



Navy League  
of the United States



**VOL. 98 DELGENE PHILLIPS - EDITOR**

**WWW.LAKEWASHNLUS.ORG**

**DECEMBER 2021**

## **FUTURE EVENTS**

Board Meeting	12 Jan
Dinner Meeting	TBD
Scuttlebutt Social Hour	TBD

## **ABOUT US**

The Lake Washington & Everett (LW&E) Council is part of the Navy League of the United States, [www.navyleague.org](http://www.navyleague.org)

## **SUPPORTED UNITS**

USCG Base Seattle  
USCGC Healy (WAGB 20)  
USCGC Henry Blake (WLM 563)  
USCGC Blue Shark (WPB 87360)  
USS Jimmy Carter (SSN 23)  
Undersea R & D Detachment  
Liberty High School NJROTC  
Snohomish High School MCJROTC  
U. of Washington NROTC  
Naval Station Everett Division USNSCC  
US Naval Station Everett  
Carrier Strike Group ELEVEN  
Destroyer Squadron Nine  
USS Kidd (DDG 100)  
USS Momsen (DDG 92)  
USS Gridley (DDG 101)  
USS Ralph Johnson (DDG 114)  
USS Sampson (DDG 102)  
USS John S. McCain (DDG 56)  
Afloat Training Group - PACNW  
Branch Health Clinic Everett  
Regional Support Organization - PACNW  
Naval Operational Support Center Everett  
Puget Sound Naval Shipyard &  
Intermediate Maintenance Facility

## **Patriot Company Academic Team Finishes 3rd Nationally at Joint Leadership & Academic Bowl Championships !**

*By John Deehr*

Liberty High School NJROTC Patriot Company's Academic Team consisting of senior and team captain Cadet Petty Officer First



Class Sanjana Addanki, senior Ryan Croasdell, senior Kaitlin Lew, and sophomore Eowyn Ream traveled to Washington, DC on 22 July 2021 to compete in the Joint Leadership and Academic Bowl (JLAB) Championships. Cadet First Class Petty Officer and Academic Team Captain Sanjana Addanki (*above*) accepts the Third Place Trophy. JLAB is a nationwide leadership and academic competition among all JROTC units (Army, Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps) around the world. (*continued on page 4*)

## VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE



Holiday season greetings to all of you. Welcome to the final 2021 edition of the Mackie Award winning newsletter of the Lake Washington & Everett Council of the Navy League of the United States.

As you all know, we had started 2021 with a lot of hope to engage in in-person activities for our council. But COVID-19 had other plans. We were not able to hold even a single event. We hope that 2022 is better on those terms, and we can hold some in-person events next year. I have been speaking with leaders at Naval Station Everett to possibly restart our Scuttlebutt Social events and hold at least one dinner in early in 2022. As we normalize the COVID-19 pandemic, I hope we can build some momentum to support our active-duty units more in the coming months.

The brightest note in our calendar in 2021 happened in December, when we officially adopted the USS John S. McCain (DDG 56), as a fully supported ship of our council. USS McCain arrived in Everett in late 2021, under the leadership of Commanding Officer CDR Tin Tran (*above right center*), XO CDR Joseph Gunta and CMC Mackenson Moise (*above right at left*). I was

## 2021 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President..... Sanu Chacko  
Vice-President..... Karmin Pincus  
Treasurer..... Jeff Garrett  
Secretary..... Janie Nicodemus  
Judge Advocate..... Bert Kinghorn  
Chaplain..... Jim Ardissono

**Other Directors:** Cecil W. Allison John Deehr  
Kevin Isherwood Phil Johnson John Kartak  
Bob Lockyer Delgene Phillips Karmin Pincus  
Pete Stiles John Thoma

**Honorary Members:** Jim Britt "Mitch" Mitchell

**National Director Emeritus:**  
Louise Chase (LWC) (NLUS)  
Roger Ponto (LWC) (NLUS) / Past LWC President  
RADM John Lockwood, USCG, Retired



honored to attend their holiday party and welcome them to Naval Station Everett and our council by presenting a plaque proudly supporting the McCain.. On behalf of the Navy League, I also presented the Honorable J. William Middendorf Award to McCain crewmember GSMC Carlos Abundismarquez. The Honorable J. William Middendorf II Award for Engineering Excellence recognizes a Navy Petty Officer who has demonstrated outstanding leadership and professional competence required while assigned to a deployed ship. (*See photo and citation next page*)

In other important council news, the council board voted and approved Karmin Pincus as First Vice President. Karmin will now relieve me as President of the LW&E Council in 2023. Congratulations Karmin! I cannot wait to work with Karmin and to see how her leadership will enhance the council and support the sea services.

