guillen receive the highest award for achievement in the Marine Corps JROTC for the Northwest Region, known as the Legion of Valor Bronze Cross for Achievement.

The local news network KARE11 warmly welcomed our Wayfinders on November 11th to conduct a live interview. CDR Neff answered a myriad of questions regarding the ship’s namesake, past and future activities, as well as their plans while visiting the Twin Cities. After the interview, and a chance to get some lunch, the crew met with the Twin Cities Squadron Sea Cadets where they saw firsthand Cadets working on marksmanship, firearms safety, cleaning and maintenance, and dry fire laser training. Concluding the evening, the Wayfinders shared dinner with the U.S. Naval Academy’s Glee Club, and attended their performance with the Minnesota Orchestra.

On the final day, Sunday November 12th, CDR Neff conducted an additional interview, this time with KSTP 5. CDR Neff talked about the friendliness of people within Minnesota and the namesake visit highlights. Following the interview, CDR Neff and his crew were excited to attend a Minnesota Vikings game. At this sporting event, our Wayfinders marched out alongside the Joint Service Color Guard and Marine Corps Silent Drill Team to render honors during the National anthem, and receive recognition before kickoff.



USS Minneapolis - Saint Paul News (Continued)

Most recently, and in closing of the fourth quarter, USS Minneapolis-Saint Paul held their annual holiday party for the crew. This was their final gathering prior to entering a well-deserved leave period, commonly referred to as Holiday Standdown. Holiday Standdown is a period where the crew divides a block of time to enjoy time with family and vacation prior to returning to an increased operational tempo.



USS Minneapolis Saint Paul crew attended the Como Marine Corps JROTC Marine Birthday Ball at Herbies on the Park



USS Minneapolis Saint Paul Crew attended Twin Cities Squadron Sea Cadet November drill where they witnessed cadets working on marksmanship and firearms safety.

Following this year, the ship will be entering the Basic Phase, which provides the foundation towards successfully operating within their future deployment. Until then, and on behalf of USS Minneapolis-Saint Paul, CDR Justin Neff would like to wish you, the reader, a very Happy Holiday Season!



USS Minnesota News

12 October 2023, USS MINNESOTA (SSN 783) successfully undocked in Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard marking a monumental milestone during this maintenance period.

The tenacity of the crew and the shipyard resulted in MINNESOTA achieving this milestone two weeks ahead of schedule. Once waterborne, the crew was able to move back onboard reviving the heart and soul of the submarine.



USS Minnesota (SSN 783) undocks at Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard

Since the summer, MINNESOTA has had 28 sailors earn their dolphins, 4 Junior Officers qualify Engineer, and 11 sailors supporting forward deployed submarines conducting missions vital to national security. During the holiday season, many sailors took the opportunity to travel home and visit family and friends.

Going into the New Year, MINNESOTA continues to look forward to rejoining the Submarine Force as one of the most technologically advanced and capable platforms in the world.

- Be a Viking!

Command Updates



Navy Talent Acquisition Group Northern Plains Quarterly Update

Hello Navy League of Minnesota!



As we closed the end of the fiscal year, it was no secret that Navy recruiting, as a whole, fell short of its goal. In the past few months, Navy Recruiting commanding officers from the areas of responsibility across the U.S. were able to meet with higher-headquarters to discuss and brainstorm various solutions to increase engagement and bolster recruiting numbers.



I can tell you that we have some of the most dedicated men and women that wear the Navy uniform engaging and prospecting across the Northern Palins. With increased production guidance, our team has risen to the challenges and continues to charge the storm to enlist and commission the future of our Navy.



Our headquarters team is also working diligently to set up and schedule engagement opportunities at events to better place our recruiters in front of the right people to better facilitate our outreach efforts. This includes multiple career fairs at more than seven colleges, and a presence at both the Iowa State wrestling and track tournament and the Minnesota State High School wrestling tournament.



