

Bancroft Sea Cadets have 53rd annual inspection



By Michael Riley

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Bancroft Sea Cadets, RCSCC Viking, had their 53rd annual inspection review at the Dungannon Recreation Centre in L'Amable on June 8. "One of Canada's best kept secrets" according to their training officer Captain Tracy Armstrong, the sea cadets were inspected by Bancroft Mayor Paul Jenkins. Others in attendance included the sea cadets commanding officer Lieutenant (N) Crystal Ladoucer, CD, Captain Garrett Watts, CD, training officer from SEOA Zone, civilian instructor Dawn Morrill, civilian instructor Jim Christie CPO2 (retired) and the Navy League of Canada Bancroft branch's treasurer Paul McAlpine. Following the inspection and parade, a slide show, demonstrations, awards presentations, and speeches there were refreshments for all attendees. Armstrong comments to Bancroft This Week on this annual inspection ceremony. Armstrong told Bancroft This Week that the sea cadets, who had their 53rd annual inspection on June 8 at the Dungannon Recreation Centre, is a free program in partnership with the Canadian Armed Forces and the Navy League of Canada. "So, we partner up and offer a free program for boys and girls aged 12 to 18 years. There are three aims to the program; there's physical fitness, there's citizenship, and there's stimulating an interest in the navy of the Canadian Armed Forces. We focus on leadership as well so it's actually a cadet-based organization under the leadership of officers from the Canadian Armed Forces and volunteers," she says. The sea cadets have 15 cadets currently and Armstrong told Bancroft This Week on June 5 they're starting to ramp back up to the pre-COVID-19 years. They draw cadets from a vast area that goes from Lake St. Peter to Coe Hill to Gilmour and Bancroft. "At any given time, we could have 25 to 30 cadets. We've had as few as eight. So, it varies," she says. Armstrong says that Mayor Jenkins is their reviewing officer and he will be inspecting the dress and deportment of the cadets on June 8. This is the first year that Jenkins has had this role. "Last year, we had a retired captain. We try to change it up and keep it fresh. This year we had the mayor come out and get the Town [of Bancroft] involved. With COVID-19 and everything else, we're trying to get back out there into the community and get them involved," she says. Armstrong says the annual inspection is basically the last parade of the year where the cadets get to show off all their hard work, and what they've been learning all throughout the year. "We've had marksmanship competitions. We went down to CFB Trenton and competed against 12 other units. We brought home a silver medal and one of our cadets also brought home a bronze medal for the open category. So, we've got some really good shooters in our corps. We've also done some orienteering, some map and compass work. Last weekend we were down in Kingston at the Royal Military College at the sail centre and we were sailing. We've done a bunch of knot work which we'll have on display as well. So, the kids learn a whole bunch of nautical work as well, cuneiform, communications, and radio work. So, we do a lot of stuff and like I said, it's a free program. We do a lot of drills and that teaches the kids some focus and some discipline that they can carry throughout their lives," she says. Armstrong says the sea cadets are trying to push back into the community [after COVID-19]. "But we don't know how many people will attend. The more people that attend the better," she says. The event started at 1 p.m. and they asked everyone to be seated by 1:15 p.m. and the inspection officially kicked off at 1:30 p.m. They had a slideshow they put together for everyone to see what the cadets had done over the past year and see them in action. In addition to Armstrong and Jenkins, the sea cadets commanding officer Lieutenant (N) Ladoucer, CD, Captain Watts, CD, training officer from SEOA Zone, civilian instructor Morrill, and civilian instructor Christie CPO2 (retired) were also present. Civilian instructor Belinda Lake

wasn't able to be there unfortunately. After the cadets marched on and the reviewing party arrived, they played 'O'Canada.' Jenkins performed the inspection review with both Ladoucer, Watts and Newman accompanying him as he made the rounds to all the cadets. The cadets are as follows; Coxswain CPO1 Clorissa Newman, Regulating Petty Officer PO1 Jasmine Chiasson, Divisional Petty Officer MC William Mahon-van Dorsser, Divisional Petty Officer MC Mars Worsley, Ordinary Cadet Taryn Feeney, Ordinary Cadet Colin Dove, Able Cadet Levi Twilt, Able Cadet Ava Belisle, Able Cadet Ben Pozniak, Able Cadet Kaydance Chiasson, Able Cadet Ares Worsley, Leading Cadet Hope Chiasson, and Leading Cadet Jonah Twilt. After the inspection, the cadets did the march past, their demonstrations, and then the awards were presented to the cadets. The awards were presented for best drill (Mahon-van Dorsser), best attendance (Twilt), most proficient OC (Feeney), most proficient AC (Kaydance Chiasson), most proficient LC (Hope Chiasson), most proficient MC (Worsley), most proficient PO (Jasmine Chiasson), most improved cadet (Hope Chiasson), most involved cadet (Pozniak), marksmanship award (Worsley), esprit de corps (Newman) and best display (for the fashion show, various cadets). The Navy League Sea Cadet Education Scholarship recipient was awarded to Newman. After the awards, remarks were made by Jenkins, who told the cadets that they had a lot of choices in their lives, but one important one they made was joining the sea cadets. He said they should be proud of doing that, with the life skills, the commitment and dedication that it teaches them, all important things to have in life. 'If you display those characteristics, they'll serve you well. You'll have options but education is so important through your life and never stop educating yourself and never stop learning,' he says. Ladoucer thanked Jenkins for coming and for his support and for the support of the Town of Bancroft through the years. She thanked McAlpine and the Navy League of Canada, Bancroft branch, for their support, all the parents and families for their support and she also thanked the sea cadets. 'You do so many things I'm so proud of. I think back to last fall and every single one of you has done some wonderful things. You learned some very valuable skills, learned how to wear a uniform, learned how to do drills, learned how to be nice people and that's what we're about here. I can't say enough good things about this group. They're like a little family unit and I'm so proud of them as I'm sure you all are as well,' she says. After Ladoucer's remarks, the cadets did the advance in review order, 'God Save the King' was played, the reviewing party departed and the cadets marched off. Attendees were then invited to have a look at the cadets' displays in the basement and enjoy some refreshments courtesy of the Navy League of Canada, Bancroft branch. Kevin Newman, whose partner is Morrill, and whose daughter Chief Petty Officer Clorissa Newman is the coxswain of the sea cadets, said the program really changed her life for the better. 'This is a really great program for the kids. Ask any of the parents or anyone who's gone through, most of them have done really well. I can't think of another program that offers that. It's an excellent program,' he says. Joanne Pozniak was there with her husband Dave, and her son is Able Cadet Ben Pozniak. She thought it was amazing programming offered by the sea cadets. 'It's been so great. I wouldn't say I worry about him but he doesn't get involved too much. When we found this program, it's been amazing with all the outings and activities. He had this floating event at the end of the year and he's like I got to capsize a boat. And like most moms, I was like, you're supposed to keep the boat up. But after talking with Lt. Ladoucer, she said not everyone gets the opportunity and he's really worked his way up and got there. He's had nothing but amazing opportunities [with the sea cadets]. It's just unbelievable the number of volunteers and amazing programming they've got here,' she says. Armstrong told Bancroft This Week that the inspection review ceremony looked way better than last year. 'This year we really tried to improve on our drills and dress and deportment. They've done a lot of stuff this year. We try to vary it and like [Lt. Ladoucer] said, we have a great team and great kids,' she says. 'We try to make it like a family, because some of the kids don't have really good homes, so this is a safe spot where they can come and have some fun and learn valuable skills.'