As for me, the board has asked me to continue as President of the LW&E Council for one more year so that I can transition the leadership to Karmin. I have also been asked, and have humbly accepted, to become the President-Elect of the Seattle Navy League Council, with a plan to lead that council for 2023. I hope to work with Seattle Navy League Council leadership, Seattle SeaFair, and the US Navy 3<sup>rd</sup> Fleet to bring an in-person Fleet Week in 2022 and beyond. As of now, the council has been notified that the Blue Angels will fly over Lake Washington during SeaFair 2022.

I hope you and all yours had a wonderful and safe holiday season. I pray that we all have a better 2022. Happy New Year!

*Sanu  
President*



*"For outstanding achievement and superior performance of duty while serving as Gas Systems Mechanical First Class Petty onboard USS JOHN S. McCain (DDG 56) from December 2019 to November 2020. He led 20 Sailors in the recovery and preparation of all seven main engineering spaces in preparation for the Engineering Basic Phase Training Cycle and successfully passed 20 of 20 evolutions and 8 of 8 drill sets during the*



*final Engineering Certification Event, an impressive feat that established the waterfront standard. As the manager for several critical Engineering Programs, his meticulous attention to detail ensured his programs were effective and received high praise from Engineering Assessments Pacific for his outstanding program*

*management. GSM1 Abundismarquez (above) ensured his Engineering team fought through a wide array of drive-train casualties throughout the year. Furthermore, during a COVID-19 outbreak onboard the ship with more than half the crew sheltered in place, he shouldered the burden by volunteering to stay onboard the ship as part of a skeletal crew to ensure all critical engineering plant work finished on time and that the plant would be operationally ready to execute two Surface Type Commander Readiness Assessments, as well as a Board of Inspection and Survey (INSURV) Reintegration Material Inspection. He consistently placed shipmates over himself and as the JOHN S McCain's Immigration and Naturalization Coordinator, ensured sailors' spouses and children of foreign nationalities received the opportunities afforded to them for citizenship. GSM1 Abundismarquez' extraordinary leadership, unrelenting perseverance, and steadfast devotion to duty reflect great credit upon himself and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Navy and the Navy League of the United States."*

## LW&EC BUSINESS AFFILIATES

### Corporate Sponsors

- ◆ The Boeing Company
- ◆ GE Energy Connections
- ◆ GEICO—Military
- ◆ Honeywell, Inc.
- ◆ Microsoft
- ◆ SAFE Boats International
- ◆ Schneider Electric
- ◆ USAA
- ◆ Vigor Shipyards, Inc.

### Community Affiliates

- ◆ American Licorice Company
- ◆ American Publishing & Printing, Inc.
- ◆ Aviation Technical Services
- ◆ B.E. Meyers & Company, Inc.
- ◆ Cadick Corporation
- ◆ Craig Chapman, CFP, Financial Advisor Oppenheimer & Co., Inc.
- ◆ First Command Financial Services
- ◆ Flags & Flagpoles Northwest
- ◆ Forde Financial & Tax, Inc.
- ◆ Global Construction Services, Inc.
- ◆ Gloria R. James, P.L.L.C.
- ◆ Heritage Bank
- ◆ Human Resources of Auburn, Inc.
- ◆ Port of Everett
- ◆ Red Lion Hotel Bellevue
- ◆ US Bank Everett
- ◆ US Family Health Plan (USFHP) at Pacific Medical Center
- ◆ Vertical Path Recruiting, Inc.