We rely on the continued support and dedication from the Navy League, as well as other Navy and military support organizations, to keep recommending Naval service and engaging with key centers of influence to explain the benefits and honor that comes with service in the Navy.

NTAG Change of command held at the Minnesota Capitol on December 15, 2023

As some who read this may be aware, I am preparing to transfer to my new command and assume the duties as the Navigator aboard USS HARRY S. TRUMAN (CVN 75). The change of command ceremony was held Dec. 15, at the Minn. state capitol rotunda where my executive officer, Cmdr. Jonny “DOZER” Kane, relieved me. I can assure you that NTAG Northern Plains will pass into great hands with Cmdr. Kane, as his passion and enthusiasm for supporting the Navy mission is only surpassed by his charisma and his dedication to those he is charged to lead.

I would like to extend my sincerest thank you to the Minnesota Navy League for their steadfast support of NTAG Northern Plains during my 3 years’ as executive officer and skipper, in addition to thanking our fellow Navy unit families that we continue to work with throughout the area to spread awareness and build community support. Although this will be my final quarterly message as an NTAG Northern Plains CO, I will continue to support our mission of praising the importance of sea service and maybe even one day I’ll continue that support as a future Minnesota Navy League member! Thank you all for all you do and for the unwavering support you provide to our community, our Navy and our country!

With Respect,
CDR John “Knox” Allen,
Commanding Officer, NTAG Northern Plains

Command Updates



NTAG New Leadership

Commanding Officer



Cmdr. Jonny "DOZER" Kane

Executive Officer



Cmdr. Mark A. Rittenhouse



NRC Minneapolis

NRC Minneapolis held a Annual Joint Retiree Appreciation Day October 21st. It had approximately 250 attendees on by the Retired Activities Office (RAO). Attendees included the following: Air Force Casualty Assistance Representative, Veteran Benefits Administration, Minnesota Dept of Veteran Affairs, Healthcare (Minneapolis Veterans Home & Suicide Prevention), Government Employees Health Association, FEDVIP, Space-A Travel, Army Retirement Service Officer, Minnesota Dept of Veteran Affairs – Programs & Services, Minnesota Chapter MOAA, Minneapolis VA Medical Center, Fleet Reserve, AARP, Minnesota Submarine League and Minnesota Disabled American Veterans.

Additionally, NRC recently refurbished its auditorium. Audio and video should be installed Feb/Mar time frame.



Command Updates

MSU Duluth



MSU Duluth had a busy month with community involvement and building relationships with the community.



November 10th all USCG units in Duluth participated in the EDMUND FITZGERALD memorial beacon lighting ceremony. We had members from our unit post the colors at the event as well as having our Commanding Officer Cmdr. Jarrod DeWitz speak at the event. The event took place at Split Rock Lighthouse. The ceremony recognizes the tragic loss of the crew that was aboard the EDMUND FITZGERALD. The ceremony had a bell ring for each of the 29 crewmembers lost in the incident. At the end of the ceremony, the lighthouse was lit up and members in attendance got to see the lighthouse in full effect. The event was humbling and reminded folks that Lake Superior is a dangerous body of water as well as the USCG to this day are regulating and ensuring the safe travels of vessels across the Great Lakes and the country.



Cmdr. Dewitt Speaks at the Edmund Fitzgerald Event at Split Rock Lighthouse

November 21st MSU Duluth participated in a Turkey Fry event. Fifty-five turkeys were donated from CHUM and frying equipment was borrowed from Marine General. During this time, volunteers from MSU Duluth and the 148th Fighter Wing fried turkeys that would later be served as turkey sandwiches to those less fortunate around Thanksgiving. The event received media coverage by local news networks and the members involved had a great time.

At the beginning of December, members of MSU Duluth did a story time event at the West Duluth Library. Members read to babies and toddlers some Coast Guard books, shared their challenge coins for kids to see, did the hokey pokey, donned a Mustang survival suit, and answered questions from parents. The event was a fun time and all those involved loved it!

