



IMPERIAL VALLEY
Supporting the Sea Services since 1949



January-February 2023

T-Bone Dinners Resume with New Location for February



Meet the 2023 Blue Angels

Blue Angels #1
CDR ALEXANDER P. ARMATAS, USN
Flight Leader / Commanding Officer

You've likely been hearing and seeing those blue and gold jets in our skies these past few weeks. You likely haven't yet met the pilots in those jets, but we intend to change that. We'll be hosting our first T-bone dinner on Tuesday, February 7th at a new location off Base.

Reservations required.

Commander Alexander P. Armatas is a native of Skaneateles, New York. He graduated from the United States Naval Academy in 2002 with a Bachelor of Science in aerospace engineering.

Alexander was designated a Naval Aviator at Naval Air Station (NAS) Meridian, MI, in June 2005, and received orders to Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 115, the "Eagles" at NAS Lemoore, California. There he served as Schedules Officer, Line Division Officer, Weapons Training Officer, Landing Signal Officer, Assistant Operations Officer, and Safety Officer.

He completed three deployments on board USS Ronald Reagan (CVN-76) in support of Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom. During his tour, Alexander received the 2008 George H. W. Bush Leadership award. In 2009, he graduated from the Strike Fighter Tactics Instructor (TOPGUN) course at NAS Fallon, Nevada, and subsequently joined the "Flying Eagles" of VFA-122 at NAS Lemoore as an Instructor Pilot. There he was named the 2010 VFA-122 Instructor Pilot of the Year.

Upon completion of his instructor tour, Alexander reported to the "Tophatters" of VFA-14 in Lemoore, California, as Training Officer and deployed aboard

USS John C Stennis (CVN-74) in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. There he received the 2013 Lieutenant Commander Michael G. Hoff Attack Aviator of the Year award. Following his Training Officer tour, Alexander reported to the VFA-143 "Pukin' Dogs" at NAS Oceana in Virginia Beach, Virginia, as a Department Head, where he deployed aboard USS Harry S Truman (CVN-75) in support of Operation Inherent Resolve.

In December 2016, Alexander received orders to the Navy Personnel Command (NPC) in Millington, Tennessee, as Strike Fighter Placement Officer, after which he reported to the "Gunslingers" of VFA-105. He became Executive Officer in October 2019, and assumed command in January 2021. While assigned to VFA105, he deployed twice aboard USS Dwight D Eisenhower (CVN-69) in support of Operation Freedom's Sentinel and was awarded the 2020 Navy and Marine Corps Association Leadership Award.

Alexander joined the Blue Angels in August 2022. He has accumulated more than 4,100 flight hours and 911 carrier-arrested landings. His decorations include the Meritorious Service Medal, four Strike/Flight Air Medals, five Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medals, one Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal, and various personal, unit and service awards.

New February Dinner Location



During the last several months, we have been attempting to work through the new security requirements at NAF El Centro that would enable us to continue to host our dinners at the Mirage Club.

Unfortunately, we haven't been able to resolve those issues, and we have made the difficult decision to

**Emerald Seed Company
1735 Austin Road
El Centro**

**Tuesday, February 7, 2023
5:30 pm (Early Start)**

RESERVATIONS REQUIRED

[Click Here to Reserve](#)

move our T-bone dinners to a location in town. One of our challenges in locating a suitable site has been finding a location that will allow us to prepare our own steaks, and has all the amenities that we've become accustomed.

We have identified a few locations, but we're also looking at the cost factor. We're doing our best not to raise the cost of dinner, or switch to something other than our signature T-bone steaks.

Until we find a permanent solution, local native, Mike Dessert has generously offered to let us host our February dinner at his Emerald Seed Company facility. Many longtime Imperial Valley residents might recognize this site as the former Tony Abatti farming facility on Austin Road. Emerald Seed is located on Austin Road, just south of Ross Road, and north of Interstate 8. Many thanks to Mike Dessert for his accomodation.

T-Bone dinners are still only \$30.00. You may pay in advance by cash or check, or use the link below, or Square Card QR code to access our pay site and reserve your T-bone dinner. There is a \$2.00 credit card convenience fee.



Square card link:

<https://square.link/u/xSyH1bBT?src=sms>

DON'T THINK. JUST D.O.!



FEBRUARY 24-25, 2023

You've probably been wondering, as we have, if we would be able to execute on Desert Outing this year. We are getting down to the wire, and do not yet have authorization for the event. While we wait for authorization to proceed, we are making plans to host the event when the "All Clear" does come through.

With the tentative state we are in, we are rolling out the invitation, with our "Don't think. Just DO" (just like Maverick) to complete your registration, and return it. The only caveat is that we are not accepting your payments until we get our final confirmation. Once confirmation is received, we will ask you to

make your payments online to secure your reservation.

Should authorization not be received by February 10th, we will unfortunately have to cancel this year's event.

A current Navy League membership is required to attend.

Holiday Support to Active Duty Families



We were excited to be able to donate 128 turkeys to active duty families this year stationed with NAF El Centro and USCGC PETREL.

We Give Thanks.

During this time when many of our military families budgets are stretched thin, these turkeys went a long way to ease the burden of during the holidays.

Special thanks to many of our members who generously donated to support this year's event, and the NAFEC Commissary for their coordination.





We've all been there. Stressing the holidays, unsure if we'll be able to provide a meaningful Christmas when our budgets have thin margins. We know what this feels like, and certain active duty families often do too.

