



May 2019

IV Navy League Dinner | May 7 at 6:30 pm

WWII Indestructible Ace Alex Vraciu

NAF El Centro Airfield Named | Hear the Story behind the Hero

The year was 1944, and this young man from Chicago, Illinois was only 25 years old when he was declared the Navy's top World War II fighter ace after downing 19 Japanese aircraft and destroying 21 more in less than eight months. Overall, he was the fourth-ranked naval ace in the war, and a recipient of the Navy Cross.



Born on November 2, 1918, Alexander Vraciu was the son of Romanian immigrants. He enlisted in the Navy in 1943 -- six months prior to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. He went on to serve 24-years in the Navy, retiring at the rank of Commander.

Naval Air Facility El Centro's Public Affairs Officer, Kristopher Haugh will be our May speaker, and telling us about how NAF came to name its air field after Commander Alexander Vraciu.

Commander Vraciu had numerous exploits in the air that earned him "Ace" status which you will hear during the presentation, but it was on December 14, 1944 in the

skies over the Philippines where it seemed that this flying ace's luck had run out. Vraciu's Navy Hellcat had taken a bullet in the oil tanks, and he was losing altitude.

More than a month had gone by, without word of his whereabouts--he had disappeared, only to emerge with an enemy's saber slung over his shoulder. He had parachuted out of his Hellcat at low altitude, and joined a band of guerrilla fighters battling the Japanese forces. It was here that he was given the nickname, "The Indestructible."

Following the end of WWII, Vraciu remained in the Navy and lead a number of squadrons, including becoming a test pilot. It was in 1957, that he trained at Naval Air Facility El Centro, achieving the highest individual aerial marksmanship score while flying the FJ-3Fury and serving as commanding officer of VF-51 squadron.

The real-life story of Commander Vraciu is compelling. We think this is one presentation you don't want to miss.

Speaker Biography

Kristopher Haugh is a veteran of the United States Navy having served 23 years. During his naval career, he served on six ships, attended the United States Naval Academy for two years, served overseas in Bahrain during the opening months of Operation Enduring Freedom, and spent four years at the White House.

In 2011, Kris retired from his final duty station, NAF El Centro as a Chief Petty Officer. He immediately began working as the Deputy Public Affairs Officer, then appointed their Public Affairs Officer in 2014.

Last year, Mr. Haugh received his Master of Arts in Holocaust and Genocide Studies from Gratz College.

NAFEC Security Access | Don't have yours? Bringing a Guest?



If you haven't done so, NAF El Centro's Base Security Office is standing by to help process your application for your DBIDS access card which will authorize you to drive your vehicle on base for Navy League events.

To apply for your card, download and submit your application with this information:

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

- [Download SECNAV 5512 form](#)
- [Steps to submit SECNAV 5512 form](#)
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QUESTIONS?

Call: (760) 339-2524

Email: W_ELCN_BASE_ACCESS_GS@navy.mil

NAFEC OFFICE HOURS:

- Monday - Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
- Closed for lunch 11:00 a.m.-12:00 noon

- *Pass Office is closed on holidays and weekends*

NO CARD? NEW MEMBER? BRINGING A GUEST?

No problem! Let us know in advance and we'll make arrangements to sponsor you, or your guest on Base for the evening, and begin the paperwork for future visits.

We're a phone call away. **Call us at (760) 791-7345.**

National Convention Coming Up - Proxy Cards Needed

The Annual Meeting of the Members of the Navy League of the United States will be held on Friday, June 21, 2019, in Norfolk, Virginia.



If You Can't Make It

Members who cannot attend this meeting are earnestly requested to fill out a proxy card in the online member portal so we can meet our quorum at our annual meeting. You must be logged into our website and use your membership ID number to fill out this form. The deadline for proxy cards is **June 7**.

If you have questions concerning proxy cards, contact Senior Vice President of Business Operations and Corporate Counsel Ryan Donaldson, (703) 312-1559.

Crown Craft Beer Invitation | Saturday, May 18



Join one of the largest craft beer tastings in the Imperial Valley, Crown Craft Beer Invitational!

Purchase Pre-Sale Tickets at the Imperial Valley Expo; Pre-Sale Tickets will be entered into event giveaways.

Let's help make this event the biggest and best yet. Get your tickets today. We'll see you there!

California Mid-Winter Fair & Fiesta
Imperial Valley Expo
5:00 - Midnight

\$30 General Admission
\$15 Designated Driver
\$15 Military Discount

(Must Present Military ID)

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Planning on ordering that perfect Mother's Day gift through Amazon? Perfect!
When you shop, Amazon gives back -- and if you're specific, Amazon will donate to a
portion of your purchase to Imperial Valley Navy League.

This amount is not added to your purchase, it means Amazon is taking less,
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What's not to love about that?

Shop today!

May is Military Appreciation Month

*"Word to the Nation: Guard zealously your right to serve in the Armed Forces, for
without them, there will be no other rights to guard." -- President John F. Kennedy*

May was selected as Military Appreciation Month because it includes many military celebrations and commemorations, such as Armed Forces Day, Military Spouse Appreciation Day, Victory in Europe Day and, most importantly, Memorial Day.

