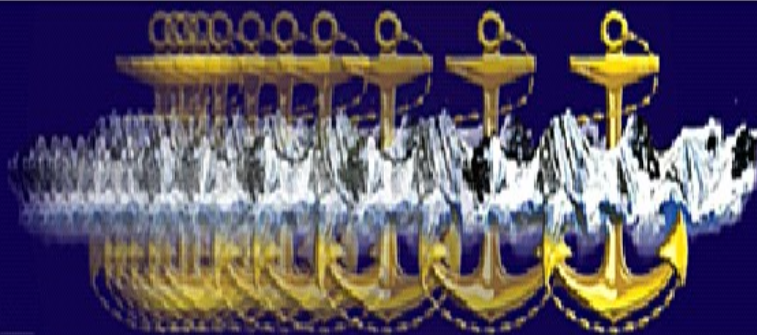




NAVY LEAGUE OF THE UNITED STATES

Citizens in Support of the Sea Services



Denver Council Peak News, 15 (4)

September 2025

Denver Council September 19th Fall Dinner Meeting Hosting Commander Joel D. McMillan, Navy Staff Engineer, USN and Honoring Top Performers From the Marine Corps Recruiting Station In Denver

I hope that you have had an enjoyable and relaxing summer thus far. It seems hard to believe that we are in the process of planning our September meeting already.

The September meeting is scheduled for Friday, September 19th at the Hilton Garden Inn Denver Airport. Our guest speaker will be Cmdr Joel McMillan, who currently serves as the Navy Staff Engineer for the Engineering Division (J42) in the Directorate of Logistics and Engineering (J4) at North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) and United States Northern Command (USNORTHCOM). We will also honor the top performers from the Marine Corps Recruiting Station in Denver.

2025 marks the **250th birthday** of the United States Navy! Plans for the **Navy Birthday Ball** to be held on **Saturday, October 11th** at the Antlers Hotel in Colorado Springs will be found on **the next page**. Please, mark your calendars! I hope that we can get a sizable number of attendees for this special occasion.

I look forward to seeing you on the 19th of September and again on October 11th!

Florence Mackin, President

Commander Joel D. McMillan, USN

Cmdr McMillan is the Navy Staff Engineer for the Engineering Division (J42) in the Directorate of Logistics and Engineering (J4) at North American Aerospace Defense Command and United States Northern Command. He advocates for military engineering support to NORAD and USNORTHCOM through technical advances and critical infrastructure advisement.

Prior to this assignment, he was the Director of the Navy Contracting Office - Somalia, coordinating life and facility support through contract vehicles to U.S. forces operating in Somalia.

After commissioning from Officer Candidate School in 1999, his Navy assignments began with Public Works Center, San Diego where he became the Division Officer for the Point Loma Self-Help.



In 2002 he reported to Naval Facilities Engineering Command Atlantic Division as an intern architect. Then serving as a company commander, he deployed with Naval Mobile Construction Battalion Three to Okinawa, Guam and the Philippines.

In 2005, he reported aboard Submarine Base New London as a construction manager and assistant public works officer. While serving in Groton, he deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, assigned as the Officer in Charge of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers construction office in Camp Taji, Iraq.

In 2007, he relocated to Naples, Italy as NAVFAC's Contingency Engineer Business Line Leader across Europe, Africa and Southwest Asia. After graduate school, he reported to Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, serving temporarily as assistant resident officer in charge of construction until he joined the Afghanistan Pakistan Hands program in 2012, deploying to Kabul in 2013 as an advisor to Afghanistan's Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development. In 2014, he served as a senior engineer in the U.S. Agency for International Development in the Office of American Schools and Hospitals Abroad. In 2015, he deployed again to Kabul, this time as both the Deputy Engineer for NATO and the Strategic Basing Officer. In 2017 he assumed the duty as the Public Works Officer of Naval Support Activity in Crane, Indiana.

