



NAVY LEAGUE
of the United States



December 29, 2015

SUBJ: NAVY LEAGUE GREAT LAKES REGION 2015 ANNUAL REPORT

The Great Lakes Region of the Navy League consists of Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan, Indiana, and Kentucky and 20 Councils. The Region is host to the Navy's only Recruit Training Command and a Navy Training Command. The Region is the proud operator of three Sea Cadet Training Ships; Manatra in Chicago, Pride of Michigan in Mt Clemens, MI and NSCS Grayfox TWR 825 in Port Huron, MI. The Region is host to Marinette Marine, the builder of the Navy's Freedom Class Litoral Combat Ship. The Region is hosst to the Great Lakes Maritime Academy in Traverse City and the lartest US Coast Guard Festival in Grand Haven, MI. With this snapshot of just some of the characteristics of the region, the Navy League plays an important role.

Some of the significant events highlight the activity of the Region. The is a subset of many events that happen in the Region.

Illinois:

- Numerous awards and support to the US Navy Recruit Training Command
- Commission of the USS Illinois SSN786, Virginia Class submarine
- Great Lakes Region Conference
- Sea Cadet training on the Manatra

Wisconsin:

- Commission of the USS Milwaukee LCS 5 on November 21 in Milwaukee
- Marinette Marine, builder of the Litoral Combat Ship
- Oshkosh Air Show and Museum
- STEM competition

Michigan:

- Preparations for the commission of the USS Detroit LCS 7 in Detroit in 2016
- Commission of the USS Gerald R Ford CVN 78 aircraft carrier in Hampton Roads
- Navy Balls in Detroit, Battle Creek, and Lansing
- Navy Week in Detroit
- Coast Guard Festival in Grand Haven
- Sea Cadet training on the Pride of Michiagn and NSCS Grayfox TWR 825
- Navy League Sunday at historic Mariners Church

Indiana:

- Navy Week in Indianapolis
- Future commission of USS Indianapolis LCS 17

From this short summary, the Navy League Councils are very active supporting our sea services. There are numerous other programs, Air Shows, events, Commands, ceremonies and activities.



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The area is host to some very important Legislators. Sen Carl Levin served as Chairman of the Armed Services Committee. Sen Gary Peters is a former Naval Reservist. Legislators in all of the states in the Region recognize the value of the Sea Services in the Region. Bob Wilsom has assembled a very robust team for the Legislative Affairs Committee and several participated in the Fly-in in DC. The Region considers this a very important component of the Navy League experience and influence. Many of the U.S. and State Legislators know local Navy League contacts. Many participate in the Navy League events.

Challenges in the Region mirror challenges throughout the Navy League. Some of these include an aging group of volunteers, inability to recruit younger members, floundering Councils, slow to embrace technology and social media, a small number of people doing a lot of activities. We feel that the ship commissions will encourage more people to become involved with the Navy League. The new membership dues structure will also help to recruit new members.

The Region's Councils have attempted some innovative approaches to some of these challenges. The Wisconsin Councils joined together to host a Navy Recognition event in contrast to a Navy Ball and embraced the use of Constant Contact to communicate with members in Wisconsin. Wisconsin also hosted a very successful STEM competition. Council President Nate Milsap works at Marinette Marine, home of the Freedom Class LCS ship. The Illinois Councils are operating more collaboratively to recognize Navy Leaders and Sailors at the Navy Training Command. Hosting the Region meeting at the Navy Training Command attracts Navy Leaguers from other Regions. The Michigan Councils collaboratively support a website www.navyspiritmichigan.org pinpointing all of the Navy activities in the State. The Indiana Councils have floundered with the retiring of some significant leaders in these Councils. We believe the commission of the USS Indianapolis will spark some new energy. The Kentucky Council is remarkable vibrant.

Councils embrace the US Coast Guard which has a very strong footprint in the area, as does the Merchant Marine with the many Great Lakes freighters. The Sea Cadet units are very active and serve a very important role in the area. We need more !

The Great Lakes Region leadership is focused on the US Navy ship commissions, support of the Navy Training Command, STEM programs, support of the Litoral Combat Ship program, Navy Recruit Training Command, Great Lakes Maritime Academy, ROTC programs, US Coast Guard, Air Shows, and Sea Cadets. We struggle to grow leaders to carry out successfully the many activities and programs.

There are many other events and programs that I am unable to highlight in this message. I also wish to thank the many leaders and members that make it all happen.

Best wishes and sincere regards.

Sincerely,

Jim Semerad

President, Great Lakes Region