Additionally, from September – December MSU members have been educating kids at the 148th STARBASE camp by teaching them USCG missions conducted at MSU Duluth and answering questions.

In between these community service events, MSU Duluth crew members have been going to high school and community events recruiting. The USCG not only protects people from the sea, protects the sea from people, and protect the sea itself, but we love to give back to our communities. Most guardians move to a new location and get involved with their community. It is an attribute not mentioned too often because of how small our service is, but communities that have the USCG among them can attest that we bring a positive impact. If you know someone interested in joining the USCG, please visit gocoastguard.com and search for a recruiter to pay a visit or call and ask questions to see if the USCG is a good fit. If you have specific questions about what Marine Safety Unit Duluth does, please call us at 218-725-3800. You can select any number on the phone tree, and we can either answer your question(s) or get you to someone that can better address your question(s).

Command Updates

University of Minnesota ROTC



A busy fall semester for the University of Minnesota NROTC Program! We welcomed and began training for six new Midshipmen. They reported for training with the Gopher Battalion after completing a 3-week long New Student Indoctrination course in Great Lakes. This program brings together incoming midshipmen from across the country to instill military customs and courtesies and provide basic professional military education. They then reported to UMN NROTC the last week of August, prior to university classes beginning. During this time, they were allowed to move into their campus dormitory, complete UMN NROTC's New Student Orientation, and prepare themselves for the start of the school year. University classes and Professional Military Education began 5 September for all NROTC midshipmen.

Not only was September 5th the start of the Fall semester, it was also a retirement for CDR Andrew Behlke, who completed 22 years of honest and faithful service. The MIDN had the honor of planning, organizing, and executing the retirement ceremony for our outgoing executive officer (XO). The Gopher Battalion was honored to have him as XO during his final tour of duty and to be the ones to say "Fair Winds and Following Seas" to a shipmate. He will be missed.

Soon after classes began, the Gopher Battalion embarked on their annual Battalion Field Training Exercise (FTX) at Camp Ripley, during which the midshipmen were challenged physically and mentally. They completed Combat Conditioning Exercises, practiced Military Operations in Urban Terrain (MOUT), and executed Leadership Reaction Courses (LRCs). These events demonstrate the importance of teamwork and showcase the value of leadership amongst their peers.

The 1/C MIDN were notified of their service assignments mid-semester and

are excited to congratulate MIDN 1/C Bowman and Mulhall for their selection as Student Naval Aviators and MIDN 1/C Reed on Surface Warfare. All MIDN are looking forward to graduation and commissioning this spring.

In late October, the Gopher Battalion coordinated, planned, and executed the annual Navy and Marine Corps Birthday Ball on 28 October. This time-honored tradition acknowledges the years and service for Sailors and Marines who have either served or are still serving.

To kick off the holiday season, the MIDN began Thanksgiving break by hosting the annual Turkey Bowl, a competitive game of football played between Navy and Marine Corps students. The winner of this year's Turkey Bowl were the mighty Marine Corps option Midshipmen. As students are winding down the semester and preparing for final examinations, the Gopher Battalion wishes you all a safe and happy holiday season!



MIDN 3/Cs Merren and Gifford along with MIDN 4/Cs Jarman and Zak practice urban warfare techniques by clearing the largest building in the area during Military Operations in Urban Terrain (MOUT) at Camp Ripley, MN.

Command Updates



Twin Cities Squadron Sea Cadets

Whoa! What a fall season for the Twin Cities Squadron. In September the unit returned to regular drill and welcomed all of the new staff cadets to their leadership positions. They did not hesitate to roll up their sleeves and get to work. The cadets knocked out the semi-annual Physical Readiness Test with several earning ribbon and appurtenance awards. I have no doubt our new fitness petty officer, AN Hartman will have the squadron in peak condition for the spring event.



Training evolutions included self defense tactics, and hand-to-hand combat. More than a few cadets took the opportunity to go a round in the ring with the Skipper and land a few well placed shots. The drill weekend wrapped up with sea bag inspection and small squad tactics and maneuvers with room clearing simulations.

