ADM Sinclair M. Harris, vice director for Operations, Joint Chiefs of Staff (J3), made a return appearance before the Northern Virginia (NOVA) Council during its February meeting at Navy League Headquarters in Arlington.

A Washington native, he spoke at the March 2011 meeting of the NOVA Council. This time around, Harris was accompanied by his wife, Cora Harris, who is a life member of the Navy League and a member of the NOVA Council.

The admiral's informative slide presentation amazed the gathering with just how many Combatant Command actions the J3 works on a day-to-day basis, according to a report from Council National Director Duane Wills. His remarks were entertaining as well as very informative, and attendees came away from the meeting with a deeper appreciation of the work of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Harris fielded a great number of questions and comments from the group.

Harris was introduced by Roger Camp, NOVA Council vice president for programs. Council President Eugene Godwin was on business travel, so Executive Vice President Nancy Gorell took the helm and presided over the evening's activities.

As is the council's tradition, the meeting began by recognizing several outstanding men and women from NOVA Council adopted ships and units. These included two Marines from Headquarters Marine Corps Service Battalion, Henderson Hall. LCpl Manuel Barragan-Rodriguez and Cpl Alan Flores were recognized, respectively, as Marine of the Quarter and Noncommissioned Officer of the Quarter. Flores also had been recognized in October as Noncommissioned Officer of the Quarter. These young men were highly praised and complimented by their superiors, as emphasized by Battalion SgtMaj Craig Cressman.

The NOVA Council also recognized three crew members of USS Gunston Hall, which currently is moored at General Dynamics NASSCO-Tabard Industries shipyard in Portsmouth, Va., for repairs and alterations. The Sailor of the Quarter, Junior Sailor of the Quarter and Blue Jacket of the Quarter awards were presented in absentia, and will be personally presented in Portsmouth by Gorell.

After the awards were presented, NOVA Council Vice President for Legislative Affairs Jon Kaskin reported on a successful campaign to defeat an amendment that would have harmed the U.S. shipbuilding industry. The amendment, filed by Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., as part of the Keystone Pipeline legislation, sought to repeal the U.S.-build requirement of the Jones Act. It was not attached to the bill that was approved by Congress in late January. The pipeline bill was vetoed by President Barack Obama in February.

Dozens of NOVA Council members used the “Navy League Voice to Congress” website application to more easily communicate with their U.S. senators and congres-
sional representatives about their opposition to the amendment, according to Wills.

ADM Greenert Speaks At Hampton Roads
The Hampton Roads Council kicked off the year with its Annual Dinner Jan. 28. The event had outstanding representation from all of the sea services that included political, business and community leadership. ADM Jonathan W. Greenert, the chief of naval operations, was the distinguished guest speaker.

In Greenert’s opening remarks, he stated that in his four years as serving in this honorable position he has been consistent in two things: “The first is that I have attended every State of the Union Address and the second that I have attended every Navy League Hampton Roads Annual Dinner,” according to a report from Council Executive Director Mary Ellen Baldwin.

The council’s newly elected president, Bill Crow, welcomed the guests that included service members from Pre-Commissioning Units John Warner and Gerald R. Ford, U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area and U.S. Marine Corps Forces Command. ADM Philip S. Davidson, commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command, and his wife, Tracy, were welcomed to their first event since taking his new post.

Greenert highlighted several issues, including the balancing act between ship construction costs and the number of ships in the Navy in an era of shrinking federal budgets; looking into the future through a lens of increased automation for effective warfighting campaigns; and forward operations in the littorals, making sure the Navy and Marine Corps have ample capability to carry out power projections from the sea, across any shoreline where necessary. He also noted the role the U.S. Navy plays as an engine of the global economy, saying that keeping the sea lanes open is a global issue.

Spanish Hero Honored by President, Congress
More than 230 years after his Revolutionary War heroics helped eliminate the British naval presence in the Gulf of Mexico, Spain’s Bernardo de Gálvez y Madrid, Viscount of Galveston and Count of Gálvez, was the recipient of a pair of honors from President Barack Obama and the U.S. Congress at year’s end.

On Dec. 16, Obama signed the joint resolution of the U.S. Congress conferring honorary citizenship of the United States to Gálvez, something that, as the resolution states, “should always be an extraordinary honor not lightly conferred nor frequently granted.”