He holds a Bachelor of Architecture from Illinois Tech, a Masters in Urban Planning from the University of Washington and a Masters in Strategic Studies from the U.S. Army War College. He is a Seabee Combat Warfare Officer, a Joint Qualified Officer, a member of the acquisition professional community and a registered architect in Colorado.

His personal awards include Meritorious Service Medals, Joint Service Commendation Medals, Navy Commendation Medals, an Army Commendation Medal and a Navy Achievement Medal.





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May Dinner Meeting Hosted Capt. John "JJ" Mackin, USN (Ret.) and Honored Top Performers of the Navy Reserve Center Denver

Capt. Mackin presented the status of USS Colorado which is currently being overhauled in the Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard along with details of a week-long visit to Colorado by four members of the submarine's crew. Awards are discussed in another section of the newsletter.

Navy Birthday Ball

A ball celebrating the U.S. Navy's 250th birthday will be presented by Navy Elements of USNORTHCOM and US Space Force in Colorado Springs and sponsored by the Denver Council of the Navy League and will be held on Saturday, October 11th, starting at 5:30 PM at the Antlers Hotel, 4 So Cascade Street in Colorado Springs. This GALA event will include a guest speaker, music, dinner and dancing. Rooms at the Antlers Hotel will be available at a reduced rate. For more information and reservations for the BirthdayBall-

Ctrl and click <https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/navy-birthday-ball--250-2>.

(works when orange)

Awards/Honors

During the May 2025 Dinner Meeting, the Council honored the following top performing sailors from the Navy Reserve Center (NRC) Denver: Logistic Specialist First Class Katrina Wells, USN, Hospital Corpsman Second Class Wade Yount, USN and Personnel Specialist Seaman Nicholas Hurd, USN. They were joined by NRC Executive Officer Cmdr Zachary Templin and Senior Chief Johanna Ray. Unfortunately, Petty Officer Wells could not attend.



USS Colorado Update

In May four crew members of USS Colorado paid a four-day visit to the state. The group included Commanding Officer Justin Reeves, Chief of the Boat Chris Goss, MMN2 Thomas Pickett and Longmont native ITE1 Andy Fischer. The visit was arranged and hosted by USS Colorado Submarine Association.

On Sunday May 11th the schedule kicked off with a dinner at the Aquarian Restaurant in Denver hosted by members of the Association.

On Monday, the crew visited the Adams County Veterans Memorial at Riverdale Regional Park where they were hosted by officials from Adams County. From there it was on to the Capitol for a meeting with Governor Jared Polis and a tour of the Capitol. They then visited History Colorado where they received a behind-the-scenes tour of some of the military artifacts in the museum's collections.

On Tuesday, the group visited Fort Collins, where they started with an interview on Pirate 93.5 Radio before giving a presentation to the JROTC students at Poudre High School. They toured Old Town Fort Collins and visited the Fort Collins Rotary Club for lunch and a presentation. In the afternoon they had a short tour of the Horse and Dragon Brewery followed by a presentation at Fossil Ridge High School and then dinner at the New Belgium Brewery.

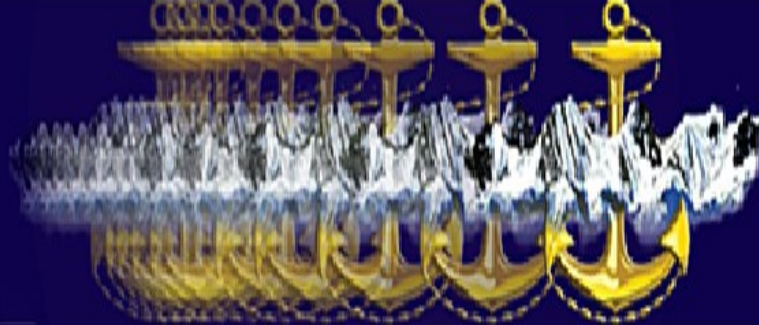
The group spent Wednesday in Colorado Springs. In the morning, they visited Cogitic Corporation, a manufacturer of critical submarine parts. They received a briefing and tour of the facility, viewing the sophisticated machinery used in the manufacture of these precision parts. They had lunch with the Colorado Springs Rotary Club where they gave a presentation about the boat to attendees. In the afternoon they visited Garden of the Gods followed by dinner at the Golden Bee Restaurant.