The weather in October provided the cadets with the opportunity to adapt and overcome. Plan to volunteer for the Twin City Marathon were scrubbed due to black

flag conditions, and the following weekend cadets battled cold temps and rain learning to rock climb and rappel with Midwest Mountain Guides at Interstate Park, Taylors Falls. The unit took advantage of the opportunity to get in some team bonding while hiking the trails overlooking the scenic St. Croix Valley. A sharp contrast (pun intended) to the following training evolution that involved teaching the cadets basic knife handling skills. The cadets showed off those newly acquired skills and some creativity carving bars of soap into a myriad of designs. They capped off the weekend with knife throwing evolution. This was an acquired skill! At the end of the day, thanks to some help from the Army staff, and our special guests Lt. Pearson and ENS Packa a couple squads earned some bragging rights as ace throwers.



AN1 Lang showing rappelling skills

One of the highlights for the TCS Command was the opportunity to welcome Lt Pearson and ENS Packa from Polaris Division (Cambridge) for the day to observe and share some command insights to that helped bring our mission better focus. It's great to see our units re-igniting that partnership. Our cadets had an action-packed fall, and arguably some of the coolest training evolutions in recent memory. November started off with a bang (pun intended again) as the cadets worked through marksmanship training with evolutions in range safety, firearm handling and maintenance, and dry fire training. It all culminated in live fire qualifications at Metro Gun Club. The cadets and officers qualified on both pistol and rifle with a number achieving sharpshooter.



Lt.jg Wilson (TCS) presenting Cmdr.Neff (LCS 21) with a citation for the crew of LCS 21

Command Updates

Twin Cities Squadron Sea Cadets (Continued)



Without a doubt, the surprise visit from CDR Neff and crew members from the USS MPLS-STPAUL (LCS 21) was the best part of the drill weekend. The cadets got to work side by side with the sailors learning small arms handling and cleaning. The crew ate chow with the cadets and departed with a symbolic exchange of swag. Thank you Wayfinders!



December is all about service. The cadets joined forces with the NLUS team at Wreaths Across America. They were thrown a late curveball and asked to unload and pull security over 16,000 wreaths. In the spirit of teamwork, TCS cadets worked side by side with Civil Air Patrol members to manage the mission.



TCS ended 2023 with a ceremony to pin new Chief Petty Officer Max Schantzen. CPO Schantzen is the 27th Chief to be pinned since 1992 (when records started), and joins an elite fraternity known as the Chief's Mess. Navy Chief. Navy Pride!



I want to wish CDR John "Knox" Allen, departing Skipper of NTAG-Northern Plains bets wishes on his deployment aboard the USS Harry S. Truman (CVN 75). Your support of the TCS has been much appreciated. And congratulations to the new CO, Jonny "Dozer" Kane, we look forward to building on this partnership under your watch.



Cadets supported Wreaths Across America

In closing, the Twin Cities Squadron wishes to thank the MN Council for the continued support and dedication to the USNSCC mission.



CPO Schantzen capping by MCPO Jim Beadle (NTAG-Northern Plains)

Happy Holidays to our friends across the NLUS-MN Council family, and special holiday cheers to our shipmates across the world keeping the watch. We are grateful for your service and sacrifice. Check out our Facebook page for more NSCC Twin Cities Squadron videos and content.

Command Updates

Polaris Battalion



From developing skills such as welding and carpentry to supporting the community through volunteering with various organizations around the area, Polaris Battalion did not slow the pace this season. The quarter kicked off with team building activities at Trolhaugen Outdoor Recreation Area where the cadets overcame their apprehension of heights by zip lining between the trees and successfully problem solved their way through the aerial challenge course. With football season in full swing, they were honored to perform color guard detail for several Cambridge-Isanti football games, including homecoming and playoffs. Color guard was also present for the Navy Chief pinning ceremony, held at the Historic Fort Snelling, as well as the lead for the annual Cambridge Snowflake Parade.