Through their financial contributions, these business affiliates demonstrate their commitment to LW&EC-NLUS, to the mission of the Navy League, and their desire to support young people through our programs and scholarships.

### Partners

- ◆ Bremerton-Olympic Peninsula Council of the Navy League
- ◆ Seattle Council of the Navy League
- ◆ Tacoma Council of the Navy League

*(continued from page 1)* Teams are composed of four primary and two alternate cadets from the Naval Science 1-3 classes (Naval Science 4 cadets are not eligible to participate). Two qualifying rounds are conducted during the school year and these rounds are completed entirely online. The six cadets making up the a team take one 50 question test covering such subjects as math, science, history, English, civics/government, etc. and answer the test as a team. The teams scoring in the top 50% move on to the second round. The second round is conducted in the same fashion with the top eight teams from each service branch moving on to the in-person championships at Catholic University of America in Washington, DC from 23-26 July. During the in-person championships, the eight Navy teams competed against one another during five rounds of competition. After the five rounds, Patriot Company was in third place with three wins and two losses and moved on to the semi-finals. Unfortunately, Patriot Company found themselves on the losing end in the semi-final round but still brought home the third place trophy out of over



*(Above from Left to Right): Cadet PO3 Eowyn Ream, Cadet Senior Chief Kaitlin Lew, Cadet PO1 Sanjana Addanki, & Cadet LTJG Ryan Croasdell accept the Third Place Trophy during the JLAB National Championships.*

800 Navy JROTC academic teams that entered the competition! During the three day event, the cadets also had the opportunity to tour Washington, DC that included various monuments/memorials and the National Chief's Mess, along with the National Museum of the Marine Corps in Quantico, VA.





## Husky Battalion Update

Winds gusting up and over 20 knots, *Vigilant's* hearty crew bears the weather. UW NROTC Sailing Team continues to practice maneuvers in *Vigilant*, included jibing in heavy winds, no small task. UW NROTC Sailing Team's vessel, *Vigilant*, is a donation from a retired Naval Academy fleet. UW NROTC was fortunate to be one of the NROTC programs around the nation that was gifted with a sailboat to further train their midshipmen. *Vigilant* is 44 feet long, powered by a main sail and a jib, and is hearty enough to take on rough ocean swells if necessary. In non-pandemic times, the sailing team trains to compete at Swiftsure International Yacht Race in the waters outside of British Columbia or to take a week-long sailing expedition during spring break.



Congratulations to Husky Battalion's senior class on receiving their service selection for careers in the Naval Service: **Front Row** (left to right): MIDN Osako, MIDN Hunley, MIDN Nylund, MIDN Miller **Second Row:** MIDN Bley, MIDN Adams, MIDN Castro, MIDN Carlson **Third Row:** MIDN Ransom, MIDN Modarelli, MIDN Ogro, MIDN Urasaki, MIDN Montovino **Fourth Row:** MIDN Hekman, MIDN Nichols, MIDN Teufel, MIDN Ng, MIDN Hampton **Fifth Row:** OC Nocera



## Liberty High School NJROTC Patriot Company Update

*By John Deehr*

Patriot Company is not at 100 cadets! Due to Covid restrictions last year we were not able to recruit which severely impacted our incoming freshman class. Our current enrollment stands at 78 and we will be placed on enrollment probation. We have already begun recruiting for next year. Despite our limited numbers, our teams are stronger than ever. Our two drill teams are the largest they have been since my arrival. All teams: Armed Drill, Unarmed Drill, Color Guard, Physical Fitness, Academics, Air Rifle, Orienteering, SeaPerch and CyberPatriot are holding regular practices and we are moving forward with a normal drill season. Our first Drill Meet is scheduled for Saturday 4 December at Graham-Kapowsin High School. On the weekend of 2-3 October, Patriot Company cadets participated in Issaquah Salmon Days by manning traffic control points around the city



*Left to Right: Cadets Samuel Jeremic,  
Henry Woo, Citlali Oliver & Oliver Manney*

for the Issaquah Police Department. Their duties included ensuring the traffic control points remained secure and providing directions to motorists and pedestrians. Forty-six of Patriot

