



# Imperial Valley

Citizens in Support of the Sea Services



## UPCOMING EVENTS

### December

- 1 NAFEC Holiday Light Parade
- 5 Council T-Bone Dinner | 6:30 pm  
Moose Lodge, Imperial, CA

### January 2024

- 2 NO MEETING | Dark
- TBD USN Blue Angels Arrival for Winter Training

### February 2024

- 6 Blue Angels Night | 5:30 pm  
Emerald Seed Company

### March 2024

- 5 Council T-Bone Dinner | 6:30 pm  
Moose Lodge, Imperial, CA

### T-Bone Dinners held on the 1st Tuesday of each month:

Moose Lodge #1033  
2310 Myrtle Road  
Imperial, CA 92251  
6:30 p.m.

### Navy League of the United States

### Imperial Valley Council

PO Box 3834  
El Centro, CA 92244  
(760) 791-7345  
ivnavyleague@yahoo.com  
ivnavyleague.org



2023 | December

## DECEMBER SPEAKER | Lt Col Christopher Kelly, USMC

### Commanding Officer VMFA-214

After 20 years of dedicated service to the United States Marine Corps, the commanding officer of the Black Sheep of VMFA-214, Lieutenant Colonel Christopher Kelly, USMC will be retiring.

Though Lt Col Kelly was our guest speaker in May 2022, we have invited him, and his family to join us for dinner. Col Kelly will provide us with an update on the squadron, and give our members an opportunity to wish him farewell in retirement. Joining Col Kelly, will be his replacement, so this will be a great opportunity for us to meet the next commanding officer of this storied squadron.

Lieutenant Colonel Christopher J Kelly is a 2004 graduate of Sacred Heart University. While completing his undergraduate degree in Criminal Justice, he enrolled in the Platoon Leaders Course and attended Officer Candidate School in 2001 and 2003. Upon graduation from Sacred Heart, Lt. Col. Kelly was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in May 2004.

[Continues on Page 2]



## Joint Operation Give Thanks 2023 Success and Thanks

For nearly 40 years this council has donated Thanksgiving turkeys to the active men and women of NAF El Centro. We were pleased to be able to successfully complete this mission with your help. You gave generously, which allowed us to "Give Thanks" to 151 active duty families of our commands.

We extend our heartfelt "Thanks" for your generous support.



**OUR ADOPTED COMMANDS**



NAVAL AIR FACILITY EL CENTRO



US NAVY BLUE ANGELS



NAVY MUNITIONS COMMAND CONUS WEST DET



USS FITZGERALD DDG 62



STRIKE FIGHTER WING PACIFIC MAINT UNIT EL CENTRO DET



USMC VMFA-214 BLACKSHEEP



USCGC PETREL WPB 87350



DESERT EAGLE SQUADRON ESCONDIDO BATTALION TRAINING SHIP KIT CARSON US NAVAL SEA CADET CORPS

**Lt Col Kelley Bio** [cont. from Page 1]

Lt. Col. Kelly attended The Basic School in 2004 and in May 2005, he reported to Naval Air Station Pensacola, Florida, for flight training. After training at NAS Whiting Field, Florida, and NAS Meridian, Mississippi, Lt. Col. Kelly was designated a Naval Aviator in October 2007 and selected to fly the EA-6B Prowler. From November 2007 to August 2009, he trained with the EA-6B Fleet Replacement Squadron, VAQ-129 aboard NAS Whidbey Island, WA.

In September 2009, Lt. Col. Kelly reported to VMAQ-1 located at MCAS Cherry Point. During this time, Lt. Col. Kelly deployed twice to Bagram Airbase, Afghanistan, in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM and once to Aviano Airbase in support of Operation UNIFIED PROTECTOR. Following the second deployment to Bagram, Lt. Col. Kelly was selected to attend the Weapons and Tactics Instructor (WTI) course. During this tour, Lt. Col. Kelly served as a Mission Planning Officer, Aviation Safety Officer, Director of Safety and Standardization, and S-1 Officer in Charge.