To support local veterans, first responders, frontline medical staff, corrections, dispatch, and their family members receive much needed mental health services, Polaris Battalion held a salute line during the 15th Annual Invisible Wounds Project Cruise for Heroes and assisted with the vehicle lineup. On Veterans Day, cadets honored local veterans and their families by assisting the Isanti VFW Post 2735 with serving beverages and cleaning up the dining area while patrons enjoyed their meal. During drill weekend they also learned of the origins of Veterans Day and why it means so much to our country.



In preparation of the upcoming annual Military Ball, the battalion has been busy finalizing the details of the evening and the cadets have been practicing their respective roles. Senior cadets trained the newer recruits on how to perform different aspects of the ceremony and instructed a class about the Missing Man Table. Also known as the fallen Comrade Table, the senior cadets focused their presentation on explaining the meaning behind every detail and why the ceremony is practiced today.



Every year the cadets take part in a campout where they have an opportunity to apply what they learned in a classroom to the practical world, while at the same

time being able to learn a completely new set of skills. This year, some cadets practiced their welding by designing and building a mobile rack that stowed Christmas lights. This project was at the request of Senator Koran who, with the assistance of Polaris Battalion, sets up an elaborate Christmas decoration display for the public to enjoy every year. Meanwhile, the other cadets learned how to read drawing plans and work with power tools as they teamed up to build park benches. These benches will be auctioned off at the military ball and proceeds will help support upcoming summer trainings. Additionally, the cadets also challenged each other through an obstacle course, learned how to start a fire, different ways to fabricate a shelter, and practiced field defense tactics. Furthermore, a class was taught on the Minnesota's emergency communications system and Isanti County Deputy Vandervegt and K9 Maverick stopped by to give a K9 demonstration and speak about being a dog handler.



Command Updates

Polaris Battalion (Continued)



Being that not only is weather important to military operations, but it is also critical when living in the upper Midwest, cadets had an interactive class with a former Air Force meteorologist where they learned how atmospheric dynamics of altitude, air pressure, and temperature, basics of weather systems and frontal boundaries, impacts on aircraft, and why the weather forecast is a driving factor in any mission. A cadet also gave a presentation on how to use an emergency weather radio, including what the different sirens mean. The cadets also started a deep dive series into the Constitution, discussing what each of the amendments mean and how each is applicable to the cadets individually. The history lessons continued when the senior cadets gave a presentation to the battalion on what led up to the tragedy on 7 December 1941 and the significant impact it had on not only our country, but also the world. They also discussed how those events changed policy on that day as well as how those events still affect us now.

Although not all the cadets are old enough to drive yet, they worked as a team to change a flat tire and perform operational maintenance by checking hoses, belts, and fluids. They were also instructed on uniform maintenance such as button replacement and mending.



It is an honor to mention the four Polaris Battalion alumni who recently graduated from Navy bootcamp at Great Lakes, IL: Reese Jorgenson, who also earned the Military Officer Association Award, Bryce Felton and Gavin Olson are currently in A school, and Thomas Abbott is on his way to the USS Eisenhower.



Command Updates

Twin Ports Division



"IN with the old, AND the new!"



This last quarter of 2023 saw many changes for Twin Ports Division. All of them good! Most of those changes came with the introduction of some familiar faces. Four of our prior cadets have returned to the command as Midshipmen, Auxiliary, and instructors! The wealth of knowledge they bring back is irreplaceable and all are re-assigned to their former work centers. Their leadership will ensure that their junior sailors receive better training and aid in earning qualifications.