Company's seventy-nine cadets participated in at least one of the four watch shifts and Patriot Company completed just over 500 hours of volunteer service. On 12 October Patriot Company



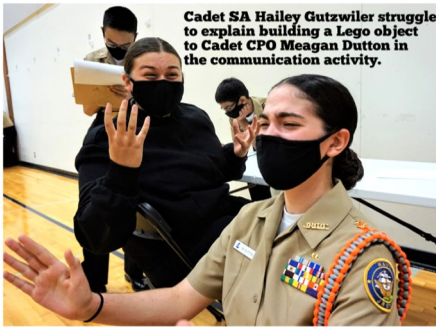
celebrated the US Navy's 246<sup>th</sup> Birthday with cake cutting and advancement ceremony. The oldest sailor, CAPT Deehr, and the youngest sailor, Cadet Seaman Apprentice Abay Bhat (*above left*), cut the ceremonial cake. Cadet First Class Petty Officer Sarah Peschek (*below right*) is advanced to the rank of Cadet Chief Petty Officer by CAPT Deehr.





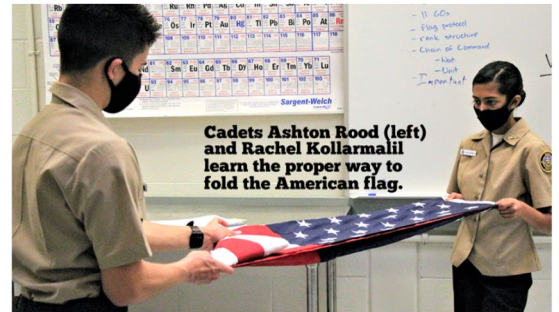


**Patriot Company cadets stand by to hold morning Colors during NJROTC Leadership Day.**



**Cadet SA Hailey Gutzwiller struggle to explain building a Lego object to Cadet CPO Meagan Dutton in the communication activity.**

At 0630 on 30 October Leadership Day, thirty-one cadets arrived and participated until 2000. They took part in various NJROTC classes, physical fitness training, communication exercises, basic drill, team building activities, uniform inspection and NJROTC knowledge exam.



**Cadets Ashton Rood (left) and Rachel Kollarmalil learn the proper way to fold the American flag.**



**Cadet Seaman Apprentice Logan Sargent (second from left) leads his platoon in the Turnstile game to get as many cadets as possible through the jump rope without getting hit.**



## Esteemed Council Plank Owner Roger Ponto Passes

*By Delgene Phillips*

Roger Wayne Ponto, age 90, of Port Ludlow, WA passed away on 30 September 2021. Roger Ponto was a plank owner, second council president, and board member of the Lake Washington & Everett Council and eventually a National Director of the Navy League. Roger was a 12 year veteran (Master Sergeant) in the Wisconsin National Guard and quietly living in Clyde Hill in the same cul-de-sac as the former home of the Coast Guard District Commander. He became close friends with John and Cyndee Lockwood who encouraged Roger to become involved with Navy League.

top off 2004, Roger was recognized by receiving the United States Coast Guard Meritorious Public Service Award, presented by RADM Jeffrey M. Garrett USCG, a current council board member. Later that summer while on a trip with their granddaughter, Rachel, in Athens, Greece, home of the 2004 summer Olympics, Roger explained that he received the USCG Meritorious Public Service Award medal which was silver, upon which his granddaughter immediately asked, "Who won the gold?" Although a humorous story, Roger eventually "won" gold when in 2010, he received his United States Coast Guard Distinguished Public Service Award Medal which is gold. In 2007, through Roger's efforts, the coun-



**Left to right: Pete Stiles, Peggy Ponto, Roger Ponto, Cyndee Lockwood & John Lockwood**

About this time, it was suggested that there was a need for a council on the east side of Lake Washington and Roger became incredibly involved as an organizer and recruiter of members in the Lake Washington Council when chartered in 2001. Roger was a board member and edited the council newspaper, *Voyager*. In 2003, the council received the Navy League US Meritorious Council Award; *Voyager* was honorable mention for the Mackie Award and the council received First Place in NLUS Public Relations Recognition. The council was also a winner of the NLUS Northwest Region Lone Sailor Membership Award. From 2004 through 2007 Roger received the NLUS Presidents Outstanding Recruiting Award presented for recruiting over 20 members in a single year. To

cil established and hosted the Inaugural Pacific Northwest Coast Guard Ball. Phil Johnson remembers,