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USS Colorado Update (Continued from page 2)

Thursday saw the group visit Saddle Ranch Elementary School in Highlands Ranch to give a presentation to about 150 students in the 4th, 5th and 6th grades. After that they headed to Arvada to tour Barber-Nichols Corporation, another Colorado critical submarine parts manufacturer. It was great to see crew members interact effectively with company employees. In the afternoon, the group received a tour of Bronco Stadium before heading to Sloan's Lake Park. There they met members of the local U.S. Submarine Veterans Rocky Mountain Base who hosted them on a visit to the USS Grayling (SS 209) Memorial. GRAYLING was one of the fifty-two U.S. submarines lost during World War II. Afterwards all headed to dinner at Sloan's Lake Brewhouse. This was the last event of their visit before their return flight to Hawaii the next morning.

It was an honor to host the crew members in Colorado once again and have them meet and interact with Coloradans.

—JJ Mackin



Sea Cadets Update

Lexington Division cadets had an exciting spring and summer, which included travel to Colorado Springs, adventure in Idaho Springs and a multitude of summer training experiences. May kicked off with a fun trip to Colorado Springs, where cadets took flight -literally- experiencing the thrill of simulated skydiving in a safe and exhilarating environment at iFly. For most, iFly was the highlight of the weekend.

Cadets also visited the National Museum of WW II Aviation. This is the only museum in the world to focus exclusively on the unique story of the role of aviation in WW II. Cadets learned how pilots and their support personnel changed the course of world history. This powerful educational experience also deepened cadets' understanding of the sacrifices and heroism of the Greatest Generation.

Back by popular demand, the cadets spent the night at the Academy Hotel, which fostered team-building and relaxation after a full day of activities. The next morning brought a delicious breakfast buffet and a hike in Garden of the Gods. Surrounded by stunning red rock formations, cadets enjoyed a scenic and invigorating hike through one of Colorado's most iconic landscapes.

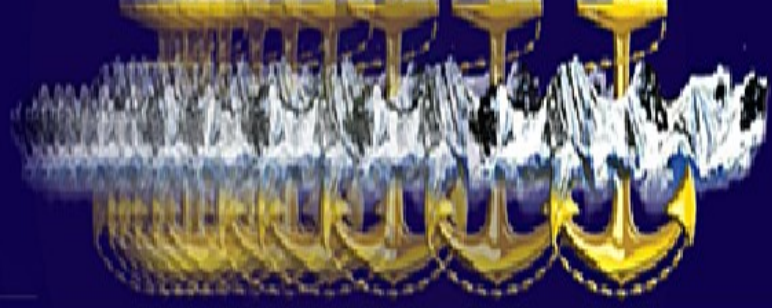
Also during May's drill, two summer training scholarships were awarded. Both PO2 Adam Van Arsdall and PO2 Mason Spanos submitted excellent scholarship applications and Sea Cadet leadership is proud to announce that both were awarded the prestigious Retired Navy Commander Len Deemer Scholarship. The scholarship helped support their participation in advanced training this summer. Both traveled to Wisconsin, where Van Arsdall performed Coast Guard Maritime Interdiction Training, and Spanos trained in field operations. Both cadets demonstrated their dedication and excellence.

Another favorite summer activity involves rafting along the Clear Creek River. In June, guides from AVA Rafting helped Sea Cadets navigate Class IV rapids. League Cadets rafted a tamer, but still fun section of the river. Only one cadet fell overboard into the chilly water, and his shipmates were thankfully able to quickly pull him back into the raft. Even fun activities like rafting build resilience and teamwork.

