

Lt. Michael Murphy Sea Cadet Ceremony at LIMM

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Ray Tomich

The Annual Seafood Festival was the venue for an impressive ceremony this past weekend on August 25 in West Sayville at the LI Maritime Museum. Former Viet-Nam US Army 82nd Airborne Ranger Gary Vertichio looked sharp wearing his new Naval Uniform with the rank of Lieutenant Junior Grade Officer, US Naval Sea Cadet Officer. Supported by the Smith-Wever American Legion Post 651 and the Long Island Chapter of the US Navy League this premier youth training program is now recruiting both boys & girls ages 13 to 17 to join the LT Michael Murphy Division at the LIMM. In addition to recruiting new cadets both Lt(jg) Vertichio and his Executive Officer Bryan Mastrangelo are seeking local men & women to join them as Naval Sea Cadet Officers & Instructors. Interested, please call Gary Vertichio at 631-831-1421.



After reading his orders Lt(jg) Vertichio stood at attention as his 93 years young Father, a WWII Navy Veteran, placed his new rank insignia on his new dress white uniform. Another highlight of the ceremony was a video shown by LT Michael Murphy's Father, Dan Murphy, who spoke of his son's bravery under combat while attempting to rescue his Navy Seal Team. By making the supreme sacrifice Lt. Michael Murphy was awarded The Congressional Medal of Honor posthumously. The newly formed Naval Sea Cadet will be known as the LT Michael Murphy Division home ported at our own West Sayville Long Island Maritime Museum.

Many distinguished guests addressed the assembled cadets and their families with words of encouragement: including Congressmen Tim Bishop and Peter King, State Assemblyman Al Graf, a Navy Veteran, Bill Lindsay's representative of the Presiding Officer, Islip Town Supervisor Tom Croci, a Naval Intelligence Reserve Officer and a new Naval Sea Cadet Instructor. Islip Town Councilman John Cochrane Jr., also a Retired Naval Captain, sent regards through his representative Marlene Johnston, and Islip's Receiver of Taxes Alexis Weik was also encouraged to participate as a Naval Sea Cadet Instructor by the new Commanding Officer Gary Vertichio.

Boatswain Mate Chief Bryan Mastrangelo is a member of the US Coast Guard Reserves and is a Suffolk County Police Officer. As the Division's Executive Officer, Bryan becomes Warrant Officer Bryan Mastrangelo, US Naval Sea Cadets. Bryan acted as the Master of Ceremonies for this event guided by LCDR Forrest Woodward, Director Region 03-4 Naval Sea Cadet Program.

Tom Matteo, Chairman of the Long Island Chapter of the US Navy League stood proudly in the background happy that this Navy League sponsored youth group was off and running *FULL STEAM AHEAD*. Representatives of the crew of the USS Michael Murphy came down from Bath Maine to show their support also; they are co-sponsoring this new Naval Sea Cadet Division and look forward to the Plank Owners visiting their ship being Commissioned in New York City, Pier 86 next to the USS Intrepid on October 6th, 2012. The motto of the USS Michael Murphy DDG-112 is "LEAD THE FIGHT." Godspeed to all who sail in her!

Congratulations to all involved in supporting and participating in this wonderful youth training program in the Greater Sayville Community. We, the members of Smith-Wever American Legion Post 651 are proud of our Commander Vertichio and new member Bryan Mastrangelo for stepping-up to support the youth of our area by taking leadership positions with the Naval Sea Cadets.

May you have fair winds and following seas all your days.