

Northern Virginia Council, NLUS -- for *Seapower* magazine, July 2013 edition

The Northern Virginia (NOVA) Council was honored on May 8th to have as its special guest the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (MCPON) Mike D. Stevens, accompanied by his wife, Theresa. Mrs. Stevens had attended NOVA Council's January meeting at the Army Navy Country Club in Arlington, and it was great to see her again. Stevens focused on the strength of the young people entering the Navy these days ... they are technologically savvy, and quickly learn difficult areas of shipboard and equipment control. Stevens joined with Nancy Gorell, council executive VP for ship and unit liaison, and LT Celina Ladyga, CO of Coast Guard Station Washington, to present Sailor of the Quarter award to Machinery Technician Third Class Alex Young.

Also on the program were Chris Lehman, Herb Wolk, and Jim Offutt. Lehman, who until recently was an active duty U.S. Marine officer, presented the Marine for Life program -- a Marine Corps organization that provides nationwide assistance to Marines who are returning to civilian life, Marine reservists and all Marine veterans throughout their lives. Marine For Life also assists Sailors who have served with Marine Corps units. The organization helps enable Marines who move on to civilian life remain a part of the Marine Corps family and brotherhood.

Herb Wolk, a NOVA Council member, talked briefly about his involvement in naming of the recently commissioned *USS Arlington* (LPD 24), an amphibious transport dock. Like her sister ships, *USS New York* and *Somerset*, *Arlington* is named in commemoration of the September 11, 2001 attacks. Steel taken from the Pentagon after the September 11 attacks will be displayed aboard. Wolk lost his son-in-law, a Naval officer, in the attack on the Pentagon. Wolk, who was a naval ship vulnerability consultant at the time, began the effort in 2002 to gain recognition for the Pentagon and Pennsylvania victims of the 9//11 attacks, similar to that of the *New York* (LPD 17), named to honor the victims of the World Trade Center buildings. It took two years of meetings and letter-writing by families of victims of the attacks at the Pentagon and in Pennsylvania, but in September 2004 the Navy notified those families that LPD 24 would be named *Arlington*, and LPD 25 would be named *Somerset*.

Jim Offutt, president-elect of the Navy League and longtime member of the NOVA Council prior to moving to Newberry, SC in 2012, introduced the new national executive director of the Navy League, Bruce Butler, and his wife Alison. Offutt also displayed two large framed NOVA Council certificates. One was the council's original Navy League charter, dated 26 February 1983, followed by a full list of all charter members. The other plaque was a certificate from the *USS Cardinal* (MHC-60), honoring the NOVA council as a *plank owner* for hosting the *Cardinal's* commissioning and adoption of the ship. Offutt went on to explain some of the new directions the Navy League will undertake. These include training for council and national officers, helping councils find a mission and focus, re-orienting National VP responsibilities and focusing more on council assistance from national headquarters.