Throughout the remainder of the summer, cadets continued their development by attending Navy League Orientation, Recruit Training, or Advanced Training. (Continued on page 4)



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Sea Cadets Update (Continued from page 3)

They attended 60 trainings, some attending as many as three. Cadets attending training for the first time learned about the values and expectations of the Sea Cadet Program, discipline and military bearing, while those attending advanced training specialized in aviation, field ops, medical, leadership or public safety, just to name a few. Others visited the academies for an immersive experience mirroring cadet life, and one cadet explored the ocean in her advanced scuba training.



From high-altitude thrills to deep historical reflection and from roaring rivers to rigorous training, cadets have made the most of their spring and summer. We're proud of their achievements and excited for what lies ahead! Thank you, Denver Council, for supporting our program.

— Sonja Asper



Legislative Affairs Update

On May 7, 2025 Denver Council members Chris Schutzenberger and Ed Duffett joined about 75 other participants in Washington, D.C. for the Navy League Annual Fly-In. They arrived in D.C. on the evening of May 6th for a briefing from headquarters and then the team descended on Capitol Hill early the next morning to meet with Congressional offices. The briefing presentation, developed by Navy League headquarters, highlighted the Navy League's legislative requests on behalf of the Sea Services for this session of Congress.

Together throughout the day Chris and Ed briefed personnel in seven Congressional offices from the Rocky Mountain Region. These members were selected based on their important roles on committees such as Armed Forces, Appropriations, and Commerce (responsible for the Coast Guard), and included:

Sen. John Hickenlooper (CO)
Sen. Ben Ray Lujan (NM)
Sen. Martin Heinrich (NM)
Rep. Jeff Crank (CO)
Rep. Jason Crow (CO)
Rep. Gabe Vasquez (NM)
Rep. Celeste Maloy (UT)

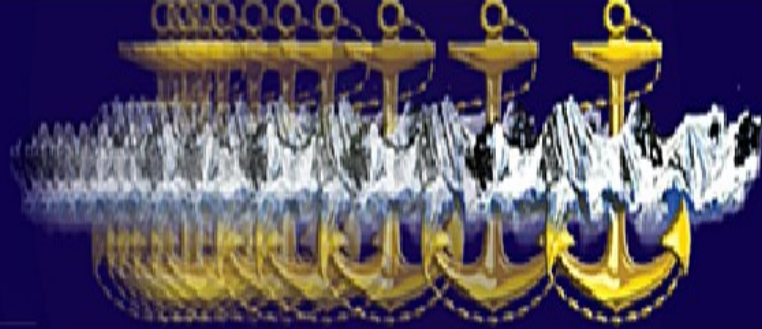
At the close of the business day, the Navy League hosted a reception for Members of Congress and their staffs as well as for the volunteer briefing team. It was an exhilarating experience to walk the halls of Congress, meet so many knowledgeable Hill staff members, and receive such courteous and attentive welcomes from personnel in each office. Anyone interested in the Denver Council's future Legislative affairs activities contact Chris Schutzenberger at teamschutz@yahoo.com.

—Chris Schutzenberger



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Council Operations Financial Support

It has recently come to Council's attention that some Council Members were not aware that the Denver Council does not receive any government grants or other gov't funding support. In fact, the primary sources of financial support are local membership dues and donations from private corporations and individuals. Additionally, all Council Officers, Executive Board Members and Sea Cadet Unit Leadership personnel are volunteers and receive no pay.

Denver Council Earns National Awards

At the Navy League National Convention which was held in June in Jacksonville, Florida, outgoing National President Chris Townsend and Navy League Chief Executive Officer Mike Stevens presented the following awards to the Denver Council:

Sea Service Unit Adoption Excellence for a medium-size council

And in the Mackie Awards Category, Denver Received the Platinum Award for Newsletter

And the Gold Award for Social Media.

Congratulations and thanks to those whose efforts made these possible.

Navy League National Election Results

During the election held in June at the National Convention in Jacksonville, Florida, Larry Salter was elected National President of the Navy League.

Several members of the Denver Council were also elected. Jim Quin was elected as the Rocky Mountain Region President and Florence Mackin, Pam Quin and John Mackin were elected as Navy League National Delegates for the Rocky Mountain Region. Congratulations to all electees.

