

A new Navy League Cadet program comes to Ventura County

by **Jeana Diacono**
editor

The cadets, while not as experienced as actual military members, pulled off the commissioning just as flawlessly.

A new training ship, CPL Nicholas H. Anderson, was commissioned by the U.S. Navy League Cadet Corp on Jan. 23, at Naval Base Ventura County, Port Hueneme.

The new unit, part of the Sea Cadet program, will be under the same command as the Ben Moreell Battalion, which has been on base for a little under 40 years.

The commanding officer of the new unit, NSCC Lt. j.g. Randy Owen, says it has been a great past year for the Ben Moreell Battalion and now, for the new training ship they are putting together for the younger Cadets.

"This commissioning ceremony is an accumulation of a lot of hard work by all of the cadets and all of the staff," Owen said during the commissioning. "It is definitely a team effort, and I am very proud of everyone that has taken the time to build this unit up and make this commissioning ceremony possible."

Being a part of a unit helps the cadets develop a sense of pride. They learn the value of patriotism, courage, self reliance, teamwork, accountability, personal success, achievement and leadership. It also provides them with an environment free of gangs and drugs.

When a cadet joins a unit, they learn all about military life. They learn what it is like in the Navy, as well as the other services.

The local cadet units are located in NBVC, Port Hueneme, and are open to community and military members between the ages of 10 to 17. Children 10 to 13 are called Navy League Cadets and children 13 to 17 are called Sea Cadets.

LC2 Amanda Macgregor, 13, a member of the new unit, is very excited for the unit to be starting. She immediately joined the cadet program

after finding out about it during Seabee Days.

"I joined the unit, because there were a lot of cool activities, and it will help me become a leader," Macgregor said. "Making new friends and learning leadership skills are basically my favorite parts. Being in the unit makes me feel proud of myself."

Macgregor's last piece of advice was "people should join."

The new unit is being named after Nicholas H. Anderson, who is a former Sea Cadet. He died in 2004 while deployed in Iraq as a machine gunner with the Marines.

"We have the opportunity to recognize the sacrifice of a fallen Marine and a former Sea Cadet," Owen said. "This is why we elected to name this new unit in honor of Nicholas Anderson. I am honored to assume command of this training ship, and I hope we will continue to grow and be successful."

Senior Regional Director Lt. Cmdr. Vahan Manoogian says the cadets are outstanding. "You are the future of our program, you are the future of our country and now, our Navy League Cadets and their older brothers and sisters in the Ben Moreell Battalion have an even more important job to do," Manoogian said. "In addition to representing our Sea Cadet program, you are now responsible for caring on the legacy and the memory of a very important individual. So for that, I congratulate you."

LC3 Rogelio Ramirez, 13, a member of the new unit, says he decided to join the unit after hearing about it from his older brother.

He says being part of the unit makes him feel admired by his family and peers. "I joined for the trainings, and I completed them already," Ramirez said. "My favorite part is the cadets and the discipline. I like the discipline."

Ramirez says even though he hasn't been in the unit that long, he has already befriended everyone. He says this program has taught him that he wants to be a Navy Seal in the future.

If it hadn't been for the Channel Islands Council of the Navy League, Ramirez may have never realized his goal. During the ceremony, the Navy League provided the Navy League Cadet Corps unit with the commissioning warrant and a check for \$500.

The Navy League is a nonprofit organization that sponsors the Sea Cadet program on base. Their sponsorship helps lower costs for cadets. With out them, this commissioning wouldn't be possible.

Manoogian says the training ship is an accumulation of many years of hard work, on the part of many individuals. "I remember the days when we had two or three cadets standing in rank and through the efforts of many of our officers and staff, or more importantly you cadets, you have made it so that our unit has grown. It is once more among the flagship of our unit in Southern California, and for that, I thank you."

The guest speaker of the commissioning, Col. Alvah Ingersoll III, says he couldn't be more proud of the cadets.

"I see the future standing before me," Ingersoll said. "What I see out there is potential, and it is among each of you. I want to encourage each of you to do the best that you can. Keep up your academics, your discipline and your physical and athletic ability."

Ingersoll says the cadets wouldn't be where they are today, if it wasn't for their parents. He says values and ideals really start at home.

"They start at home with you and your dedication," Ingersoll said. "Getting your children up, out and participating in this program, it really is remarkable for me to see how dedicated families are and how much you all participate and put out for this program. It really is a great effort."

Ingersoll and Owen then presented the first crew of Training Ship CPL Nicholas H. Anderson with plank owner certificates.

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