*"I don't recall whether I was yet a Navy League member the first time I met Roger, but he approached me during a Coast Guard Puget Sound Officers Association lunch at Base Seattle. He knew that I worked for KIRO Radio at the time. I think he liked my voice, as well as my Coast Guard background. On the spot he pitched me for being the master of ceremonies for the upcoming USCG Ball. Roger retired as a skilled sales executive, so of course, I said yes. I soon found out that writing the MC script was a lot more work than I'd expected. But in for a pen-*



ny... One of Roger's major contributions to each ball was a personal connection that enabled him to buy excellent wines in bulk at a big discount. We got better wines at a better price than the hotel venue could provide, even with the obligatory corkage fee. I thoroughly enjoyed knowing and working with Roger. I will always remember him."

Roger felt the Coast Guard Ball was his greatest achievement. The ball was subsequently held in 2008, 2010 and 2012 with Roger as Chairman of the Ball Committee for all but 2012. *Voyager* was awarded NLUS Mackie (Outstanding Newsletter) Second Place in 2007. In 2010, Roger Ponto received the United States Coast Guard Distinguished Public Service Award, presented by the Coast Guard Chief of Staff, VADM John P. Currier USCG. At the January 2012 council dinner, Roger Ponto was awarded the John & Cyndee Lockwood Lifetime Achievement Award for 2011. (photo previous page) During the presentation, John Lockwood remarked,

"Cyndee and I are truly honored to join with you tonight to assist in the presentation of this annual award to an outstanding Lake Washington Council member who has distinguished himself by his service and in so doing, reflected great credit on the council as a whole and what the Lake Washington Council stands for in its continuing efforts to promote and support the sea services and the wonderful men and women that wear the uniform of our great country. To set the stage, you know as well as I there is a rancorous debate raging around the country about the lousy state of the economy, millions out of work, home values in the toilet, decimating the military services through budget cuts and an additional \$350 billion with a "B" in cuts to the Defense Department since the Super Gang in Congress punted and opted for another trillion in cuts called sequestration. In essence, the overarching question is what we must do to get steadied up and on a positive course again. This may appear too simplistic or off the cuff to some, but the lion's share of our overall problem boils down to whether or not one is a MAKER or a TAKER. And for the next couple of minutes, I'd like to talk about one of the greatest MAKERS I have had the pleasure to know in my life. Your outstanding council member this year is a leader of the first order – he has been your council president and a National Director for years on end. A maker, not a taker. He is the most unselfish person I know, and he has spent thou-

sands of hours displaying his devotion to the men and women of the sea services, and particularly to members of the Coast Guard family. A maker, not a taker. And allow me to submit to you, ladies, and gentlemen, that the shining star that stands proudly atop all his many achievements in furtherance of the Navy League's mission is his role as the Founding Father of the Pacific NW Coast Guard Ball. Not once, not twice, but three times over the last five years, he has almost single handedly planned and executed three amazingly successful Coast Guard Balls. 1,200 CG members and friends have attended these events. 24 CG members have been honored as outstanding performers at these Balls. The awareness of the CG and what it does has been significantly enhanced throughout Puget Sound by these events. A maker, not a taker. The Coast Guard thought so much of his work on their behalf that at the 2010 Ball, the incoming Vice Commandant of the Coast Guard, VADM John Currier, presented him with the Coast Guard Distinguished Public Service Award, an honor reserved only for a truly special Maker. No one is an island, as I am reminded daily by my beloved Cyndee. And I am sure your honoree would agree with me that his chief of staff, his dear wife and best friend and partner in life, who has always stood by his side with help and advice, hard work, and yes, even a resounding "NO WAY" every once in a while, has been the person that has enabled him to do all he has done for our Navy League, and that she was always there to raise his spirit and drive and commitment when the going got rough. She is another wonderful MAKER, not a taker. Well, I have gone on long enough by far. You all know the person we are saluting tonight. To me, he is the HERO of the Lake Washington Council. He is an unsurpassed MAKER, and never a taker. Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in expressing our deep thanks and appreciation to Roger Ponto and his wife, Peggy."

