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NAVY LEAGUE OF THE UNITED STATES
BREMERTON-OLYMPIC PENINSULA COUNCIL



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NEW MEMBERS

Welcome Aboard

- ★ Sonia Wellington

Marine Major General, Richard Mills will be Grand Marshall and Navy League Gala Keynote Speaker



Photo by Air Force Master Sgt. Brian Jones

Major General Mills has just returned from Afghanistan after serving as the Regional Command (Southwest) and Commanding General, 1st Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward), where he was responsible for over 20,000 of our Marines.

He was also responsible for the majority of coalition in Afghanistan as they continue to enhance overall security in Helmand Province and improve the capability of Afghan security forces. He has worked closely with top-level Afghan leaders to promote greater security and development throughout the province and country.

According to his extensive bio, Mills has served at such varied locations as Parris Island, Palestine, Bosnia, Somalia, Italy, Kosovo and Iraq as well as his most recent post in Afghanistan.

He has attended the Marine Corps Command and Staff College; served as

the Air/Ground Liaison Officer, Marine Air Group 29, 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing; studied at the Royal College of Defense Studies in London, England; served as the Assistant Chief of Staff and Deputy Director of Operations for the United States European Command in Stuttgart, Germany and served concurrently as Assistant Division Commander, 1st Marine Division and Commander, Ground Combat Element, Multi-National Forces-West.

On a personal note, Major General Mills has a reputation for having a great sense of humor and being very open to subordinates. He is also a great fan of the New York Giants Football team.

A huge thanks goes to the many people responsible for bringing the Major General to our area for the Armed Forces Festival. Mr. Guy Stitt deserves very special thanks for all of his hard work in securing our Grand Marshall.



President's Message

Our Council plans four major events each year: The Armed Forces Gala, The Memorial Day Service aboard the USS Turner Joy, Navy Day in October and Veterans Day. While we are very busy the rest of the year, these four events require major attention as we provide opportunities to bring the civic and business leaders together with our military leaders.

Read more about the Gala and the Memorial Day event in this newsletter.

We are also so delighted to add an additional event: a special event for the Senior Enlisted Members of all military services. These wonderful people often are not thanked enough for the amazing

work that they accomplish on a daily basis. This year we are working closely with the Suquamish Tribe and Clearwater Casino to host this special group of people at Kiana Lodge. I am certain that it will be an evening to remember.

We are fortunate to live in an area where there is so much popular support and respect for the men and women of the military. Each of our military leaders continues to stress that they have never felt so appreciated or welcome as when they are in our area and that is so important to them and to their families.

This doesn't happen by accident. We have many organizations and individuals who go out of their way to say thank you in so many ways. In the last week, I heard about a group restoring bicycles for military families and so I am hoping

we can participate in getting those "new" bikes to children who will enjoy them. Another request was for funding to help a military family with medical transportation on a regular basis for their young child. Thanks to very helpful people, I learned of a special fund that is set up to provide just that type of support.

Our Council is so fortunate to be in a position where we really can make a difference at the local level and at the national level. Our National Director, Larry Salter, just returned from Navy League's huge Sea, Air and Space Conference which brings the military, Department of Defense, business and civic leaders together at a national level.

Please keep the men and women in the military in your hearts and please support their families.

Will Lent and the Largest Sea Battle in History

For those of you who might have missed our May luncheon, our speaker and program chair, Will Lent, submitted the following information regarding the Battle of Leyte Gulf.

The Battle of Leyte Gulf was the largest sea battle in history engaging some seven hundred and fifty ships of all types but despite being a major US victory, it never enjoyed the popular place in history held by such battles as Midway and Normandy. The reason for this was that WWII in the Pacific was closing out at that time and the over-powering force of the US Navy was simply expected to win all actions undertaken; additionally the public was no longer starving for a major naval victory as it was at the time of the Battle of Midway.

While the powerful US Navy held all the cards in recapturing the Philippines at Leyte, the Japanese, with a strong surface force, had a very aggressive defensive plan, which coupled with some poor



U.S. landing ships, tank (LSTs), on the beach at Leyte Island in the Philippines, October 1944.