Supply Dept Head Rainah Gibbons



BM3 Lowney was a crucial asset during both moves of the William A. Irvin in 2018 & 2019. Serving as Work Center Supervisor for Deck Department during the Irvin project "Operation Rivet" Lowney oversaw the completion of deck's American Bureau of Shipping (ABS) checklist before the move. Lowney transferred to active duty after seven years of service with Twin Ports Division and remained a Boatswain's Mate. BM3 Lowney has now returned as the Department Head for deck department. Rainah Gibbons served in Twin Ports Division for two years as a Culinary Specialist in Supply Department. Since returning to the command and beginning her transition over to the officer side of the line, Ms. Gibbons has already taken charge as Department Head of Supply and has even returned to her



seamanship roots to assist in a 4-hour pilot boat tow through the Duluth and Superior Harbor, all while being several months pregnant! ENFN Andrew Truscott served as an Engineman in Machinery Division for three years in Twin Ports Division. Truscott is now the Department Head for M-Div and has just landed a job at Cirrus Aircraft.

During this last quarter Twin Ports Division entered its next phase in anti-terrorism/force protection (ATFP) training. This phase involved weapons safety, familiarization, and courses of fire with the M4 and P226 9mm pistol. Sailors both officer and enlisted were trained in weapon condition levels, operation, and handling, along with dry-run range procedures and performance. This phase is complete and wrapped up until 2024 when range quals take place. The command has shifted to navigation training and chartwork. Duty resumes for Twin Ports Division in late January 2024 after the Christmas Standdown expires.

During late fall, Twin Ports Division was contacted by the harbor pilot to assist in the tow of one of their company's tugs to another dock on the other side of the harbor. Five personnel made up the tow, three from TPD. The tow began in the St. Louis River and through both Duluth and Superior harbors. The wind was almost non-existent and the water was smooth as glass. Four hours later after an orange sunset, the pilot boats were safely shifted to the new dock.

Command Updates

Twin Ports Division (Continued)



Twin Ports Division entered its next phase in anti-terrorism/force protection (ATFP) training

Midshipman Oliver Swimeley was commissioned to Ensign and is the Executive Officer of Twin Ports Division.

Swimeley is no stranger to boats. Early on in his time in the command, Ensign Swimeley spent several hours and days underway on the pilot boat.

Lt. Paul Bastianelli just earned his active-duty commission this year as a pharmacist. He served in Twin Ports Division for over 10 years. After completing Pharmacy school at the U of M and UMD, Bastianelli now works at the Naval Hospital in Portsmouth, Virginia. We are proud of him and all of our sailors for their never-ending successes. Bravo Zulu shipmates on a job well done! Thank you all for your service!

Washington Tech JROTC



WTMS NJROTC Eagle Company is proud to announce our 2023/2024 Cadet Leadership Team. C/LCDR Nathan Vue, CO; C/LT Ethan Yang, XO; C/MCPO Saw Taw Nay Lwe, CMC; C/LTJG Aliyah Tao, Operations; C/Ensign Alex Cuevas Marquez, Drill; C/Ensign Las Way Wan, Supply; C/Chief Petty Officer Jamie Thao, PT.



Returning Cadets and Instructors welcomed more than 40 new Cadets to the program, including over ten 8th grade students. Multiple Eagle Company Cadets were recognized by their peers and elected to student council. Congratulations to Yajaira Gil Tapia, Khin Mar Oo, Tenesha Clement, Eyvette Soe, Jin Her, Aliyah Tao, Perianna Comodore and Bubba Moo! Eagle Company Cadets turned in a spirited performance at the 14th Annual Great Northern All Team Sports (GNATS) blowout, hosted by the Harding High

NJROTC Program. Although we came up short, a good time was had by all. Our Varsity Color Guard performed well at the Como Park Devil Dog Drill Competition. Eagle Company promoted over 20 Cadets this quarter.

The Cadets organized and held a Halloween Party with support from our National Guard Recruiters.

Eagle Company Cadets performed multiple Community Service events in support of Washington Technology Magnet School, local elementary schools, and local community organization events, including the SPPS School Choice Fair, Washington Debate Tournament and Color Guard at our Karen New Year celebration. We presented over 20 Community Service and Unit Service awards this quarter. We have launched our new NJROTC Club, taking place during advisory periods beginning 2nd quarter. The club allows us more time during the school day to work on drill and color guard teams.