Indeed, he is only the eighth foreign citizen to earn such recognition, joining Winston Churchill, Raoul Wallenberg, William and Hannah Callowhill Penn, Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu (Mother Teresa), and fellow Revolutionary War heroes Marquis de Lafayette and Casimir Pulaski.

Two weeks earlier, a portrait of Gálvez was unveiled in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee room before an audience that included Ambassador of Spain Ramón Gil Casares and the Defense Attaché General de Brigada Angel Valcarcel Rodriguez, and was presided over by Sen. Robert Menendez, D-N.J. It fulfilled a promise made by the Continental Congress in 1783.

The Navy League National President’s Representative in Spain, Eva García, was among the few selected to be part of the unveiling ceremony. She had requested an invitation for Navy League National President James H. Offutt, but ironically he was in Spain at the time of the ceremony.

The event was very well represented by the Spanish armed forces to stand by General Galvez, said Garcia, who works for the Defense Business Unit at INDRA, a consult-
ing and technology multinational in Spain and Latin America.

“It was indeed a great day to celebrate, a great day for the military men of two nations that together made a turn in history with the successful victory in Pensacola [Fla., where Gálvez, the colonial governor of Spanish Louisiana, captured the capital of British West Florida in one of the longest battles of the Revolutionary War]. The U.S. Navy League is now part of this history accomplishment, too,” García said.

“I was extremely honored for the opportunity to participate in the fulfillment of this piece of history, thanks to the Asociacion Bernardo de Gálvez, thanks to the hard work and enthusiasm of Manuel Olmedo and thanks to the efforts and successful results of Teresa Valcarce.”

After discovering Congress never followed through on its promise to hang a portrait of Gálvez to honor his Revolutionary War service, Valcarce, a labor union secretary in Washington, worked for the past three years to bring the recognition to reality, according to the Washington Post.

The “the Lady of the Portrait,” as she has become known, also attended the unveiling ceremony.

Successfully recognizing Gálvez in a Capitol portrait also bolstered the effort to grant him honorary citizenship by increasing his name recognition among lawmakers, according to a CQ Roll Call report. U.S. Sen. Jeff Miller, R-Fla., helped spearhead the honorary citizenship campaign that culminated in a joint resolution with 30 co-sponsors, 13 Democrats and 17 Republicans.

Energy Center Hosts ‘Sea Cadet Day’

Ameren Corp.’s Callaway Energy Center hosted its first “Sea Cadet Day” on Jan. 17, welcoming more than 100 U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps (USNSCC) and Navy Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps (NJROTC) cadets and staff from across the state of Missouri.

The Sea Cadets represented the Thomas Jefferson Division, Battle-ship Missouri Division and the Harry S. Truman Squadron from St. Louis, Kansas City and Jefferson City areas, and the NJROTC cadets were from Washington, Mo., according to Instructor John H. Brandt with the Thomas Jefferson Division.

The tour was structured to support efforts to promote science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) study and career development programs. Volunteers from the Callaway Energy Center supported the event by leading the cadets though tours of training facilities at the nuclear plant including the Control Room training simulator and the cooling system flow simulator, human performance discussions and the radiological protection dress-out lab. The cadets did not visit the actual control room or any radiological controlled areas, Brandt said.

Many of the volunteers were former Navy nuclear or military personnel who often shared their insights on how military training in similar systems led to their careers in commercial energy production. Among them was Navy Reserve LCDR Kelly Alderman, Callaway's Outage Manager and commanding officer of Naval Sea Systems Command's Surgemain (Surge Maintenance) Kansas City. The father of one of the Harry S. Truman Squadron cadets, he spoke to the entire group in the Callaway Learning Center lunch room during the visit, according to Brandt.
Imperial Valley Meets 2015 Blue Angels

The Imperial Valley, Calif., Council celebrated its 66th birthday with the 2015 U.S. Navy Flight Demonstration Squadron — the Blue Angels — at its monthly dinner Feb. 3 at the Mirage Club. More than 100 members, Blue Angels officers and Naval Air Facility El Centro personnel were in attendance.