In March 2013, Lt. Col. Kelly reported to MCB Quantico, Virginia, to serve in Manpower and Reserve Affairs, Manpower Management Officer Assignments, as the Fixed Wing Company Grade monitor. While serving in this billet, Lt. Col. Kelly was selected to transition to the F[1]35B.

In June 2015, Lt. Col. Kelly reported to VMFAT-501 at MCAS Beaufort, South Carolina, to begin transition training for the F-35B. In June 2016, Lt. Col. Kelly reported to VMFA-211 at MCAS Yuma, Arizona, where he served as the Assistant Operations Officer until January 2018. In January 2018, Lt. Col. Kelly moved down the flight line to stand up the next F-35 squadron in MAG-13, VMFA-122. During his time with VMFA-122 he served as the Aviation Maintenance Officer, and Executive Officer. In June 2020, Lt. Col. Kelly was selected to assume command of VMFA-214 and transition the squadron from operating AV-8B's to F-35B's.

From June 2020 until June 2021, Lt. Col Kelly deployed as the Aviation Combat Element Executive Officer and F-35B Detachment Officer in Charge for the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit. During this deployment onboard the USS MAKIN ISLAND, the 15th MEU supported Operations OCTAVE QUARTZ, INHERENT RESOLVE, and FREEDOM'S SENTINEL.

Lt. Col. Kelly has over 2,000 flight hours in the EA-6B and F-35B. His personal awards include the Meritorious Service Medal, Air Medal with 10 Strike/Flight Awards, the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal with gold star, and the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal.



**Ready to Join Us?**

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

**Welcome New & Renewing Members!**

Edelmiro "Tom" Gonzales  
 Karen Gonzales  
 David Gupton  
 Ivan Mustafa

**Unit Sponsorship Opportunity**

Consider sponsoring one of our units. Sponsors underwrite special events and awards. Ask us how.

- NAF EL CENTRO
- STRIKE FIGHTER WING PACIFIC
- MAINTENANCE UNIT—EL CENTRO
- NAVY MUNITIONS COMMAND
- USS FITZGERALD
- VMFA-214
- USCGC PETREL

**Table Sponsors**

Table sponsorships underwrite the cost of our speakers and active duty award recipient's dinners. Want to lend your support? Contact us to find out how, and become a sponsor today!

- THE DAHM TEAM REAL ESTATE CO.
- BRUCE & AVA CROWDER
- USAA
- PREMIER TOWING



## Catch These Highlights From Our Last Dinner

### Honoring Vietnam Veterans

Our special guest was Vietnam Veteran, Captain Bob Marshall, USMC who was shot down while he was piloting a helicopter conducting Med-Evacs in Vietnam. Captain Marshall was awarded 26 Air Medals, the Purple Heart, the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry, and Vietnam Civil Action Ribbon.

In addition to Captain Marshall, we were honored to recognize a number of Vietnam Veterans and members who joined us for dinner last month. Pictured L-R: Captain Bob Marshall, Lee Quarcelino, Tom Gonzales, Charles Hill, Thomas (Dan) Daniels, Bill Browning Jr, Carlos Zaragoza, and President Ted Gallinat.



### Adopted Unit Award Recognitions

Our congratulations are extended to each of these exceptional squadron and command standouts from our adopted units:

#### VMFA-214

Sgt Alexandar Looper  
Corporal Dolyn Kahn  
Lance Corporal Dominic Companio

#### Strike Fighter Wing Pacific Maintenance Unit

AME1 JodyLee Norman  
AE2 Ian Elrod  
YN3 Marvin Chavez  
AZAN Rosa Cardona

#### NAF El Centro

NC1 Veronica Garcia  
HM2 Andres Lopez  
AC3 Alec Charles

#### NMC Conus West Detachment El Centro

AO1 Kendell Morris  
AO2 Zatayha Washington  
AZAR Stephan Wallach



### Dinner Reservations Strongly Recommended

Our steaks are specially aged, and hand-cut for us each dinner meeting. Due to our inability to store extra steaks at our new meeting site, we will only order as many steaks as we have reservations for. We typically have 1-2 extra steaks on hand, but cannot guarantee you a steak dinner without an advance reservation. **24-hour notice prior to dinner is recommended.**