Proposed Slate of Candidates for November Council Election

The Board of Directors has developed a proposed slate of candidates for Council Officer and Executive Board Member positions to be voted on during the November meeting. These positions and preliminary candidates are:

Council Officers

President, **OPEN**

Secretary, Gray Buckley

Treasurer, Florence Mackin

Executive Board

Membership Recruiting, Kathleen Branch

Council Contact, Youth Programs, David Fong

Social Media, Florence Mackin

Media and Public Relations, Joe Suchman

Council Chaplain, Gray Buckley

Legislative Affairs, Chris Schutzenberger

Council Awards, Joe Mahaffey, Art Cyphers

Membership Retention, **OPEN**

Newsletter, **OPEN**

Navy Ball, **OPEN**

Meeting Coordinator, Pam Quin

Programs, **OPEN**

The Council is seeking volunteers for the **OPEN** positions. Those interested in any position should email David Fong at dfong@lexdiv.org. Board Members must be active members in good standing with the Denver Council of the Navy League.

Online Resources:

Navy League National:

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

Denver Council Navy League:

www.navyleague-denvercouncil.org/

Denver Council Flickr photo albums:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/131150115@N07/albums/>

Denver Council Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/DenverCouncil/>

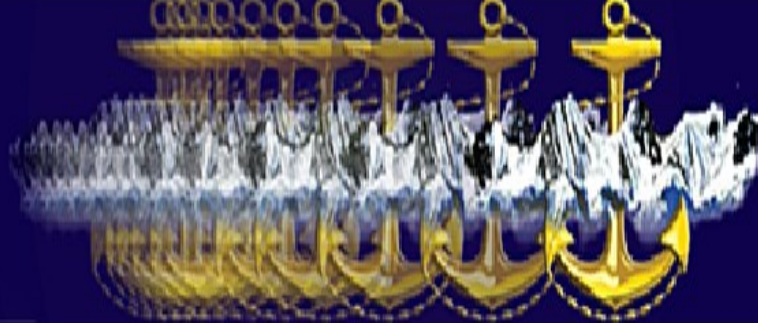
National and Local Dues

Please remember to keep up with your Navy League national dues (and keep Sea Power magazine coming to you) and your local Council annual dues of \$15 per Individual or \$25 per couple. These local dues became mandatory in January 2025 and are a key element in supporting Council initiatives.



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Sea Cadets receive aviation training in Colorado Springs.



USS Colorado crew members and hosts visit Denver Broncos' facility.

Denver Council Navy League Peak Newsletter is an official publication of the Denver Council, serving the members and community of Colorado. This publication does not necessarily reflect the official views of the National Navy League or Department of Defense.

Stories and artwork may be submitted via email to the editor at

mahaffey10@aol.com

Electronic versions available upon request.

September Fall Dinner Meeting

Friday, September 19th, 2025, 7PM

Your reservations may be made online no later than **Thursday, September 11th, 5 PM** via our Navy League RSVP Site:

<https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/denver-council-dinner-friday-september-19--2025> .

If you prefer to RSVP by ground mail, please print this page, complete the form and send it with check (\$40.00 per plate) payable to NLUS Denver Council to:

Mrs. Florence Mackin
2137 Night Sky Lane
Lafayette, CO. 80026
(720- 292-9772)
fmackin@mackinweb.net

**RESERVATION REQUEST for
NLUS Denver Council September Fall Dinner
Friday, September 19th, 2025
6:00 PM Social Hour
7:00 PM Dinner**

NAME(S): _____

GUEST(S): _____

MEALS:

Chicken _____

Salmon _____

Vegetarian Plate _____

Cost remains at \$40.00 per plate

DIRECTIONS TO MEETING PLACE:

**Hilton Garden Inn Denver Airport
16475 East 40th Circle,
Aurora, CO 80011**

I-70 east to North Chambers Road (Turn left, North), then turn right (East) on East 40th Avenue. Turn right (South) on the second East 40th Circle. Hilton Garden Inn is on the right just behind Applebee's Restaurant.