Eagle Company, 4th Platoon, hosted Command Master Chief Sheon Hunte, USN (retired) as our guest speaker for a Veterans Day presentation.

Command Updates

Como Park MCJROTC



The CPSHS MCJROTC Cadets hit that Community Service "LIKE BUTTON" again at the Palace Recreation Center to celebrate their holiday festivities. Led by Junior Cadet Eh Chri Paw's leadership.



The CPSHS MCJROTC Cadets continue to perfect their craft Saturday after Saturday honing their skills on the drill deck for the next Drill Competition. Seen here on a break breaking bread over homemade nachos.



The annual Devil Dog Drill Competition was hosted at Como Park High School for eight schools within the surrounding states. More than 300 JROTC cadets attended this day-long affair. An admirable performance from all the cadets who sacrificed their time off to hone their close order skills.



The Marine Corps JROTC at Como was established 28 years ago. Since 1995, thousands of Como students have chosen to participate as committed cadets who work for the betterment of themselves and their community. A strong foundation for consistent excellence over many years has resulted in Como being recognized as the top-ranked program for 2023 in Region 4 of the Marine Corps Reserve Association (MCRA).



The MCRA "Eagle Globe and Anchor Award" for Outstanding Unit was announced and celebrated by past and current cadets on November 10 at the Marine's Birthday Ball. Region 4 of the MCRA spans 20 states and includes over 60 other Marine Corps JROTC programs.



The continued commitment to expand their community service, achieve academic success, and excel in local and national competitions brought the group to the top spot for the first time in school history.

Other News

Minnesota Chapter participates in Army Navy Game Watch Party



Minnesota Chapter participates in Wreaths Across America at Fort Snelling



Other News

Harriet G. Walker Chapter, NSDAR presents ornaments to USS Minneapolis Saint Paul

The Harriet G. Walker Daughters of the American Revolution Chapter made 82 holiday ornaments and mailed to the USS Minneapolis Saint Paul. The ornaments, 82 of them, used 700+feet of ribbon, 8 yards of fabric, and over 13,000 pins. Chapter members helped with cutting the ribbons. The one with USS MSP was given to the ship, with the rest given to the crew, and one to the ombudsman.



St. Paul Winter Carnival is January 26 - February 5



Navy League New Portal is now LIVE!!!

<https://www.navyleague.org/login/>

Other News

NAIP

This year 144 Minnesota high school students have submitted preliminary applications to attend the USNA in Annapolis, Maryland. This preliminary application is the first in a series of steps for USNA candidates. After the preliminary application, candidates complete a more comprehensive application that includes a one-on-one interview with a Blue and Gold Officer. Each candidate simultaneously submits applications their members of Congress, hoping to obtain a nomination to USNA. The Congressional nominating committees conducted nomination interviews from early November to early December. Minnesota's BGO served on many of these interview committees this year. Nominations will be made by a US Representative or Senator, and must be submitted to USNA by January 31, 2024.

Simultaneous with the nomination process, the USNA Admissions Board convened and has been meeting regularly since early September 2023 to evaluate each USNA candidate who has completed the USNA application. Offers of appointment have already been made to several highly qualified Minnesota candidates. It is hoped that the full USNA Class of 2028 will be selected and notified not later than April 15, 2024. It is anticipated that between ten and eighteen students will be selected from Minnesota's USNA applicants and will receive full scholarship appointments to USNA with the Class of 2028.

In addition to the annual interview, nomination and appointment process, Minnesota also participated in Operation Information (OPINFO). This is a program set up by the USNA to provide first-hand information on USNA life to perspective candidates and parents, by current Midshipmen who call Minnesota home. This year nine USNA Midshipmen were selected to participate in OPINFO. The Midshipmen are paired with a BGO and make presentations to interested school officials, students and others regarding their USNA experiences, academic majors and possible career paths after graduation.