Although COVID has disrupted lives and events, Roger celebrated his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday with 47 people on 30 July. Early in life, Roger was a licensed HAM operator and over time transitioned from Morse Code and speaking over the airways to an exceptional ability to relate to everyone on a personal level. His dedication and enthusiasm for the Navy League has left an enduring legacy and vision for the Lake Washington & Everett Council.

## News of Council Supported Units

The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer **USS Kidd (DDG 100)** returned to Everett on 24 September after a deployment to U.S. 7th and 3rd Fleet areas of operation. While in 7th Fleet, Kidd operated as a part of Commander, Task Force (CTF) 71 and Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 15. The ship departed on deployment to the Indo-Pacific in June 2021. *"This ship, her CO, and crew should take great pride in their performance over the last four months,"* said CAPT Steven McDowell, the commodore of Destroyer Squadron 23. *"Every deployment we execute is essential to ensuring the freedom of maneuver in the Indo-Pacific, and this crew's dedication and efforts helped to ensure the opportunity for prosperity exists for all in the Pacific."*

**USS John S. McCain (DDG 56)** arrived in its new homeport of **Naval Station Everett**, Washington 15 October 2021. The ship was previously forward deployed in Yokosuka, Japan, for 24 years. The move comes a few months after the ship returned from a seven month independent deployment, during which the ship participated in the annual multinational exercise MALABAR alongside the Indian Navy, Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force, and the Royal Australian Navy. During the ship's transit to Everett, McCain conducted a port visit in Hawaii and participated in San Francisco Fleet Week. *"We are so excited to arrive in our new homeport of Everett,"* said CDR Tin Tran, USS John S. McCain's commanding officer. *"This ship and her crew did so much excellent work with our allies and partners in 7th Fleet, and we're looking forward to training and operating in 3rd Fleet. Everett has provided such a warm reception; our sailors are truly looking forward to integrating into the local community."* Now based in U.S. 3rd Fleet, McCain is joining the ships of the "Little Beavers," Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 23.

Congratulations to LTJG Jamie Maguire (*below*) of the **USS Gridley (DDG 101)** for earning her Surface Warfare Officer (SWO) pin. The Wardroom gathered together for her pinning.



On 17 December 2021, **University of Washington NROTC** Husky Battalion held a commissioning ceremony for ENS Miller, USN and 2ndLt Bassen, USMC. The ceremony honors their arduous work for this achievement. Husky Battalion wishes them luck as they both continue in their careers as officers. *Below left to right:* CAPT Allen Adkins, CO NROTC; ENS Miller; 2ndLt Bassen & CAPT Shaun C. McAndrew, USN, Retired, former CO of University of Idaho NROTC.





## Icebreaker Healy Returns Following Northwest Passage Transit

USCG Pacific Area News Release

Photo by PO2 Steven Strohmaier USCG D13

The crew of USCGC Healy (WAGB 20) returned to their Seattle homeport 20 November following a 22,000-mile, 133-day deployment circumnavigating North America. The crew aboard Healy, a 420-ft. medium icebreaker, provided U.S. surface presence in the Arctic, supported high-latitude oceanographic research missions, participated in an international search-and-rescue exercise, and engaged in passing exercises with surface vessels from the U.S. Navy, Canadian Navy, and Mexican Navy. Healy's crew hosted members of the international science community and institutions from the U.S., Canada, Norway, and Denmark who conducted oceanographic research throughout the Arctic including the Northwest Passage and within Baffin Bay to monitor environmental change. Healy crewmembers also facilitated 430 over-the-side casts of

Rangers for a search-and-rescue exercise. The crew transited south of Mexico via the Panama Canal on their way home. Healy's deployment supported the Coast Guard's Arctic Strategy while providing critical training opportunities for future icebreaker sailors. *"Healy's crew demonstrated their tremendous dedication to duty while carrying out the Coast Guard's Arctic mission, operating in some of the harshest regions in the world,"* said Healy's Commanding Officer CAPT Kenneth Boda. *"They assisted teams of scientists in gathering invaluable data and information throughout the deployment. This research will be shared with laboratories, universities and institutions around the world to support research focused on the changing Arctic environment."* While transiting down the east coast of the United States and back up the west coast of Mexico, Healy engaged in multiple outreach events including passing exercises, professional exchanges, and embarking distinguished visitors to bolster relations with other nations.