US decisions, came close to causing an upset. The first mistake was the US had no single local command authority closer than the Joint Chiefs in Washington, D.C. This awkwardness is due to the Pacific Naval Force under Admiral Nimitz/Admiral "Bull" Halsey, 3rd Fleet, being one autonomous command. The other was General MacArthur, in a different global theater, over VADM Kinkaid,

7th Fleet, invasion force. These two fleets, 7th and 3rd were acting side by side under mere informal agreements. By virtue of misunderstandings between the two groups and a gross failure of communication and coordination, they needlessly allowed the powerful enemy striking force access to the unprotected Leyte beachhead. The major disaster here was avoided by an equally bad decision on the part of the Japanese commander who tactically blundered by abandoning the scene for reasons unknown to this day.

We learned how the enormous US force and its plan to reoccupy the Philippines worked out against a clever Japanese defensive operation resulting in four major surface ship actions, each one being very interesting from a naval tactical point of view.

*Submitted by Will Lent,
Naval Historian and Program Chair*

Change of Command for CAPT Mark Olson and CAPT Pete Dawson



Photo by Helen Miller

More than 500 people attended the recent Change of Command for outgoing Captain Mark Olson and incoming Captain Pete Dawson. Naval Base Kitsap had been home to Captain and Linda Olson for more than two years and, as always, it is with mixed emotion that someone who has made such a positive impression on our community moves far away. At the same time, we are pleased that he has been recognized for his good work and is getting a great new assignment. We know that he will do well wherever he is assigned.

We welcome Captain Pete Dawson who has been assigned to SUBGROUP 9. This means that he and his family are already familiar with this area and with NBK. He has been able to move right into his new role and continue the good work of his predecessors.



*The Great Cris Larsen giving a “thumbs up” to the new Commanding officer of Naval Base Kitsap, Captain Pete Dawson and the outgoing NBK Commanding Officer, Capt. Mark Olson.
Photo by Karen Ebersole*

Courage Brings Freedom: 63rd Armed Forces Festival

This is a perfect title for our Grand Marshall and keynote speaker, Major General Richard P. Mills.

Once again, everyone is getting ready for all of the exciting events planned for honoring the men and women of our military on May 21.

Our Navy League Council will participate in the Parade again with Sailors, Marines and Coast Guard Personnel riding on a Safe Boat. The parade starts at 10 am in downtown Bremerton, but come early for breakfast and to find a place to watch the exciting events.

That Saturday evening, we will host the Navy League Armed Forces Festival Gala at the Admiral Theatre. Doors open at 6 pm and the program begins at 6:30.

Swing Fever; a great swing band will entertain us after dinner and our regular program with a special keynote address by the Major General. Members from all of the various commands have been



Photo by Karen Ebersole

invited to attend.

Another highlight of the evening is presenting the Olympic Bowl Trophy to the most outstanding submarine crew in our area. Actually, both the Blue and Gold crews of a submarine

will both be recognized.

Tickets for this event may be obtained by calling the Admiral Theatre at 360-373-6743. This will be a fun evening filled with surprises.

Memorial Day Event On-board USS Turner Joy



Photo by James Klose

The general public is invited to attend a Memorial Day ceremony, on Monday May 30th at 10:00 a.m. which will be held on the fantail of the historic ship, The USS TURNER JOY. The ship is located near the Bremerton ferry terminal. The ceremony is being sponsored by the Bremerton-Olympic Peninsula Navy League Council.

Navy League Vice President, Tim Katona, will serve as master of ceremonies and one of our local Active duty Naval commanders to be announced will serve as the guest speaker.

Colors will be presented by the U.S. Naval Sea Cadets. A memorial wreath will be laid in honor of those that

have fallen. The Peninsula Veterans Color and Honor Guard will perform taps and the rifle salute. Parking is available at the convention Center near the Bremerton ferry terminal. Coffee and donuts will be provided in the Turner Joy crews mess after the ceremony.

Submitted by Tim Katona

USS Stennis Tour on June 30



Meeting Place: Pendergast Park, Bremerton at 10:15 am. NBK will provide a bus.

Cost: \$20. Payable in advance, (see note below)

Return Time: Approx. 1 p.m.

Special Notes:

- ▶ Cameras allowed
- ▶ Wear comfortable walking shoes, as there are many ladders to climb, suggest women wear slacks.
- ▶ Bring government issued ID. Passports or birth certificates not necessary.
- ▶ Tour participants must be US Citizens.
- ▶ Must be older than 8 years of age.

To make a reservation, email Byron Faber before June 15 at byfaber@centurytel.net

Send checks payable to Navy League of the US, Bremerton-Olympic Peninsula Council or NLUS, BOPC.

The \$20 fee is to discourage "no-shows" and will include lunch on-board the ship and any extra will go to the ship's MWR fund.

