2026
Mayport Navy League March Newsletter

President – Bob Whitkop (904) 900-8934 http://www.mayportnlus.org

Calendar of Events

Women's History Month

March 3 - Total Lunar Eclipse, Blood Moon

March 5 - MNL BOD meeting at Ocean Breeze Conference Ctr 6:30pm. All Mayport Navy Leaguers invited!

March 8 - Daylight Saving Time begins (clocks spring forward)

March 9 - MMDTG at St. John the Baptist Catholic Church parking lot. 3-5pm

March 12- Food Farmacy at Fleet Reserve Assoc at 390 Mayport Rd 10am-noon

March 17 - St. Patrick's Day

March 20 - Spring (Vernal) Equinox — first day of spring in the Northern Hemisphere.

March 19 - MNL Social location and time TBD

March 26 - Food Farmacy at Fleet Reserve Assoc at 390 Mayport Rd 1 - 3 pm

March 29 - Palm Sunday

SAVE THE DATE
MNL 2026 9th Mike McGrath Memorial Golf Tournament on 20 April 2026
Looking for corporate sponsor contacts- see John Strohofer at cjstrohofer@gmail.com

NS Mayport Sailor of the Year Awardees

On a brisk Tuesday, February 24th, the Mayport Naval Station Sailors of the Year (SOY), honoring the best performing sailors during 2025, were recognized and congratulated.

The Ocean Breeze Conference Center was near capacity with over 90 awardees in an audience of 190 attendees. Each awardee and their command leadership were invited to the podium for recognition and a certificate, and a group photo. Supporting the awardees were many family members and friends who were invited to join the individual commands in the photo.

Attending the luncheon included over 20 base commands and the Mayport Coast Guard Command, unable to attend were 10 commands on deployment. The Mayport Navy League luncheon sponsors and partners were: Hover Girl Properties, First Command, Navy Federal Credit Union, Navy Wives Club of America #201, USAA, and Surface Navy Association. The menu included pork loin smothered w/ gravy onions and peppers, garlic mashed potatoes, green beans, pretzel sticks, and assorted cookies and enjoyed by all.

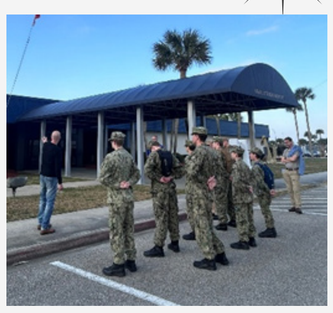
The Master of Ceremony was CMCM Strickland, and the program remarks were presented by Naval Station Commanding Officer, Captain Mike Trumbull. The keynote speaker was Command Master Chief Carlos T. Slade, the senior enlisted leader currently serving at Naval Station Mayport's Afloat Training Group.

It was a great event that truly represented the Best of the BEST.

The Mayport Navy League values membership volunteerism and support

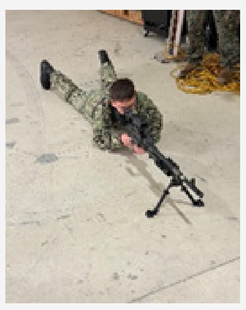
SEA CADETS CORNER

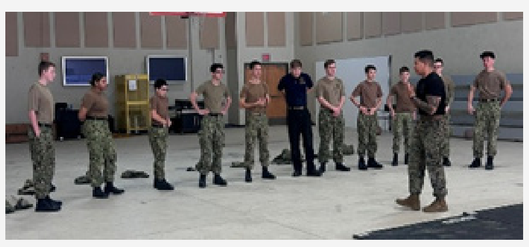
Sea Cadets February Drill



On 07 FEB, the Mayport Sea Cadets spent the day with the United States Marine Corps Bravo Company 4th Assault Amphibian Battalion. Cadets participated in a weapons demonstration, a mixed martial arts lesson, watched a Navy Corpsman "stop the bleed," and boarded an AAV7 track vehicle for a ride through the woods on their training base. Thank you, Mr. Brian Kennedy (Past MNL President and member), for coordinating an incredible and eventful day!! Hoorah!

