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A Night of Honor: Navy League Hosts Military Appreciation Night

More than 300 guests attended the Newport Navy League's Annual Military Appreciation Night in Middletown to inspire and honor young cadets, active duty service men and women and retired military personnel.

By [Olga Enger](#) | [Email the author](#) | May 26, 2011

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Sea Cadets. Back row left to right: Ronald Gutierrez, Tayla Reid, Tori Anderson; Front row, left to right: Mackenzie Bowman and sister Lyndsey Bowman. Credit: [Olga Enger](#)

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Mackenzie Bowman, 10, and Lyndsey Bowman, 11, sisters from Portsmouth, said they were inspired and honored to be among the 300 dinner guests who surrounded them Tuesday night in the banquet hall at the [Atlantic Beach Club](#).

In every direction, the two League Cadet Recruits found themselves in the warm and friendly company of people who understood their similar dreams and career aspirations for a life at sea—local elected officials, community leaders and Navy service men and women, as well as the new president of the [Naval War College](#), Rear Admiral John Christenson.

They were invited guests to [Military Appreciation Night](#), an annual event hosted by the Newport Council of the Navy League.

The Newport Council, a civilian organization with about 400 members, is part of a worldwide organization that promotes sea power in conjunction with national security, and reaches out to communities to honor service men and women.

As League Cadet Recruits, the Bowman sisters take part in the NETC Naval Sea Cadets program in Newport, which trains American youth in seagoing and leadership skills.

“I’m a Sea Cadet because I want to help the dolphins, so I’m going to join the Coast Guard,” Lyndsey Bowman explained during the dinner.

Mackenzie’s dream is to become a nurse on the Comfort Ship, so she can help injured people.

Navy League President Anne Huot said that for the Sea Cadets, attending the event “is an inspiration, to see their role models in full dress uniform and being honored for their leadership by their grateful community—business and civic alike.”

Guests are often recognized for their efforts on land as well as at sea.

Huot presented Lyndsey Bowman a Navy League coin for her participation in the Newport Soapbox Derby that flew past Easton’s Beach last Saturday.

Bowman had the honor of racing in the Navy League’s sponsored derby car.

In a room filled with proudly crisped white uniforms, inspiration and camaraderie seemed to be an unspoken language shared across the lines of generations and worn ranks.

Active duty B2 Mark Swayne from Bristol seemed energized by the event and spoke with great hope about his future in the Coast Guard.

“As a future executive petty officer, this gets me out in the community and helps me understand how the Coast Guard impacts that community,” said Swayne, who will serve Newport County for the next three years.

Many who attended were excited to meet and hear [Rear Admiral John Christenson](#), the new president of the U.S Naval War College who took the helm in March.

Christenson spoke about his own personal passion for the United States Navy.

“My dad was a dirt poor farm boy, grandson of immigrants,” Christenson told the audience. “The Navy gave him everything he has ever had. Everything I have in this world, the Navy gave me. I love the Navy.”

A list of special guests is available to view in the image gallery above.

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