Honor. Remember. Never Forget.

Memorial Day is a time for Americans to give pause and remember the fallen and honor their sacrifice of all those who served in our Armed Forces.

The History of Memorial Day

First established as Decoration Day after the Civil War, the holiday was set aside for families and friends to visit and decorate the graves of troops lost in the conflict.

As time went on, the observance instead became known as "Memorial Day," until 1971, when Congress declared it an official holiday set to fall annually on the last Monday in May. Read more about the history of Memorial Day.

There Is A Difference: Memorial day v. Veterans Day

Service members, veterans and their families know there is a big difference between Memorial Day and Veterans Day. While Veterans Day, Nov. 11 -- a day set aside to celebrate all veterans; Memorial Day is a somber holiday dedicated to honor military



fallen, with a special focus on those killed during military service -- *it's not Happy Memorial Day.*

May 10 | Military Spouse Appreciation Day

May 18 | Armed Forces Day

May 27 | Memorial Day

President's Message

Under normal circumstances, and according to our council bylaws, we hold officer and board of director elections in the month of November.

As you know, it was a busy time for us as we worked tirelessly through changes to Base security access in which to hold our dinner meetings. Along with this, we were holding Joint Operation Give Thanks, feeding Sailors and Marines Thanksgiving meals, and planning and hosting our most important fundraiser -- Desert Outing, all the while juggling the holidays.



I think most of you realize that we are all volunteers -- no one draws a salary for the work we do for Navy League. Many of us hold full-time jobs, and have families we care for as well. This isn't an excuse, but rather an explanation for why we're off schedule.

With all we had going on, the Board found it necessary to defer our election of officers and board members until the dust settled.

I'm happy to report that we are back on track. A nominating committee was formed in March, and the Board of Directors were elected last month 2019. With the new Board seated this week, the Board's took action to elect the 2019 officers:

2019 Officers

President	Ted Gallinat
Vice President	Lee Hindman
Secretary	Sue Caldwell
Treasurer	Gaylla Finnell
Judge Advocate	Lisa Gallinat

2019 Board of Directors

Janie Almandariz
Roy Caldwell
David Gupton
Benino Martinez
Joan Mitchell

Our officers are largely unchanged, as we develop new Board members to take on new roles within the council.

I would like to thank former Board Members Betty Tucker, Eddie Lutz and Walter Gonzales for their long service and dedication to the council, and the Navy League

mission.

Each Board Member has been asked take a specific committee assignment which we will be soon announcing. They in turn will be recruiting our members to assist them in various programs. If you have a specific talent that you would like to share with us, let us know! We are currently seeking an individual to assist with social media and writing our newsletter. Let's find a place for you!

I would like to thank the Board for allowing me to continue to serve you and be your representative. Let's continue to work together to grow our membership and provide the premier support to our adopted commands that we've come to be known for.

You may have recently read where NAF El Centro recently named their airfield after WWII flying ace Commander Alex Vraciu. There is an impressive story behind this aviator and why he was selected for this recent distinction. Come hear this story. You won't be disappointed. Of course, we're still serving delicious Brandt Beef T-Bone steaks for only \$25 per person.

Until then!

Ted

Ted Gallinat, President
Imperial Valley Council
Navy League of the U.S.
www.ivnavyleague.org
ivnavyleague@yahoo.com

UPCOMING DINNER MEETINGS

May 7 | Speaker: Kristopher Haugh, Public Affairs Officer, NAF El Centro
Naval Air Facility El Centro | 6:30 pm
T-Bone steak Dinner only \$25 pp

June 4 | Speaker: TBA
Naval Air Facility El Centro | 6:30 pm
T-Bone steak Dinner only \$25 pp

July 2 | No Meeting Fundraiser Benefiting Youth Scholarship Programs

August 6 | No Meeting Fundraiser Benefiting Youth Scholarship Programs



LOOKING FOR SOMETHING TO DO?

May 6-8 | Sea-Air-space Exposition
National Harbor, MD

May 18 | Crown Craft Beer Invitational

California Midwinter Fair , I.V. Expo | 5:00 pm - Midnight

\$30 General Admission

\$15 Military Discount

May 27 | **Memorial Day**

June 19-22 | National Convention

Norfolk, VA



Besides being a part of a great organization that serves others.
You receive benefits too!

[Become A Member](#)

OUR ADOPTED UNITS



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EL CENTRO



US NAVY BLUE ANGELS
FLIGHT DEMONSTRATION
SQUADRON



USMC MARINE ATTACK
SQUADRON VMA-214



USCGC PETRAL
WPB 87350



NAVY MUNITIONS COMMAND
CONUS WEST DETACHMENT



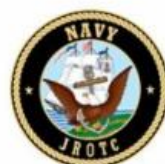
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MAINTENANCE UNIT EL CENTRO DETACHMENT



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The Official Publication of the Navy League

In print since 1902, Seapower provides Navy League members, sea service chiefs and members of Congress with the most relevant news affecting the U.S. Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard and U.S.-flag Merchant Marine.

Navy League of the United States

Imperial Valley Council

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