On 21 FEB, the unit was welcomed to the Mayport Naval Station Quarterdeck. The cadets participated in morning colors and received an introduction and brief tour of the building with base PAO David Holmes. We also enjoyed a briefing as well as the personal military history and goals of Base Commanding Officer Captain Mike "Bull" Trumbull. Afterwards, the cadets received a tour of a harbor patrol boat and a tractor (tug) boat. With perfect timing, our unit was at the basin when the USS Jason Dunham (DDG 109) returned to Mayport from a short deployment. The remainder of the day included chow, some classroom time, a dress white inspection, marching practice, and three cadet promotions.





For the weekend of FEB 28th, the Sea Cadets conducted a joint drill with the American Victory Division out of Tampa, FL. Both Units toured the USS Marinette and had lunch before the American Victory Division departed home.

Story and Photos from Ron Harnek

MILITARY MONDAYS-DINNERS TO GO(MMDTG)

and FOOD FARMACY (FF)

On February 9th, MNL hosted the 2nd 2026 MMDTG on a very cold and blustery afternoon. Due to the weather, there were fewer volunteers than usual. Those volunteers that persevered the elements are greatly appreciated for their dedication to our food programs and support of our military members and their families.

As usual the military members and their families arrived well before 3pm and waited patiently for the hot food to serve to their families at home. Diapers and baby wipes were available to families that needed the items. Again, the carline opened early and after less than 2 hours, the food ran out.

From the carline participants, it was learned that many mark their calendars to receive the monthly MMDTG food. It truly helps bolster their morale and provide good food for their family members. One Active-Duty member and mom of 4 shared that the best part of her day on MMDTG is their children's excitement for Chick-A-Filet hot food and her happiness that she does not have to cook that night.

Photos by Pat Kluever

Everyone leaving the church parking lot with their food, always stop to say,

"Thank you so much! We really appreciate MNL and your help make our day better."

Are you interested in becoming a MNL Board Member? If so, contact Bob Whitkop for more information.

LCS Trainer Session attended by MNL members

On February 26th, a group of 13 MNL members participated in a Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) training session.

What is an LCS? The Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) is a fast and agile coastal U.S. Navy surface combatant designed to operate in near-shore (littoral) environments where larger ships have limited maneuverability. The LCS program began in the early 2000s to address emerging coastal threats, in shallow waters and congested maritime regions, such as small fast attack craft, mines, maritime security threats, and quiet diesel submarines.

Attending the training session were: Nick & Donna Norfleet, Wayne Dietel, Brian Kennedy, Tim Jenkins, Bill Towcimak, John & Pat Strohofer, Jim Young, Bob Buehn, David Belanger, and Laurette & Clark Gaylord. A special thanks to Ryan Tillotson for arranging the LCS trainer session.

Cypress Village supports MNL with Baby Wipes

Laurette and Clark Gaylord, MNL Members, have teamed up to lead a February baby wipes donation effort at Cypress Village.

After watching a MMDTG, which included diaper and baby wipes distribution during the government shutdown, they decided to extend the support by rallying Cypress Village residents to donate baby wipes. Their efforts have been very well received with many packages for our military families. It's Laurette and Clark's energy that crafted this initiative and sustained it for the entire month of February.

Our sincere thanks and appreciation for their efforts and to Cypress Village for their generous donations.

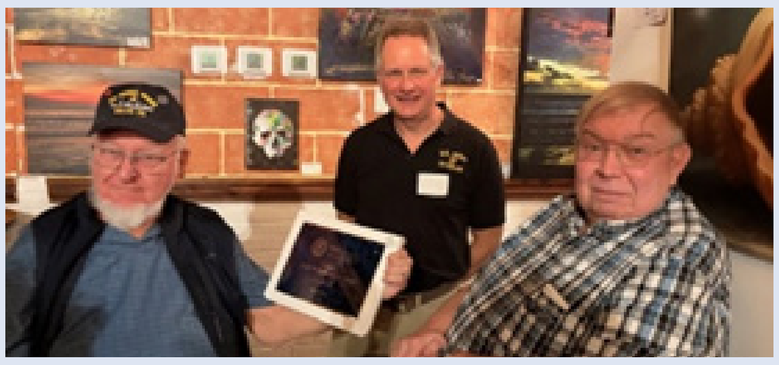
Pictured Laurette Gaylord and George Huchting

MNL February Social

MNL February Social at Royal Palm in Atlantic Beach on Thursday, February 19th famous for their awesome tapa dishes and large selection of wines.