Mail check to NL-BOPC
34156 Pilot Point Rd, NE
Kingston, WA 98346

*Submitted by Byron Faber
Tour Director*

Successful Tour of the Manchester Fuel Depot and the NOAA Fishery



Byron Faber, our illustrious tour director, did it again.

On a cold, misty morning, a group of us gathered in the parking lot at the Manchester Fuel Depot wondering what we were going to see. Only a couple of us had ever been there before.

We were in for a treat. Robert Cairns told us amazing stories about the important role that this fuel depot has played since the late 1800's in fueling ships as they transited out to the Pacific. It is the largest military fuel depot on the West coast and has a wonderful history. We learned that most of the fuel had originally been held in tanks inside the mountains. During the cold war era, some of these old spots had been used for bomb shelters in case of attack. Mr. Cairns has worked with oil depots around the world and we learned how the work of our military literally helped fuel modernization of some of the rural countries where transportation infrastructure was limited.

We boarded a bus and toured the old officers quarters that are about

to be torn down and wondered about how nice it must have been to have lived here in the 20's and 30's. We also toured some of the big tanks and learned about all of the wonderful wild life that chooses to live on the grounds.

We then went to the NOAA fishery and learned about the special work that is accomplished there. We saw the holding tanks and even were able to watch eggs being taken from some fish. This particular fishery has gained a well-deserved reputation for its special work with fish. Everyone was so knowledgeable. Next time any of our group is out fishing, I hope they take time to thank the people at NOAA for doing such great work.

We finished off the tour with a great lunch in Manchester.

Each time we take a tour, we learn new things. Different people lead the tours or new things have been installed or created, or we just see new things that we might have missed on previous tours. We have some great tours being planned for the rest of this year, so be ready to sign up and learn something new.

Notes from the USS Bremerton



U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Michael Hight (Released)

Aloha and greetings from the USS Bremerton Family Readiness Group Ohana! I wanted to take a moment to introduce myself and a few of the board members via email and hopefully start some correspondence to keep you up to date on all the ways the FRG is helping to stay busy and united during this deployment.

My name is Michelle Foor and I am current President of the FRG. I have been a navy wife for seven years and am excited to be working with an FRG group for the very first time. Our Secretary is Courtney Eliason and she brings a lot of energy to our group. Cortney Edwards is our Treasurer and keeps all the checks and balances going with a smile.

We are really excited to see how our group has grown in the past months and the wonderful involvement and participation we have going with our families. We are planning our halfway celebrations, which include a beach day for the kids as well as a ladies lunch and are working on morale boosters for the boat to send along over the next few months. Our halfway bags for our sailors are already assembled with snacks, candy, gum, games, and pieces of “home” and are tucked away on the boat...we hope they bring a smile to their faces.

We have also decided to “adopt” the Fisher House Organization during deployment to show our support for

fellow military families as well as give back to our community. We will be collecting food items, toiletries, and household goods for donation. The items will be exchanged for a chance at the first hug or first kiss at the end of deployment. We are very excited to have our first collection at our May meeting.

The USS Bremerton is a fast attack submarine homeported in Hawaii. Our council, the City of Bremerton and Puget Sound Naval Base Association, have officially adopted the boat.

If you are interested in corresponding with the Family Readiness Group, please contact Byron Faber at byfaber@centurytel.net

USS Bremerton Treats



Proceeds from the sale of these throws have been used to provide special treats for the crew of the USS Bremerton. Photo by Byron Faber

Come Ride With Me



For more than two years, Board member, Byron Faber has generously offered Sailors of the Quarter and of the Year to take a ride in one of his great sport cars. So far, not one person has taken advantage of his offer.

At our March luncheon, we challenged Command Master Chief, Dave Bisson

to do a trial run in either the Ferrari or the Corvette to see what he thought. If he thought that it was a fun experience, maybe he could encourage others to take a ride. Someone suggested that maybe the Corvette Club could get together and take several awardees for a ride and even treat them to lunch. ... Any other ideas?

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Navy League of the United States Mission Statement and Goals

A civilian organization dedicated to informing the American people and their government that the United States of America is a maritime nation and that it's national defense and economic well being are dependent upon strong sea services – United States Navy, United States Marine Corps, United States Coast Guard and the United States Merchant Marine.

Navy League Goals

1. Educate national leaders and the nation.
2. Support the men and women of the sea services.
3. Provide assistance to the sea service families.
4. Support the youth program.