

# PORTSIDE

December 2005 - Volume 5 - Number 4

## Come join us at the Next Northern Virginia Council Meeting

Our Next NOVA Council meeting is **January 14th at 1130 a.m.**  
Followed by a Tour at the National Air and Space Museum  
Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center at Dulles Airport.

We will have **lunch** first at the **Applebee's Restaurant** located at **45979 Denizen Plaza, Sterling, VA** at **11:30 AM**. (Go west on VA Route 7 to Sterling, VA, past Palisade Parkway to right on Davenport Drive to right on Denizen Drive.) We will conduct a general membership meeting and elect our 2006 Board of Directors for the Northern Virginia Council of the Navy League of the United States. We will then car pool to the Air and Space Museum for a two-hour tour.

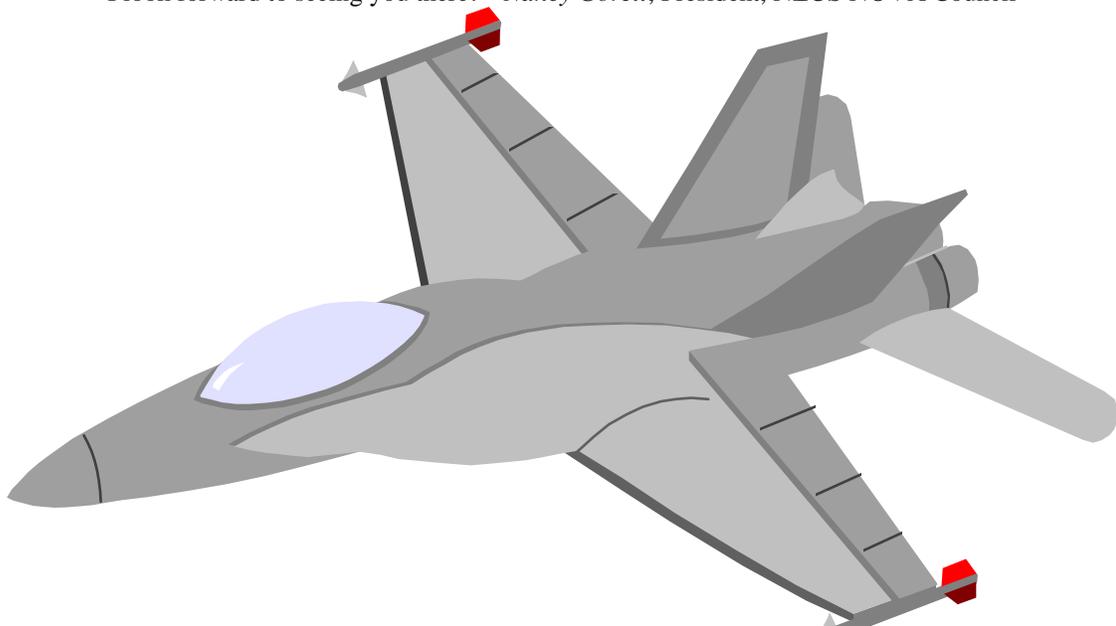
**The Nominating Committee presents the following slate of nominees for  
2006 Officers and Directors:**

Nancy Gorell (President), Stew Reuter (Treasurer), John Camp (Secretary & VP, Administration), Robert Haemer (Judge Advocate), James Offutt (VP, Programs), Fred Gorell (VP, Ship Liaison), Dorothy Harmon (Director), Charles Davis (Director), Roger Hood (Director), Michael Rice (Director, Membership) and Carl Jones (Director).

Only cost is **\$20 per person for lunch** and we will organize car pools from the restaurant to save on the parking fees of \$12.00 per car at the Museum.

**Call Jim Offutt at 703-691-1260 or email [jhoffutt@aol.com](mailto:jhoffutt@aol.com) for reservations and directions.**

I look forward to seeing you there! – *Nancy Gorell*, President, NLUS NOVA Council



**CNO Shares a Moment with Salem High School NJROTC  
Honor Guard and NOVA Council Officers at 2005 Navy Birthday Ball**



The 2005 Navy Birthday Ball was held on Saturday, October 15, 2005 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Arlington, VA. The Northern Virginia Council of the Navy League hosted the award winning Salem High School JROTC Honor Guard 2005 Naval District Washington Navy Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (NJROTC) Drill Team. The competition was held at the Washington Navy Yard and the Salem High School JROTC Honor Guard from Virginia Beach, VA had the opportunity to present colors before the Chief of Naval Operations and the Commandant of the Marine Corps at the 2005 Navy Birthday Ball. Pictured above (left to right) are: James Offutt, Vice President (Programs), Northern Virginia Council and National Vice President (Education and Information Technology), NLUS, Cadet Chief Petty Officer, Alexander Merz, Cadet Chief Petty Officer Richard Milana, Admiral Michael G. Mullen, USN, Chief of Naval Operations, Cadet Chief Petty Officer Tristen Suarez, Cadet Senior Chief Petty Officer Dennis Trahan and Nancy Gorell, President, Northern Virginia Council and National Director, NLUS.