Over 25 MNL members, spouses, and friends attended the social with lots of great conversation, good food and delicious wines. Special thanks to Eric Alfaro, the MNL new membership lead, for arranging the gathering, providing nametags, and promoting membership interests. A highlight of the social was the attendance of our board member, Captain Mike Trumbull, Naval Station Commanding Officer.

At the social, MNL President Bob Whitkop presented Navy League National Outstanding Performance awards to Mayport Navy League members. The Navy League Donald M. Mackie Award for communications was presented to Wayne Dietel (website), Brian Kennedy (Facebook), and Barbara Ives (newsletter).



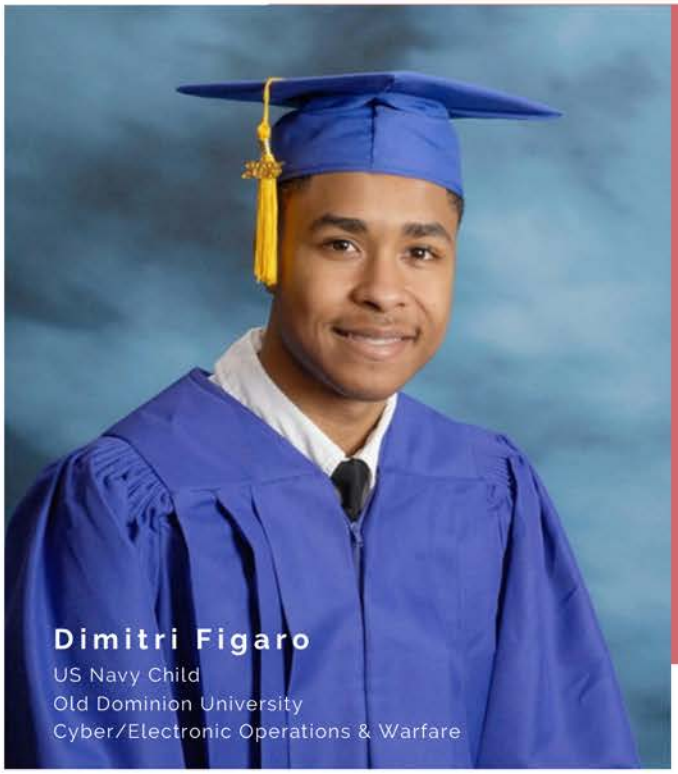
Photos by Eric Alfaro

Are you interested in becoming a MNL Board Member? If so, contact Bob Whitkop for more information.

NAVY-MARINE CORPS RELIEF SOCIETY®

EDUCATION ASSISTANCE

Grants & **interest-free loans** for Navy-Marine Corps dependents & Active Duty students with MECEP/MECP orders so they can reach their education goals with **less financial stress**.



Dimitri Figaro
US Navy Child
Old Dominion University
Cyber/Electronic Operations & Warfare

HOW IT WORKS

- Apply during open window
- Grants awarded 1x/year
- Rolling loan availability
- Funds sent to schools
- Split between Fall & Spring semesters

AWARDS

- Range between $500-$3,000
- Needs-based determined by FAFSA SAI and school's Cost of Attendance

"This scholarship will allow me to focus more on my studies and less on financial stress by helping me complete my program faster. Earning this degree will open the door to better-paying, stable job opportunities... This support brings me one step closer to achieving both my career and personal goals."

BRIANNA ELLISON
USMC Spouse
American Public University
Early Childhood Education

ELIGIBILITY

Spouses & children of active duty, retired or deceased Sailors & Marines may apply. Children must be DEERS eligible & under age 23 by September 30, 2026. Surviving dependents are eligible if the service member passed on active duty or once retired. Active Duty must be on MECEP or MECP orders and are eligible for loans only.

AREAS OF STUDY

NMCRS Scholars can be full or part-time students working toward career & technical programs, associate's or bachelor's degrees. Spouses are eligible for their first undergraduate or master's degree. Second degrees must apply for an exception.

2026 TIMELINE

February 16-April 17, 2026
Open window to create student NMCRS account, upload qualifying documents & complete application.

May 22, 2026
Award announcements sent to all applicants via email and decisions also available on NMCRS account.

July 7, 2026
Scholarship and loan acceptance deadline.

July 21, 2026
Funds dispersed to Scholar's schools. Students can track checks in their NMCRS account.

LEARN MORE & CREATE AN ACCOUNT

Contact Andrea Nevin at education@nmcrs.org