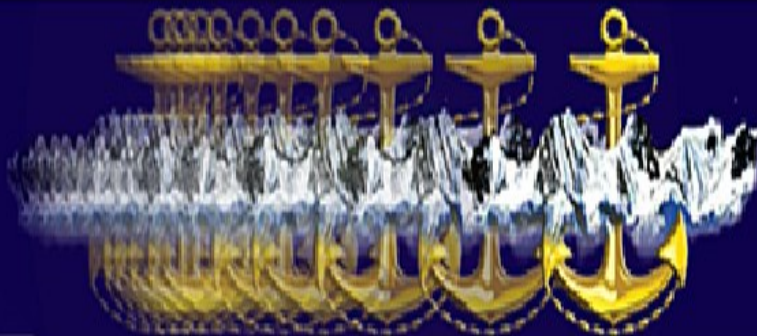




NAVY LEAGUE OF THE UNITED STATES

Citizens in Support of the Sea Services



Denver Council Peak News, 16 (1)

January 2026

Page 1

Denver Council January 16th Winter Dinner Hosting Commander Andrew Gerla, USN, Com- manding Officer Navy Talent Acquisition Group (NTAG) Rocky Mountain and Honoring His Top Sailors

The Denver Council will begin the new year at our next meeting scheduled for Friday, January 16th at the Hilton Garden Inn Denver Airport located at 1645 East 40th Circle, Aurora, CO. Our guest speaker for the evening will be CDR Andrew Gerla who currently serves as the Commanding Officer of the Navy Talent Acquisition Group Rocky Mountain.



You can register for the event online at the Denver Council website: Navy League of the United States – Denver Council – Citizens in Support of the Sea Services.
<https://navyleague-denvercouncil.org/>

Many thanks to all of you who donated toys for the Marine Corps Toys for Tots program. I delivered four large bags filled with new toys to their warehouse in Aurora. As always, I appreciate your generous support for this program which brings Christmas joy to so many kids.

We have begun collecting our annual dues for 2026. Our online site for payment of local dues will be open to take payments through March 31, 2026. Please click here to make your payment or send a check made payable to NLUS Denver Council to me at 2137 Night Sky Lane, Lafayette, CO 80026. I hope that all our Denver Council members and supporters will consider making this nominal payment. Your support helps us to keep the cost of our dinners as low as possible while maintaining our financial viability and continuing our support of our Sea Cadet units and local commands.

My best wishes to all of you for a Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy new year! I look forward to seeing you on the 16th of January,

Florence Mackin, Denver Council President

Commander Andrew C. Gerla, USN

Commander Gerla is a native of Washington State and joined the Navy's Delayed Entry Program in 1999. Following recruit training in Great Lakes, IL, and nuclear "A" school in Charleston, SC, he earned a NROTC scholarship to Washington State University where he graduated and received his commission in 2006.

Commander Gerla's Surface Warfare Officer assignments include a tour aboard the USS Chafee homeported in Pearl Harbor, HI, and as a Mission Commander for Maritime Expeditionary Security Squadron Four, homeported in Portsmouth, VA. He has three times deployed in the Western Pacific as well as conducted numerous waterborne security missions throughout North and Central America.

Commander Gerla's shore tours include: Executive Officer for Transient Personnel Unit Puget Sound; Flag Aide to Rear Admiral Annie B. Andrews, Commander, Navy Recruiting Command; Commanding Officer of the Honolulu Military Entrance Processing Station where he was responsible for all Department of Defense military accessions in the state of Hawaii, American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of Palau; Deputy Director of Manpower and Personnel for Commander, Submarine Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet; Director of Naval Manpower and Personnel and the Naval Element Executive Officer at the 4-star Combatant Command, US Special Operations Command in Tampa, FL. Commander Gerla most recently served as Senior Naval Advisor at the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, CO, where he was awarded the Philip D. Caine award as an instructor of the year for 2022-2023. Commander Gerla redesignated into the Human Resources community in 2013. He is a certified Senior Professional in Human Resources, earned a Master's Degree in Business Admin. from the City University of Seattle, and a Master's Degree in National Security and Strategic Studies from the Naval War College. He has also earned the designation of Joint-Qualified Officer.