This year, Minnesota was fortunate to have a Midshipman assigned to each of Minnesota's eight Congressional Districts either before or just after Thanksgiving. An open house was held at Saint Thomas Academy with support from NTAG Northern Plains, the Parents Association of Minnesota, the Navy League of the United States- Minnesota Council, the Naval Academy Alumni Association-Midwest Chapter and the NROTC University of Minnesota. At the open house, presentations were made on USNA by Captain Brad Gawboy, Minnesota's Deputy Area Coordinator for the Naval Academy Information Program and by Captain Abigail Hutchins, Commanding Officer of the NROTC program at the University of Minnesota. Captain Hutchins spoke on many aspects of both the Navy and Marine Corps options of the NROTC program offered at the University of Minnesota and partnered area universities.

The USNA and NROTC Midshipmen each discussed their experiences in their selected programs and why they chose the officer program in which they enrolled. Time was also allotted for one-on-one discussions with Midshipmen and interested students and parents. The evening provided much information on the various Navy and Marine Corps Officer programs. We look forward to conducting a similar open house next year as part of the OPINFO program.

Other News

DID YOU KNOW?

By Brandon Montanye

On the 22nd of April of this year, the USS Nimitz (CVN-68) successfully completed her 350,000th arrested aircraft landing aboard the 48-year-old aircraft carrier, truly a historic milestone. Launching and recovering jet aircraft aboard aircraft carriers has become common place in today's modern era. But did you know that the first U.S. Naval Aviator to take off and land a jet powered aircraft from an aircraft carrier was a Minnesotan?

On July 21, 1946, aboard the USS Franklin D. Roosevelt (CV-42), approximately 60 miles off the coast of Norfolk, VA, 26-year-old Lieutenant Commander James J. Davidson conducted a total of five daytime launches and recoveries in an XFD-1 Phantom fighter jet. This was the first time this had been done aboard an American aircraft carrier. Another truly historic milestone for Naval Aviation.



Lt. Cmdr. Davidson

LCDR Davidson grew up on a farm in Fremont Township, Winona County. He attended Lewiston High School, where he was heavily involved in athletics, lettering in football, basketball, and baseball. He graduated in 1936. After graduation he attended Winona State Teachers College, now known as Winona State University, and graduated in 1940. At Winona State, he learned to fly in the Civilian Pilot Training program. After college he entered the Navy to become an Aviator.

Davidson went on to fly several combat missions during WWII in the South Pacific piloting the SBD Dauntless dive bomber. After his historic launch and recoveries aboard Roosevelt, he had a very successful and distinguished flying career in the Navy. He flew in the Cleveland National Air Races. During the Korean War he flew sixteen combat missions. He also authored a technical manual establishing jet aircraft handling procedures aboard aircraft carriers.

He was one of the first Naval Aviators to make carrier takeoffs and recoveries at night in a jet powered aircraft. He also participated in the development of systems that are still used on modern carriers, to include angled flight decks, deck edge elevators, steam catapults, high-speed arresting gear, and the optical landing system (OLS), AKA the "meatball" or "ball."

And now you know.



FH1 Phantom taking off from CVB-42 - 1946



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CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

January

New Year's Day
Martin Luther King's Birthday
St. Paul Winter Carnival

January 1
January 15
January 25-
February 3



February

Black History Month
Ground Hog Day
Four Chaplains Day
USO Birthday
Mardi Gras
Valentine's Day
Coast Guard Reserve Birthday
President's Day

Entire Month
February 2
February 3
February 4
February 13
February 14
February 19
February 20



March

Women's History
Navy Reserve Birthday
SeaBee Birthday
Daylight Savings Time Begins
K9 Veterans Day
American Legion Birthday
St. Patrick's Day
Rosie the Riveter Day
Medal of Honor Day
National Vietnam War Veterans Day
Easter

Entire Month
March 3
March 5
March 10
March 13
March 15
March 17
March 21
March 25
March 29
March 31