Healy deploys annually to the Arctic in support of oceanographic research and Operation Arctic Shield, the Service's annual operation to execute U.S. Coast Guard missions, enhance maritime domain awareness, strengthen partnerships, and build preparedness, prevention, and response capabilities across the Arctic domain. Commissioned in 2000, Healy is one of two active polar icebreakers in the Coast Guard's fleet. Healy is capable of breaking 4 feet of ice continuously and up to 8 feet



various scientific instruments including a Conductivity, Temperature, and Depth (CTD) array that requires the cutter to station keep as wire lowers and recovers the instrument from below the surface. Additionally, Healy mapped over 20,000-square kilometers of the seafloor, including 12,000-square kilometers of previously unmapped regions, throughout the patrol. Healy transited north of Canada via the Northwest Passage, where the crew rendezvoused with members of the Canadian Coast Guard and Canadian

of ice while backing and ramming. The U.S. Coast Guard is recapitalizing its polar icebreaker fleet to ensure continued access to the Polar Regions and protect the country's economic, commercial, environmental, and national security interests. The Coast Guard and U.S. Navy, through an integrated program office, on 23 April 2019, awarded VT Halter Marine Inc., of Pascagoula, MS, a fixed-price incentive contract for the detail, design, and construction of the lead Polar security cutter with contract delivery planned for 2025.

## Medal of Honor Monday: Marine Corps Maj. Henry Elrod

By Katie Lange, DOD NEWS

Pearl Harbor wasn't the only U.S. military base attacked by the Japanese on Dec. 7, 1941. U.S. service members on tiny Wake Island, a strategic base about 2,300 miles further west from

Oahu, also defended themselves from enemy invaders.

Maj. Henry T. Elrod, USMC, *(left)* fought valiantly there in the skies and on land for more than two weeks. While he didn't survive the

battle, his bravery earned him the Medal of Honor. Elrod was born 27 September 1905, in Rebecca, GA, to parents Robert and Margaret. The family moved to Thomasville, GA, in 1911, where Elrod grew up with his younger sister, Kate. According to the Thomasville Times Enterprise, Elrod played football and baseball for Thomasville High School before attending the University of Georgia, where he played football for one year. He then transferred to Yale before joining the Marine Corps in 1927. Elrod received his commission as an officer four years later. In May 1933, Elrod married Elizabeth Jackson. She was the niece of RADM R.H. Jackson, USN and went on to become a captain in the U.S. Marine Corps' Women's Reserve. By February 1935, Elrod had earned his wings as an aviator. He served at Quantico, VA, before being transferred to San Diego in 1938. In January



1941, he was sent to Hawaii to be the executive officer of Marine Fighting Squadron 211. On 4 Dec 1941, Elrod and 11 other pilots in his squadron flew F4F-3 Wildcats to Wake Island (*below*). Three days later — technically 8 Dec 1941, because Wake is on the other side of the International Date Line — the Japanese attacked. Just like that, the U.S. had been thrust into World War II, and Elrod was in the thick of it. But as the simultaneous attack at Pearl Harbor lasted hours, the attack on Wake lasted 15 days. At the start of the bombardment, eight of the 12 Wildcats in MFS 211 were destroyed. Even though the island's shore defenses were still intact, this meant that only four fighter planes were left to fend off a massive number of enemy forces. Over the span of several days, Maj Elrod, USMC, used one of those aircraft to keep several Japanese planes from landing on the island. He also single-handedly shot down two enemy fighters in a flight of 22. After that, he bombed and strafed the Japanese destroyer *Kisaragi* so many times that it sank. That feat made Elrod the first U.S. pilot to sink a warship from a fighter plane. Eventually, Elrod's plane suffered enough damage that it was no longer able to fly, and the remaining Wildcats (*next page*) were no longer airborne, either. In a last-ditch effort to save the island, Elrod helped organize the remaining troops on the ground — many of whom were civilians — into beach defense units to repel waves