To ease this burden we solicit our sponsored commands for input to families who may be under particular financial strain during the holidays. For about a dozen years, the Council accepts applications to support these families with holiday dinners, gifts for children, and gift cards to "fill the gap". This year, there were only three families, and it is always a blessing to know that a families holiday was made a little brighter with treats and gifts made available to them from the Council.

Our Council Treasurer, Gaylla Finnell, and her husband Joe, undertake this project each year, providing the shopping, gift preparation, and additional funding to ensure successful delivery in time for "Santa."

We extend a special thank you to the Finnells, and NAF El Centro's Command Master Chief Rob Roske for the coordination for another successful event.

Scholarships Available

Scholarship Funding for Military Spouses

The Navy League and Columbia Southern University (CSU) are proud to announce a new scholarship for military spouses. The recipient will receive 60 credit hours towards any degree program (up to \$25,200) at CSU. This scholarship is open to a spouse of the U.S. Navy, U.S. Marine Corps or U.S. Coast Guard personnel. If you have any questions regarding this scholarship please contact us at scholarships@navyleague.org. [Apply here](#).

Submissions for 2023-2024 School Year Scholarships Now Open

We are proud to announce that scholarships for the 2023-2024 school year are now available! Navy League Foundation scholarships increase access to deserving high school seniors from sea service families who will be continuing their education to an accredited institution in the Fall of 2023.

[Apply now on the Navy League website](#)

Your Voice Matters | Letters to Congress

The MOC | The Global Competition in the Western Pacific

We're introducing [The MOC \(Maritime Operations Center\)](#), an online journal produced by writers from the Center for Maritime Strategy. The journal features articles that critically engage with pressing defense issues, particularly focused on the maritime domain.

Recently in the MOC, as the center looks at potential hot topics in 2023, Dr. Jeff Harley breaks down the increased global competition with China in the Western Pacific and why the sea services should prepare for a potential conflict. [Read more of his analysis here](#)

Your Voice Matters | Letters to Congress



We have many pressing issues facing our sea services. If we don't make our voices heard to our Congressional and Senate leadership, who will? Our sea services rely on us being their voice to our elected representatives.

You can be their voice by sending your letters on these important matters. Visit our [Voice to Congress site for active campaigns](#), and submit your letters. Your responses really do make a difference.

President's Message

New Year. New (re)Solutions.

It's not too late to say "Happy New Year". Normally, we don't get together until February, and we kick off our Navy League year with Blue Angels night.

This year is different/not-so-different.
Different, in that we'll have a new venue;



but not-so-different, that we're hosting Blue Angels, and continuing our support of the sea services -- just as we always do.

Though we haven't seen much of you, we've been working hard behind the scenes to bring back our dinners, and carry out our mission until we see you again.

In November we distributed turkeys, and in December we were able to make Christmas just a bit brighter for some active duty service members and their families. We kicked off the New Year with the arrivals of the Blue Angels, and we've been working on solutions to our dinner location -- and Desert Outing.

We believe we've got things (mostly) worked out, and we will appreciate your flexibility while we find a more permanent solution to our meeting nights. In the meantime, we are grateful for the generosity of Mike Dessert/Emerald Seed for opening up his facility to allow us to host the Blue Angels for their first public appearance.

Because our February dinner set-up will be a little different than you're used to, we'll do our best to make sure you're appreciated, and valued as a member. Just as we've been doing for the past year, we will be taking reservations for the dinner. This helps us immeasurably in our steak orders, and ensures you'll get a steak when you show up. We are requesting that you place your dinner reservation and payment online. You can use this link to reserve your spot at this very popular dinner.

Before I forget, it's our 74th birthday. We were chartered on January 19, 1949, so I hope you'll plan to join us for T-bones and birthday cake on Tuesday, February 7th.

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

Upcoming T-Bone Dinners and Events

FEBRUARY 2023

7 | Navy League Dinner | 5:30 pm

Emerald Seed Company, 1735 Austin Road, El Centro, CA 92243

24-25 | Desert Outing (*Pending*)

Naval Air Facility El Centro

MARCH 2023

7 | Navy League Dinner | 6:30 pm

Location: TBD

11 | El Centro Airshow

Naval Air Facility El Centro | Gates open 8:30 am

APRIL 2023

4 | Navy League Dinner | 6:30 pm

Location: TBD

MAY 2023

2 | Navy League Dinner | 6:30 pm

Location: TBD

Follow Us Whenever, and Wherever We Go!



Welcome New and Renewing Members!

Sheri Eckman
Dr. Gerald Fox
Robert and Becky Haas
George Keith
Diana Steward
Jonathan Villa
Victor Villa

Ready to Join?

[Besides being a part of a great organization that serves others.](#)
[You receive benefits too!](#)

[Membership now open to all active duty service members](#)

[Download an Application](#)

[Join Online](#)

Our Supported Units



NAVAL AIR FACILITY
EL CENTRO



US NAVY BLUE ANGELS FLIGHT
DEMONSTRATION SQUADRON



USMC MARINE FIGHTER ATTACK
SQUADRON VMFA-214



USCGC PETREL
WPB 87350



NAVY MUNITIONS COMMAND
CONUS WEST DETACHMENT



STRIKE FIGHTER WING PACIFIC
MAINTENANCE UNIT EL CENTRO



NAVAL BRANCH MEDICAL
EL CENTRO



USS FITZGERALD DDG 62



DESERT EAGLE SQUADRON
ESCONDIDO BATTALION
TRAINING SHIP KIT CARSON



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Sailor Award Sponsors

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USCGC PETREL
VMFA-214**

**Strike Fighter Wing Pacific Maintenance Unit
Navy Munitions Command (Weapons) Detachment El Centro**

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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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