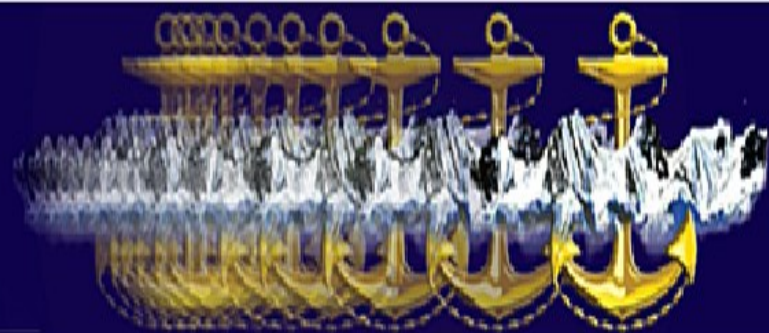
Commander Gerla has received many personal awards but is most proud of the unit and team awards he's been privileged to contribute to.





NAVY LEAGUE OF THE UNITED STATES

Citizens in Support of the Sea Services



Denver Council

Page 2

November Dinner Meeting Hosted Lieutenant Tatiana Torres, USCG, Executive Officer of US Coast Guard Cryptologic Unit Colorado

LT Torres presented a summary of her US Coast Guard career path along with an insightful overview of Current Coast Guard operations and plans.

Veterans Memorial Ceremony

Several members of the Denver Council attended the annual Veterans Day remembrance event at the University of Colorado, Boulder. This year's guest speaker was USAF Major General Jack Briggs, Vice Chancellor for Public Safety Operations at the university.

Awards/Honors

During the upcoming January Dinner Meeting the Council will honor top performers of the Navy Talent Acquisition Group Rocky Mountain.

Update from Lexington Division and Training Ship Colorado Cadets

November–December 2025

Lexington Division and Training Ship Colorado (LEX-151) cadets continued to demonstrate leadership, service, and teamwork throughout November and December, strengthening their skills through hands-on training, community engagement, and end-of-year traditions that reflect the Navy's core values of Honor, Courage, and Commitment.

In November, cadets spent an unseasonably warm weekend at Camp Timberline supporting the camp's winter shutdown while embracing adventure and personal growth. Cadets were welcomed with ziplining and high-ropes challenges that set a tone of courage and camaraderie. Sea Cadets and League Cadets rotated through Fire Starting and Shelter Building courses, building resilience and teamwork through practical survival skills. The Lexington Division Commander delivered a focused lecture on the Sea Cadet Code of Conduct, reinforcing discipline and responsibility.

Sunday began with Reveille at 0600, followed by broomstick hockey at the barn and a drone-captured sunrise over the valley. Cadets concluded the weekend by removing decorations, deep-cleaning buildings, and assisting with winterization tasks across the property, demonstrating stewardship and service.

In December, the division closed out the year with a weekend that blended celebration, discipline, and service. Cadets checked in Friday evening and prepared the space for the annual holiday gathering before a short ceremony recognizing promotions and achievements earned throughout the fall. A gift exchange, chow, and games brought the unit together, while staff conducted rope yarn to discuss Winter Training expectations and welcome new cadets. After homework time and evening hygiene, cadets settled in for the night with room leaders ensuring accountability and staff rotating overnight watch. Reveille sounded at 0600 on Saturday, followed by chow and instruction on customs, courtesies, and advancement expectations. The division then traveled to Fort Logan National Cemetery to participate in **Wreaths Across America**, where cadets placed wreaths and honored veterans with solemnity and respect. The afternoon returned to structured training at the Navy Reserve Center, including a Chief Petty Officer board, a full field day, and Physical Readiness Tests for cadets still requiring a passing score. The drill concluded with final inspections and a strong sense of accomplishment as the division wrapped up the year.

The LEX-151 thank the Navy League of Denver for their continued support in developing the next generation of leaders.

Ens Jason Chen, Asst. Public Affairs Officer

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/>

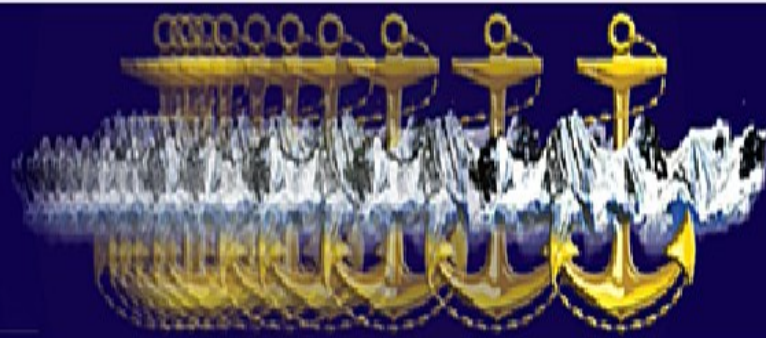
USS Colorado (SSN-788) Submarine Association