USN/National Archives photo





USN/National Archives photo

and as a leader on the ground was integral to the fight. On 8 Nov 1946, GEN A.A. Vandegrift, USMC, presented the Medal of Honor to Elrod's widow during a ceremony in Washington, D.C. Elrod was initially buried on Wake, but he was reinterred at Arlington National Cemetery in 1947. His Medal of Honor (below) is housed at the National Museum of the U.S.

of Japanese troops trying to come ashore. Several times during that night, Elrod provided cover fire for unarmed ammunition carriers who were re-supplying a gun emplacement. Shortly before dawn on 23 December, a Japanese sailor who had hidden himself among the casualties on the beach shot Elrod as he was providing cover fire. He died instantly. Wake fell to the enemy later that day. The Japanese didn't surrender the island back to U.S. troops until the end of the war. Despite the massive American losses recorded at Wake, Elrod's determination in the air

Marine Corps in Quantico, as are relic pieces of the aircraft he flew during the Wake battle. According to the Georgia Aviation Hall of Fame in which Elrod was inducted in 1995, the cowling of the plane he flew on the day he sank the *Kisaragi* is in the Smithsonian Institution. Elrod's heroics haven't been forgotten in the Marine Corps. In 1985, a guided missile frigate was commissioned and named USS Elrod (FFG-55) (below left) in his honor. A street is also named for him at Quantico. *This article is part of a weekly series called "Medal of Honor Monday," in which DOD News highlights one of the more than 3,500 Medal of Honor recipients who have earned the U.S. military's highest medal for valor.*



USN Photo



Photo By: National Museum of the U.S. Marine Corps

LAKE WASHINGTON & EVERETT COUNCIL  
NAVY LEAGUE OF THE UNITED STATES  
P.O. Box 547  
BELLEVUE WA 98009-0547

*Voyager*, official newsletter of the LW&EC NL-US, is published electronically in March, June, September and December and provided to all members. Comments and suggestions are welcome and should be sent to: *Voyager* Editor, P.O. Box 547 Bellevue WA 98009-0547 or email to: [etpefp@comcast.net](mailto:etpefp@comcast.net)



***Since Voyager is now digital only, insure your email address is correctly updated!***

## NAVY LEAGUE *of the United States*

### Lake Washington & Everett Council

#### CITIZENS IN SUPPORT OF THE SEA SERVICES

**Lake Washington & Everett Council is your community organization that:**

Supports our Puget Sound Sea Services: USCGC Healy, USCGC Henry Blake, USCGC Blue Shark, USCG Base Seattle, USS Jimmy Carter, Naval Station Everett and Undersea R & D Detachment, USS Kidd, USS Momsen, USS Gridley, USS Ralph Johnson, USS Sampson, Destroyer Squadron Nine, Carrier Strike Group ELEVEN, Regional Support Organization – Pacific Northwest, Afloat Training Group – Pacific Northwest, Naval Operational Support Center Everett, Branch Health Clinic Everett and Puget Sound Naval Shipyard & Intermediate Maintenance Facility

Supports local Naval Reserve Officers Training Units and US Naval Sea Cadet Corps:

- Liberty High School NJROTC and Snohomish High School MCJROTC
- University of Washington NROTC and US Naval Sea Cadet Corps, Naval Station Everett Division
- Increases awareness of the diversity of maritime units in Puget Sound
- Conveys the pivotal role of Puget Sound sea services in national and regional security
- Furthers understanding that maritime commerce is the cornerstone of our region's economy.

#### ***Navy League of the United States Mission Statement***

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

<https://www.navy.mil/>  
<https://www.marines.com>  
<https://www.uscg.mil/>  
<https://www.maritime.dot.gov/>