Call or email us if you have questions. Reservations accepted online at: <https://www.ivnavyleague.org/t-bone-dinner>

## President's Message

The Holiday season is here, and we kicked it off with "Joint Operation Give Thanks," which was another successful event for supporting the Sailors and Marines in uniform and their families, who are defending our American way of life.

Because of your donations, we were able to purchase 151 turkeys, and present a Thanksgiving turkey to all those families that requested one. It was through your generosity that we did not have to turn anyone in uniform away.

Christmas just a few weeks away, we are turning our focus on holiday gift baskets for certain active duty families who are enduring financial hardship. I don't even have to tell you that we're all feeling the pinch of our current economy — and much more so for young families who are some of our nation's lowest paid.

Though times are tough for everyone, we want to make you aware of what we are seeing, and give you an opportunity to support these families.

At this time, a total of 10 families have been identified across all our commands to be recipients of our gift program. You may submit your donation on the included form here, or you can make a donation via check or our PayPal link on our website. Thank you in advance for your support of these families.

I want to give a special shout out to Navy League member Dave Reider, who made it possible for me to speak to the Sunbeam RV Resort breakfast last week. I was able to share the mission of the Navy League, and what our Imperial Valley council does through membership and support of our adopted commands. If you are a member of an organization, and would like me to speak about what Navy League does for our sea services, let me know — I'd be happy to speak to other groups.

If you missed our November T-Bone Steak Dinner meeting, I will just tell you that you missed one of the best speakers our Council has ever had in recent history: Vietnam Veteran, Captain Bob Marshall USMC gave a very heart-tugging presentation. We were honored to have him speak about his experience.

I pray that I will see some of you next Tuesday, December 5th for the last T-bone dinner of 2023. We have invited Lieutenant Colonel Chris Kelly, USMC, Commanding Officer VMFA 214 Black Sheep to give his farewell message before his retirement. He'll be bringing along his replacement, so we hope to see you there!

Until we "meat" again!

CMDCM Theodore R. "Ted" Gallinat, USN, Retired  
President



### We have the perfect gift! One Size Fits All.

The gift of Navy League membership fits all sizes — and everyone benefits! We benefit from the rebate your membership brings, and your recipient will be one of many across our nation who benefits from the opportunity to support our mission. Sign your friends and family up for membership today. <https://www.navyleague.org/become-a-member/>

## SAVE THE DATE | Desert Outing 2024

We're still working out the details for the next Desert Outing, and waiting on final authorization to hold the event.

In the meantime, we're asking you to "pencil in" the date, and plan to join us in 2024.

Funds raised from this event support the servicemen and women of each of our adopted commands, ships and squadrons, their families, and our sponsored Sea Cadet, and NJROTC Cadet units.

Mark your calendars!







# CHRISTMAS **GIFT** PROGRAM

*for Active Duty Families  
in need*

**DONATE "SANTA"**

We work with our adopted units to meet the needs of active duty families experiencing hardships during the holidays.

A donation in any amount will help us "adopt" a family this Christmas to ensure "Santa" makes a visit.

[www.ivnavyleague.org](http://www.ivnavyleague.org)

**Make a tax-deductible gift payable to:**

**Imperial Valley Navy League**

**P O Box 3834**

**El Centro, CA 92244-3834**

**Or visit us online to make a donation at [www.ivnavyleague.org](http://www.ivnavyleague.org)**

**Reference "SANTA"**