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Awards ceremony: Sea Cadets are honored, Sea Cadets earn trophy awards

Okeechobee County's US Naval Sea Cadet Corps (USNSCC) unit, the Naval Special Warfare Trident Team, held their annual awards ceremony for the cadets on Saturday, the 15th of January. Also attending were Sheriff Paul C. May In addition, US Navy Captain Mike Howard, USN, representing the Navy's SEAL Association, and SEAL Museum Association also attended.

The ceremony commenced with opening remarks by Capt. Howard and Sheriff May. Cadets Austin Brown and Ivan Marerro were appointed to Petty Officer 1st Class by order of US Navy Captain M.D. Ford, the USNSCC's Executive Director. Cadet Petty Officers Jesse Pallon, Joel Pallon, Robert Carter, and Hector Feliciano received the UDT-SEAL Association's Rear Admiral Kaufman Trophy for Teamwork. The trophy, named after the founder of the Underwater Demolition Teams, is the top Trident award. Cadet Petty Officer Craig Kemp was the recipient of the UDT-SEAL Museum Association's SEAL Challenge Trophy for Naval Special Warfare Skills. Cadet Petty Officer Israel Weaver was the recipient of the Naval Special Warfare Foundation's HMC (SEAL) Matthew Bourgeois Trophy for Leadership. Cadet Petty Officer Josiah Barber received the Sheriff's Office Detective David Brough Memorial Trophy as the Outstanding Cadet for the year.

In addition to the trophy awards, other cadets received commendation citations for their performance during the last year. Cadet Petty Officers Rene Mendoza, Kevin Maguire, Jack Cofield III, and Seaman Christopher Brown received the NSW-Trident Commendation for Teamwork; Cadet Seaman Andrew Phillips received the NSW-Trident Commendation-SEAL Challenge for Naval Special warfare skills; Cadet Seaman Aaron Gurrestieta received the NSW-Trident Commendation for Leadership; Cadet Seaman Israel Gurrestieta received the NSW-Trident Commendation for performance; Cadet Petty Officer 1st Class Ivan Marerro received the NSW-Trident Commendation for Physical Fitness; Cadet Petty Officer 1st Class Austin Brown received the NSW-Trident Commendation for Advanced Training and was the honor graduate from the Petty Officer leadership Academy during the summer training; Cadet Seaman Hector Feliciano received the NSW-Trident Commendation for performance at Recruit Training; and Cadet Seaman Recruit Joshua Holley received the NSW-Trident Commendation for Most Improved Cadet.

The Trident's training year closed in December. Next for the cadets in continuing their academics and practical skills phase which will conclude in March. In April, the Trident's cadets will be entering the second phase of the semester based training with Diving Qualification School. In May the cadets will resume their intense & demanding



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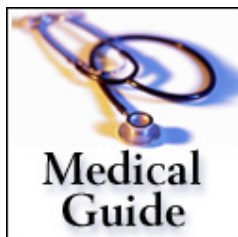
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training and preparation for the summer training. Starting in June the cadets deploy for summer training. The new “recruits” will be headed to Recruit Training, and the “veteran” cadets will be getting ready for Aviation School, Submarine School, Medical School, Advanced Coast Guard orientations; and for some, the SEAL and Special Boats Orientation Course for cadets.



The Sea Cadet unit located in Okeechobee, Florida, is the Naval Special Warfare Trident Team, and is the only Naval Special Warfare Sea Cadet Unit in the nation. Based upon the direct sponsorship by the Navy’s SEAL Association, the Trident is specifically oriented towards Naval Special Warfare — the Navy SEAL’s — and draws its name from Naval Special Warfare symbol. The Trident is administered locally by the Okeechobee County Sheriff’s Office as their official pro-active youth development activity.



The USNSCC program is an official activity, and was established by an act of Congress, by request of the Secretary of the Navy in 1958. The program is organized and supervised according to requirements established by the United States Navy and is intended to provide an orientation to a career in the United States Navy.

Based upon the relationship of the NSW-Trident with Naval Special Warfare, the unit’s name is drawn from US Navy’s Special Warfare symbol. The NSW-Trident traces its history to the UDT-SEAL Museum in Fort Pierce, the birthplace of the Navy SEAL’s. Together with the UDT-SEAL Association, the UDT-SEAL Museum Association, and the Naval Special Warfare Foundation, the NSW-Trident is sponsored by the Okeechobee County Sheriff’s Office as the Agency’s pro-active youth development activity. In addition, the Trident program is supported by the Children’s Services Council of Okeechobee and the Okeechobee District Schools.

The NSW-Trident is the only Naval Sea Cadet Unit or Junior Navy ROTC unit in the nation oriented towards Naval Special Warfare and sponsored by the Navy’s UDT-SEAL Association. The program operates in a highly structured, military environment.

The NSW-Trident is considered as one of the most challenging career oriented youth development programs in the nation. The program has won the prestigious Bergen Trophy six times since 1996 and is rated by the NSCC as the top sea cadet unit in the nation.

The program is approved by Okeechobee District schools for elective credit. Cadets enrolled in Okeechobee High School are given the same elective academic credit as NJROTC for each completed semester. Participation in the program affords the cadets the same benefits after graduation from High School as attendance at JROTC, including enlistment at advanced pay grades.

While the NSW-Trident is oriented towards the SEAL’s, the unit stresses diversity in the training program. Cadets who are interested in aviation, submarines, and other US Navy career fields are encouraged to take advantage of these training opportunities during the summer training cycles. The cadets learn about discipline, responsibility and

authority from a “hands-on” perspective. All cadet applicants are screened without regard to race, color, sex, creed, or religion. The application process is open to all young men and women between the age of 14 and 18, and meets or exceeds any applicable Equal Opportunity requirements for such programs.

For information regarding the Naval Special Warfare Trident program, interested parents may contact the Sheriff’s Office coordinator at 357-1600.

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