<https://usscoloradosubassoc.org>



NAVY LEAGUE OF THE UNITED STATES

Citizens in Support of the Sea Services



Denver Council

Page 3

USS Colorado Submarine Association Update By Don Price, President

The boat remains in overhaul in Pearl Harbour Naval Shipyard but has now exited the drydock and is pier side. The crew is VERY happy to be out of the drydock. They are on schedule for completion of the overhaul this coming summer. The official plan, after that, is to return to their previous homeport at Naval Submarine Base New London. However there is a chance that they will remain in Pearl Harbour depending upon the needs of the Navy. Of course! The Association has been involved, at a distance, in supporting the boat's Family Readiness Group, and the crew. The Association donated, or are donating, funds (from the Association or directly from Association members) for the boat's Halloween Party and their coming winter party. We and Association donors are also paying to design and then procure special challenge coins, for each of the crew, to commemorate the completion of the overhaul.



This past fall, the Dolphin Scholarship Foundation awarded college scholarships to two students from funds for this purpose made available by our predecessor, the USS Colorado Commissioning Committee. The Association has also been advised that History Colorado is developing an exhibit on the life and legacy of the USS Colorado (BB-45). This exhibit is slated to open March 6, 2026 and will be open for a year. As part of the exhibit there will be a case on the legacy of the ship, which will include the history of the USS Colorado submarine. The Association has donated photographs of SSN-788 for this exhibit.

Please remember to keep up with your Navy League National and Local Dues (and keep Sea Power magazine coming to you) and our local Council annual dues of \$15 per individual or \$25 per couple. These local dues are a key element in supporting Council initiatives.

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.

Find out more on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/DenverCouncil/>

The following are Officers and Executive Board Members elected during the November 2024 dinner meeting who will be inducted at the January 16th meeting to lead the council through 2026:

Council Officers

President, Florence Mackin

Secretary, Gray Buckley

Treasurer, Pam

Council Board

Membership Recruiting, Kathleen Branch

Council Contact, Youth Programs, David Fong

Chaplin, Gray Buckley

Social Media, Florence Mackin

Media and Public Relations, Joe Suchman

Council Awards, Joe Mahaffey, Art Cyphers

Legislative Affairs, Chris Schutzenberger

Member-At-Large, Ed Duffett

Membership Retention, Open

Newsletter Editor, Open

Navy Ball, Open

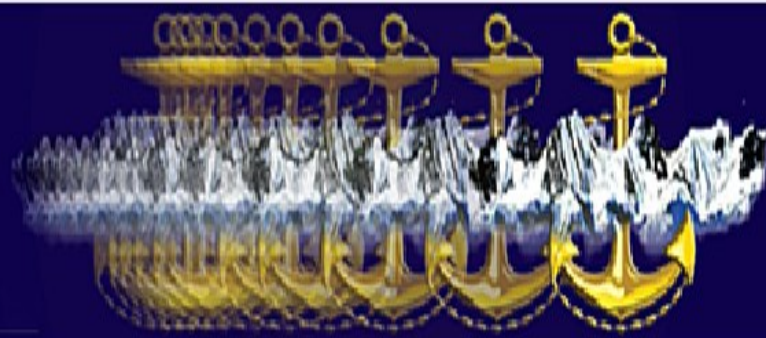
Programs, Open

The council is seeking volunteers for the open positions. Those interested in filling any open position should email Council Contact David Fong at dfong@lexdiv.org. Executive Board members must be active members in good standing with the Denver Council Navy League.



NAVY LEAGUE OF THE UNITED STATES

Citizens in Support of the Sea Services



Denver Council

Page 4



January Winter Dinner Meeting Friday, January 16th, 2026

Your reservations may be made online **no later than Thursday, January 8th, 5 PM** via our Navy League RSVP Site:

<https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/denver-council-dinner-friday-january-16-2026>

control+click to follow link

If you prefer to RSVP by ground mail, please print this page, complete the form and send it to arrive **NO LATER THAN THURSDAY January 8th, 5 PM** with check for \$40.00 per plate payable to NLUS Denver Council to:

Mrs. Florence Mackin

2137 Night Sky Lane

Lafayette, CO

(720- 292-9772)

fmackin@mackinweb.net

RESERVATION REQUEST for NLUS Denver Council

January Winter Dinner Meeting

Friday, January 16th, 2026

6:00 PM Social Hour

7:00 PM Dinner

NAME(S): _____

GUEST(S): _____

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.