## NOVA Council Supports USCG Station, Washington Holiday Party

The Northern Virginia Council helped sponsor a Holiday Party for the men and women of the U.S. Coast Guard Station, Washington, D.C., and for their invited guests. The event was held December 10th at the Bolling Air Force Base Officer's Club.

Station Commanding Officer LT Frank DelRosso spoke highly of his Coast Guard team and cited some of the many outstanding accomplishments of the command, which has existed for just two years. The NOVA Council has adopted the command, and DelRosso thanked the Council FOR its support.

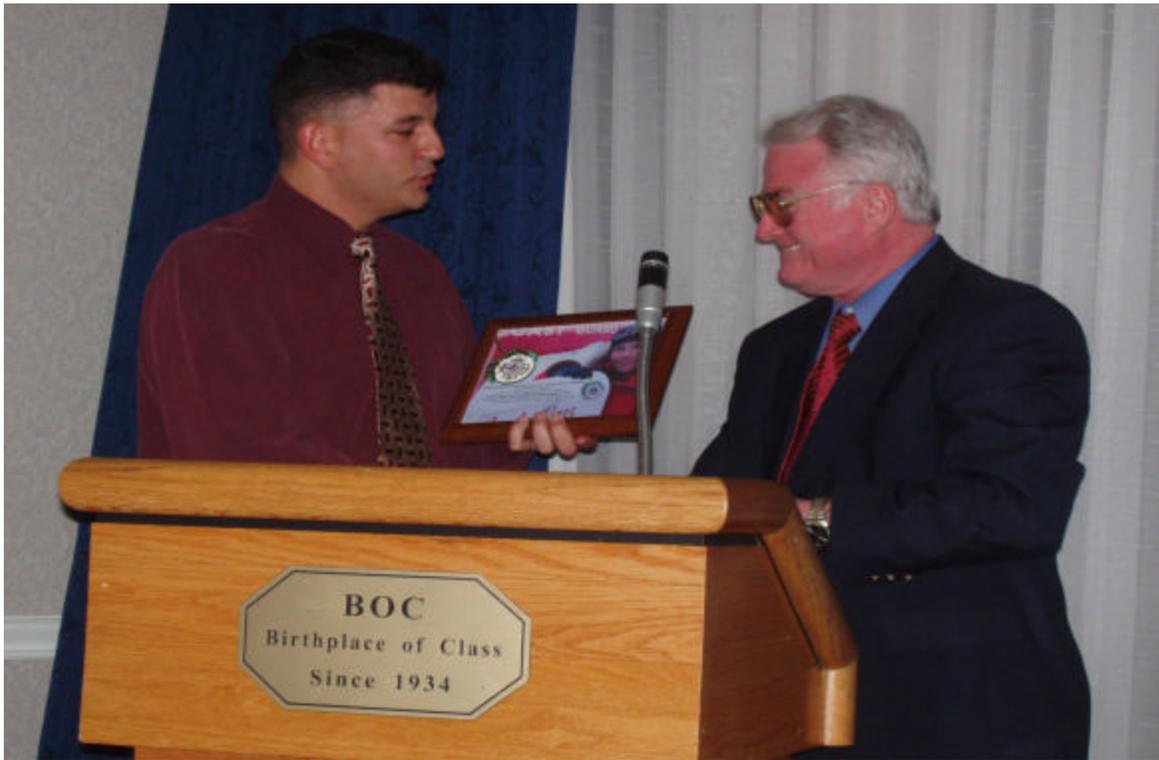
One important element of our partnership was to connect a Sea Cadet unit with the Station. That connection thus far has resulted in 12 Navy Sea Cadets receiving training from Station Washington in areas such as marlinspike, first aid, first responder, boat handling, watch standing, and navigation & piloting. "We will be able to do more this summer," said DelRosso.

In its brief history, the Station Unit has produced some impressive statistics. The Station conducted more than 1,000 Law Enforcement boardings, vastly improving recreational boating safety on the Potomac River.

The Unit also conducted support for more than 400 Presidential launches, working alongside the Secret Service, and undertook more than 50 Search and Rescue missions, including saving two lives from a boat collision. Station members enforced Security & Safety zones during major events taking place within the National Capital Region. And they saw duty during the State Funeral for former President Reagan.

The Navy League NOVA Council presented the unit with an embroidered USCG Emblem surrounded by a wreath. The Holiday decoration has traveled to 90 degrees north, to the North Pole where it was photographed at a Santa Claus mailbox kindly provided by the USCG icebreaker Healy.





(Left to Right) LT Frank DelRosso, USCG, Commanding Officer, and Fred Gorell.



(left to right) Rear Admiral John Tozzi, USCG (Ret.), Coast Guard Liaison - Mary Tozzi - LTJG Kara Lavin, USCG, Executive Officer – LT Frank DelRosso, USCG, Commanding Officer – and Nancy Gorell.

**A Holiday message from NOVA Council President Nancy Gorell:**

**Give a Gift--Win a Gift---It's not too late to put the men and women of the Sea Services on your Holiday gift list.**

Happy Holidays from the Officers and Board members of your Navy League Council. We hope this issue of Portside finds you happy and in good health.