This was the Blue Angels’ first public engagement during their training season at El Centro. Blue Angels “Boss,” CAPT Tom Frosch introduced the 2015 Flight Demonstration Team, which consists of flight officers and the support team comprising non-flight officers who serve as Events Coordinator, Maintenance Officer, Flight Surgeon, Administrative Officer, Public Affairs Officer and Supply Officer, as well as their two Boeing technical representatives.

During the dinner, Frosch presented Council President Steve Benton with the first Blue Angels lithograph of the season.

The Blue Angels represent the finest from the Navy and Marine Corps. Each member, whether officer or enlisted, is hand-picked from the fleet to be part of the team. Every year, this select group begins a two- or three-year rotation traveling across the country and around the world to perform for millions of spectators.

The Imperial Valley Council, chartered in 1949, immediately adopted the Blue Angels when they made the decision to make El Centro their winter training home in 1967. Since that time, the council continues to sponsor the Blue Angels, and host a yearly “Blue Angels Night” where the newly formed team is officially introduced to the Imperial Valley community. The council serves up a locally raised and hand-cut 16-ounce T-bone steak dinner to the guests.

Newport Beach Honors Seal Beach Sailors

CAPT Tripp Hardy, commanding officer, Naval Weapons Station Seal Beach, Calif., and CDR Erik Franzen, executive officer, joined Newport Beach Council Navy Leaguers Chris Chocek, Budd Bennett, Irv Cuevas and Steve Tibbetts in congratulating the latest recipients of base awards on Dec. 12.

The Sailors who were recognized were: MA1 Christopher Noeth,
Senior Sailor of the Quarter (SOQ); MA2 Casey Morgan, Junior SOQ, both for the fourth quarter of 2014, and MA1 Virgil Ignacio, Senior SOQ for the third quarter. Each received a $100 check from the Newport Beach Council, and were among the first recipients of the distinctive Bosun’s Pipes in a hand-crafted wooden box now presented as a lasting memento to outstanding Sailors at Naval Weapons Station Seal Beach, the Navy’s primary West Coast weapons and munitions loading, storage and maintenance facility. The base also is home of the World War II National Submarine Memorial-West.

In addition to Naval Weapons Station Seal Beach, the Newport Council also awards Sailors onboard the aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson and the amphibious assault ship USS Essex, both with a San Diego homeport.

Tampa Council Hosts Florida Region Meeting

The Florida Region and its nominating committee held its annual meeting Feb. 6-7 at the Grand Hyatt in Tampa, which will play host to the Navy League National Convention in June.

National President James H. Offutt shared points of interest for the Navy League and the organization’s direction and energy during the meeting. RADM Mary M. Jackson, commander, Navy Region Southeast, was keynote speaker for the event and shared information about the region’s area of responsibility and its challenges.

A number of awards were presented at the meeting by Florida
Region President and National President-elect Skip Wituski.

Dave Sullivan, regional vice president of Legislative Affairs and a National Director, received the Scroll of Honor for his years of leadership in the Navy League.

Simone Ramos, national director from Fort Lauderdale Council, was awarded the Outstanding Navy Leaguer of the Florida Region.

Central Florida Area President Chris Paddock joined Wituski in presenting the Council President of the Year award to Tim Rocklien, president of the Sarasota Manatee Council.

Tampa Council President Jason Allen accepted the award for the council with the most new members.

The Key West Council received the award for greatest net growth and highest percentage growth for new members in the Florida Region. South Florida Area President Chuck Black accepted for Key West.

Wituski also presented a Navy League History book inscribed to Jackson as a show of appreciation for speaking at the meeting.

Meier Addresses Williamsburg-Yorktown
CAPT John F. Meier, prospective commanding officer of the aircraft carrier Gerald R. Ford, spoke at the February meeting of the Williamsburg-Yorktown, Va., Council. He discussed the ship’s motto, “Integrity at the Helm,” that characterizes the life and leadership of the former president for which the ship is named.

Meier also reviewed the technologies and design features that will be aboard the Navy’s newest aircraft carrier, including a larger flight deck, electromagnetic catapults, advanced weapons systems, and a command culture that is founded on “character and quality of work.”

The event took place at the U.S. Coast Guard Training Station, Yorktown, Port of York Club.