

Navy League of the United States  
-Speech-

Thank you for that kind introduction. I'd like to thank all of you here at the [ADD ORGANIZATION NAME] for allowing me to give you a brief overview about the Navy League of the United States and all this patriotic organization encompasses.

The Navy League is a civilian organization of nearly seventy thousand members dedicated to keeping the American people and government officials informed about America's national security requirements, and their relationship to our economic prosperity. The Navy League focuses particular attention on the MARITIME component of our great defense team ... the United States Navy ... Coast Guard ... Marine Corps ... and US-flagged Merchant Marine.

More than 100 years ago ... in 1902 ... President Theodore Roosevelt asked a group of business leaders in New York City to find a way to effectively communicate the importance of SEAPOWER to the American people ... and their elected representatives. Fueled by this vision ... the Navy League of the United States was born.

The Navy League remains today ... the foremost national organization representing all our nation's sea services. We are a civilian organization ... as indicated by our national slogan "*Citizens in Support of the Sea Services.*" As such, we do not permit active duty members of the Nation's armed forces to become Navy League members ... though we certainly encourage them to take advantage of the services and programs we offer on their behalf.

With two oceans framing our East and West coastlines and the Gulf of Mexico to our South ... it is an obvious but inescapable fact that America IS ... and WILL REMAIN ... a maritime nation. These broad oceans that once seemed to insulate and protect us from foreign threats are now our primary connections to the global economy.

Maritime issues impact every American in a multitude of significant ways—from national security, delivery of products in a global economy, protection of natural resources and marine environment, drug trafficking, the influx of illegal immigrants to recreational boating safety and more. Our U.S. sea services alertly maintain and protect our safety, security, economy, freedom and other critical matters impacting our American way of life.

Navy League members are the nation's watchdogs for the sea services--advising national and local elected officials about maritime matters, and alerting citizens about issues of significant impact to Americans and protection of our sea power interests. We accomplish our mission to inform and educate through Navy League forums, events and publications, and the defense community.

What else does the Navy League do?

The heart and soul of the Navy League is its nearly 300 local councils worldwide that directly support sea service personnel – our Sailors, Marines, Coast Guardsmen and Merchant Mariners. Council support of sea service personnel has four goals:

First: Educate community leaders and citizens about the need for strong sea services.

For example:

- Navy Leaguers speak to local community service organizations – Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions and Optimist Clubs – and sponsor seminars discussing national defense issues.
- We ask local media outlets to recognize the importance of strong sea services, the critical role they play in Homeland Security and the economic value of sea service facilities in their community.
- We arrange ship rides and station tours for political and community leaders to give them an opportunity to meet first hand the young men and women serving in the most powerful sea services in the world.
- We recruit local business leaders to support community education through our Community Affiliate program. Our Community Affiliate members also provide financial support to local sea service personnel – gifts, dinners, award plaques, and jobs. Many local political and community leaders join the Navy League because of our efforts.

Second: We provide direct support to the men and women serving in the sea services, whether on their way home from serving in Iraq and Afghanistan, still serving in the Persian Gulf and other parts of the world, or defending our shoreline and ports here at home.

For example:

- Councils *adopt ships*, stations and units of the active and reserve forces. Adopted units receive personnel awards and gifts, equipment, contributions to the Morale, Welfare and Recreation Fund, donated books, hosted picnics, family appreciation events and many other forms of support.
- Councils *host ship commissioning ceremonies*, raising all the funds needed to perform the commissioning celebration and providing assistance in organizing the event.
- Councils sponsor Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard Birthday celebrations in their community.
- Councils host *ship visits* in port cities.

Third: Councils provide assistance to sea service families in their communities.

For example:

- Councils assist Fleet Family Service Centers to support recalled reserve personnel and their families in remote locations.
- Councils support sea service recruiters and their families in communities across the country, both to perform their job and to help support family needs.
- Councils assist parents of active duty personnel connect with their child's experience and share the joy of achievement.

Fourth: Navy League councils play an instrumental role in youth development with its support of the U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps (NSCC) of more than 10,000 cadets in units around the world. It's vital that we guide our youth to continue our proud military and national heritage and to ensure America's future as a world leader.

In 2002, the Naval Sea Cadets Corps celebrated four decades of outstanding development of American youth. The NSCC has provided tens of thousands of young people with valuable mental, moral and physical training and skills.

Councils also sponsor and support other local youth programs, including the Navy & Marine Corps Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps units and Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps units.

For example:

- Council members serve as adult leaders of these youth groups.
- Councils provide financial and public relations support for these youth groups. Support includes time, talent and money.
- Councils mentor sponsored youth with their applications to the military academies or public and private colleges. Many councils provide scholarships for these youth to support their education. National scholarships are also available to the sons and daughters of sea service personnel.
- Councils connect these youth groups with their community through our Community Affiliate members and political leaders.

The Navy League believes American youth are our future. We support youth groups that develop character and values and thus continue the American dream.

How is the Navy League different from other military-related organizations?

The Navy League is different in two ways:

- Our memberships require *only* that you be a citizen, not necessarily a former member of the military; although we do not permit active duty members of the armed services to join the Navy League so our advocacy does not appear self-serving.
- Our mission is to support active members of the sea services and their national defense and warfighting capabilities, not promote services for our members.

Some additional benefits of being a Navy League member include a monthly subscription to Sea Power magazine – the best publication of its kind. Members also receive a copy of the Almanac of Seapower. This highly regarded publication is a valuable source of reference in sea service related topics including its leaders, vessels, and other war fighting and supporting equipment.

The Navy League is concerned about our servicemembers, military preparedness, modernization, sufficient sea power and other matters in order to preserve and protect our national security and economic stability.

The world is becoming increasingly dangerous, and the threat of international terrorism adds a new dimension to this problem. The attack on the United States and the

war since highlight a fundamental condition of our circumstances: We CANNOT and will not know precisely where and when America's interests will be threatened, and when America will come under attack or when Americans might die as a result of aggression. The sea services, and the men and women who serve in them, are uniquely poised to protect America in this threat environment.

We need you and every concerned American citizen to join with us to sustain and ensure a robust future for America. We need you as a citizen in support of the sea services. Together we can make a difference for effectively expanding our reach and impact.

Our military is the greatest in the world, and we have to keep it that way. It's a warning to those who would threaten this nation's welfare or the welfare of its allies and friends that their efforts at coercion or aggression will not succeed.

History shows a direct correlation between the greatness of nations and their commercial and military supremacy of the sea. I am a proud member of this organization. I hope you will join me in becoming a member of the Navy League – this historically rich, patriotic and meaningful organization. Help me serve those who serve our country.

Thank you very much for this opportunity to speak with you today. I'd be glad to take any questions you may have.