Thank you for your support. Without you, we can't deliver our programs of support for the men and women of the Sea Services. For example, your NOVA Council shipped candy, popcorn, cookies, and even socks to Sailors and Marines overseas. We sponsored a PlayStation2 with computer games for the crew of our adopted submarine USS Virginia, and we hosted the top officers and enlisted men from our adopted submarine USS Alexandria at an appreciation dinner and party. For USCG Station Washington D.C. we sponsored an appreciation picnic, hand-delivered homemade pies to those on watch Thanksgiving Day and helped sponsor their December Holiday Party. For those three adopted units, plus two adopted minesweepers, one adopted amphibious ship and one adopted assault unit, we provide certificates and cash rewards for sailors of the quarter and of the year. We also sponsored an award winning Sea Cadet color guard unit at the national Navy League Birthday Ball in October.

We are doing fine--but we could do so much more if all of you would add one more gift to your Holiday gift list. That gift would be a check to your Council so that we can do more for our seven adopted units and provide help in other areas too. For example, I'd like to assist wounded Sailors, Marines or Coast Guardsmen at our two area military hospitals. We can also help family members who travel here to be with their wounded sons or daughters, by contributing to Fisher House, which provides living accommodations for visiting families.

We'll make sure your Holiday contributions help those in our Sea Services all year long. And, in one case, we can double the value of your contribution, because the City of Alexandria, our partner in supporting USS Alexandria, will match cash contributions we make in support of that submarine--until the total reaches \$5,000.

I'll start with a Holiday check for \$25. Will you match or beat that? Donations are tax deductible. Checks may be made out to NOVA Navy League Council and sent to me at 20337 Ashcroft Terrace, Sterling, VA 20165. Write "Navy," "Marines," "Coast Guard" or Merchant Marine on the "Memo" line of your check if you'd like us to apply your contribution to members of a particular Sea Service.

Checks for \$100 or more will enter you in a drawing to win one of 15 embroidered Holiday decorations that have been to the North Pole (Write your choice of Navy, Marine or Coast Guard Emblem on your check)

I'll let you know how we do in a future issue of Soundings.

Happy Holidays!

Nancy

## **USS Virginia Returns to Home Port Crew, families set to enjoy Thanksgiving Day together**

By Gladys Alcedo, *New London Day*.

24 Nov 05, Groton, CT -- As the wind and the temperature headed south, Debi Slywczuk huddled under a tent across from the pier at the Naval Submarine Base, waiting patiently Wednesday for the USS Virginia to return from its first deployment. "I want to go back to Hawaii," Slywczuk, of Ledyard, said as she waited for her husband, Chief Greg Slywczuk. "... Although this homecoming will be warm in its own way. It will be a nice Thanksgiving."

Debi Slywczuk, who has attended several such homecomings in Hawaii, wasn't the only one in the crowd thinking of warmer climes. And even though she could have stayed home a little longer and avoided waiting for more than an hour in the cold, she said she "would have been sitting at home twiddling my thumbs." So she put some pork chop suey on low heat and headed to the base.

Unbeknownst to the dozens upon dozens of wives, children, families and friends who waited to greet the submarine's 134 officers and sailors, the crew had brought with them a taste of Hawaiian culture -- fresh leis. Greg Slywczuk placed the necklace of purple and white flowers around the neck of his wife of six years, embraced her and kissed her as they stood on the pier in the midst of the crowd. Later, he said the idea for the leis, which had been flown to the submarine Saturday, was hatched by the chief of the boat, who hails from Hawaii. In Hawaii, returning crews are welcomed by family members bearing leis. The crew of the Virginia decided to reverse the roles, Greg Slywczuk said.

Led by Cmdr. Todd W. Cramer, the officers and sailors had racked up a number of "firsts" on their deployment. They were the first to serve on the Virginia, the first boat in its class of fast-attack submarines. The crew came home Wednesday from their first deployment in support of the global war on terrorism in the U.S. Southern Command, a territory that covers Central America south of Mexico and all of South America

The submarine, commissioned in 2004, was deployed 18 months ahead of schedule on Sept. 12 and returned home two hours earlier than anticipated. "I was watching my schedule very closely," said Cramer, who plans to spend today with his family in Gales Ferry. Cramer, who called the deployment an "absolute success," said the Virginia "was built and designed to perfection." In the post-Cold War era, the Virginia-class subs have been designed for stealth and to support Special Forces operations, Cramer said.

The Virginia's inaugural deployment was marred early last month when one of its sailors, Sonar Technician 1st Class Eric P. Skinner, a 34-year-old Ohio native, died of natural causes while performing his duty. "A death in any family is a sad moment," Cramer said. The crew paid its respects to Skinner in a memorial service in Kings Bay, Ga.

Then, they focused their attention on the mission before them, said Cramer, who praised his sailors and officers for their performance during the short deployment. Debi Slywczuk said a deployment of any duration "is always hard."

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