



The Ship's Whistle

Fall 2025

An occasional e-mail bulletin of newsworthy information for Members of the **Massachusetts Bay Council**, Navy League of the United States and other friends of the Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard and U.S.-flag Merchant Marine.

The Navy League is a civilian organization dedicated to the education of our citizens, including elected officials and the support of the men and women of the sea services and their families.

Calendar

October 21 USS Constitution underway

Nov Toys for Tots drive

Nov 9 Sea Cadet Swim Meet. Members invited.
(details below)

March 2026 USS Massachusetts (SSN 798) Commissioning
(Subject to change)

April Mass Maritime ship tour and optional dinner with
NOAA speaker (TBA)

2027 USS John F. Kennedy (CVN 79) Commissioning (TBD)

2029 USS Thomas G. Kelley (DDG 140) Commissioning (TBD)



Coming soon.

Our fifty-first year of supporting the Marine Toys for Tots drive. Details to follow by email and USPS. Last year we were able to donate over 700 items, thanks to contributions of toys but mostly donations with which our 'super shopper' purchased items. If you care to contribute now, send check payable to: "Mass Bay Council, NLUS", at Mass Bay Council, 25 Dorchester Ave., P.O. Box 51662, Boston, MA 02205. The Council is a 501.c.3 non-profit.



U.S. Coast Guard

commissioned first new icebreaker since the 1990s on Aug 10th as USCGC Storis (WAGB-21). She was originally built as an icebreaking anchor handling tug supply vessel to support oil exploration and drilling in the Chukchi Sea off Alaska before the USCG acquired the vessel. She joins the only two other U.S. icebreakers: Healy (WAGB-20) and Polar Star (WAGB-10).

The Coast Guard needs about nine to do the job properly, officials have testified.



MASS BAY COUNCIL

MEMBERS INVITED TO SAIL IN USS CONSTITUTION

In honor of the U.S. Navy's 250th Birthday and USS CONSTITUTION'S 228th Birthday the Massachusetts Bay Council was offered a limited number of spots for the underway on Tuesday, October 21. A lottery was held to select from among those responding to the invitation.

Passengers will engage with active-duty sailors on board to learn about the Navy and the history of the ship. They will have a front-row seat for a 21-gun salute in honor by Castle Island and a 17-gun salute off Coast Guard Base Boston (where the Ship was built between 1794 and 1797).

Naval Sea Cadets Annual Regional Swim Meet November 9, at the Gleason Family YMCA, 33 Charge Pond Rd, Wareham

NL Members and Guests are invited and encouraged to attend.

For many years, the Mass Bay Council has provided the awards for these swim meets.

Teams will check in at Noon. Food (pizza) will be provided.

Those planning on attending, contact Jim McLoughlin at VZE2P78Y@VERIZON.NET no later than Nov. 1.



History (next page)



USS Thomas G. Kelley (DDG 140)
will be similar to the ship (shown above).

Bath Iron Works announced that cutting of steel for the future USS Thomas G. Kelley (DDG 140) has started. It usually takes about four years to build. Named for Captain Thomas G. Kelley, USN(Ret), who as a then-Lieutenant serving in Vietnam, was awarded the Medal of Honor "for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty". Kelley served in the Navy for 30 years, and after retirement, became Secretary of the Massachusetts Department of Veterans' Services. We are pleased and proud of his membership in our Council.



Toys for Tots began in 1947 as the brainchild of Marine Corps Reserve Major Bill Hendricks. It was his wife, Diane, who was the inspiration. She had a few handcrafted dolls and asked Bill to deliver them to an agency that supports children in need. When Bill reported that he could not find such an organization, she instructed him to "start one!". Maj Hendricks and his Marine Reserve unit in Los Angeles collected and distributed 5,000 toys. Seeing such successful community engagement, the Commandant directed all Marine Reserve Sites to implement a TFT campaign in 1948. As a personal friend and as a favor to Bill, Walt Disney designed the first Toys for Tots poster which included a miniature three-car train that was subsequently adopted as the Toys for Tots logo.

The Massachusetts Bay Council got involved in 1976, following the National Park Service's reopening of the refurbished Commandant's House, Boston Navy Yard, in conjunction with the council's annual Christmas holiday party.

(Toys for Tots cont'd)



Over the years, the Council collected toys and games as well as cash contributions with which items were purchased while also enjoying friendship and good cheer in the Commandant's House. It is important to remember the profound impact this initiative has on the lives of children in need. Every toy collected represents more than a gift— it symbolizes hope, joy, and a reminder that the community stands united in uplifting those who may be struggling during the holiday season.



Photos: Pre-Covid Holiday tree in Commandant's House; Sea Cadets attended with gifts.

In 2024, the council gathered over 700 items for the volunteer 25th Marine Regiment Reservists from Ft. Devens to pick up. These became part of the 106,389 items delivered to a warehouse, sorted by age and available for pickup by charitable organizations for distribution in Middlesex and Essex Counties. Some 104,553 children were supported.

If you care to contribute now, send check payable to: "Mass Bay Council, NLUS", at Mass Bay Council, 25 Dorchester Ave., P.O. Box 51662, Boston, MA 02205.

 The Ship's Whistle is published by The Massachusetts Bay Council, Navy League of the U.S., 25 Dorchester Ave., P.O. Box 51662, Boston, MA 02205. To be removed from this mailing list, contact: Editor: Ivan Samuels at go2navy@verizon.net.

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