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Life & Leisure

Brothers meet aboard USS Constitution for new rank

By CHIEF JOURNALIST (SW/AW) MARK O. PIGGOTT
Special to The News-Journal

They come from a small town in North Carolina. One is a corpsman, the other an electronics technician. They joined the Navy nine months apart. They only see each other during visits back home in Raeford. After 13 years in the Navy they've finally done something together.

Chief Electronics Technician Christopher O. Leggett and Chief Hospital Corpsman Michael A. Leggett were both recently selected for advancement to chief petty officer (CPO). On top of that, the brothers finally got the chance to be together during the Fleet CPO Training Week held aboard USS Constitution.

Christopher, 30, is stationed at Submarine Training Facility in Norfolk, Virginia while Michael, 32, is stationed aboard USS Louisiana (SSBN 743) in Kings Bay, Georgia. Getting the two brothers together on the constitution trip took a little help from the right people.

"Originally wasn't slated to go," Michael said. "When I found out Chris was coming, I told my COB (Chief of the Boat), and he pulled some strings to get me here. That's what chiefs do for their Sailors."

For the past seven years prospective chief petty officers from around the fleet have been invited to Charlestown, Massachusetts to visit "Old Ironsides," and get a lesson in Navy history and traditions, as well as some quality

training on being a chief petty officer.

"Leadership training," said Master Chief Electronics Technician Steve H. Brandt, command master chief USS Constitution. "This program was established to help the new chiefs take on the tasks of today's Navy."

For the Leggett brothers, it's the chance opportunity for the two of them to finally work together, as brothers, as Sailors and as Chiefs.

"We've never served together at any time in our careers," Christopher said. "The pleasure of being with my brother is first and foremost. And to learn from the chiefs and the other selectees with their specialties, surrounded by all this history is highly motivating."

Michael added, "This is my first time in Boston, so being here means a lot to me — being able to take advantage of the training we're getting here, so we can take it back to our commands and use it ourselves and hope it makes us better chiefs."

Though Christopher has been in the submarine service for his entire career, Michael has not. He served with the Fleet Marine Force for six years before Christopher convinced him to join the "silent service."

"I told him what our Independent Duty Corpsman (IDC) do onboard submarines," Christopher said, "and the benefits of being a submarine IDC. That's all it took."

The brothers are highly competitive when it comes to a lot of things, especially advancement. "We've been chasing each other since we both came in," Michael said.

"He made 3rd class before I did, but I made 1st before he did."

"When we found out we both made chief this time, our first time up, it felt really good," Michael added.

When you ask the Leggett brothers what their goal is, both say, "to serve together at a command." But not just any command — they have something special in mind.

"It's our goal, before the end of our careers, to serve together," Christopher said, "and we want to serve on USS North Carolina."

USS North Carolina (SSN 777) will be the fourth in the next-generation attack submarine, the Virginia class, providing the navy with the capabilities it requires to maintain the nation's undersea supremacy well into the 21st century.

The ship will have improved stealth sophisticated surveillance capabilities and special warfare enhancements that will enable it to meet the Navy's multi-mission requirements.

Though North Carolina is not slated to join the fleet until 2006, the two brothers are optimistic about serving together on the submarine.

"That's our home state," Michael said. "It's our ultimate goal. We've already made one goal; we both made chief, so that one is next."

For related news, visit the Commander, Submarine Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet Navy NewsStand page at www.news.navy.mil/local/sublant.

Family participates in brothers' pinning

The Leggett brothers are the sons of Annie D. Leggett of Raeford and the late McAllister Leggett.

Michael is a 1988 graduate of Hoke High and a 1991 graduate of Chowan College. He enlisted in the Navy in 1991.

Christopher is a 1990 graduate of Hoke High and enlisted in the Navy in 1990. Both brothers are members of Silver Grove Missionary Baptist Church.

Michael's anchors were pinned on by his wife, April, and two sons Austin and Justin. Annie Leggett pinned the anchors on her son Christopher's uniform with the help of Swanda Tollison, his younger sister, a resident of Montgomery, Alabama.

Other out-of-town family members who traveled to Kings Bay for the chief petty officer initiation and pinning ceremony are Herlon and Retha Hardimon, Virginia; Doretha Black, Myra Locklear, Buster and Marie Morrison, all of Raeford; Jerry and Cheryl Hollingsworth of Moyock,

North Carolina; and Lisa Maye of Virginia Beach, Virginia.

Rank history

The chief petty officer rank was authorized by the U.S. Navy in 1893. The word "chief" means taking first place and denotes its senior position among enlisted ranks.

The position of the chief petty officer is one of special honor. It shows not only that the chief has served successfully but that the services provided have met with the commendation of one's seniors that the chief is proficient, trustworthy and reliable.

Becoming a chief petty officer also means changing from the traditional enlisted sailors uniform to the khaki uniform worn by the chief petty officer.

The fouled anchor is the emblem of the chief petty officer rank. Attached to the anchor is a length of chain and the letters U.S.N.



Christopher, on the left, and Michael with mother Annie Leggett

Hoke students help mark Revolutionary War patriot's grave

By FRANKLIN N. HORTON
Special to The News-Journal

On Saturday, while finishing their last bit of driving education, Danielle Pope and Jamie Stark helped their instructor mark a Revolutionary War Patriot's grave — with their parent's permission, of course. They became the photographers for the Marquis de Lafayette Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolutionary during the event. Their instructor, Lt. Col. Frank Horton, USA, Ret., who is the NC State SAR Secretary, read the Liberty Point Resolves during the ceremony.

The patriot honored on the occasion was James Gee, a hatter in Cumberland County. Buried in small family cemetery, just behind Terry Sanford High School, he started the second hat factory in America. On June 20, 1775, about 13 months before the Declaration of Independence, he and 54 other patriots signed a document calling for freedom from the oppressive British Government. By signing this document, he became a target for loyalists in the area.

James Gee was born in 1741 in Prince George County, Virginia and came to Cross Creek in the late 1700s, just before the Revolution. At that time, Fayetteville did not exist as a city. There were two communities existing in the area where Fayetteville now stands, Campbelltown, on the Cape Fear River, and one mile west, Cross Creek. After the Revolutionary War, the two communities combined to become Fayetteville, named after the Marquis de Lafayette. Fayetteville is the only city in the United States bearing his name that the famous general visited in 1824.

James Gee married Mary Walker in 1771 and together they had 10 children. James became a militia captain and fought in several battles during the war, most notably under General Nathaniel Greene, the hero of Guilford Courthouse.

Mary was once urged to convince her husband not to go off to battle but to remain close to home. She is reported to have remarked, "I would poison his drink, if he did not go." She also is famous for helping Patriots and their families during the war.

The Liberty Point Resolves, first known as the Cumberland Association, was lost in history for many years. While the act and event were known to historians, the original document could not be located. It later became known as the Liberty Point Resolves deriving from the spot where the document was signed. It was rediscovered during the 200th anniversary celebration. Like so many "lost" documents, it was discovered catalogued in the Southern Historical Collection of the North Carolina-Chapel Hill.

Today, a granite boulder at Liberty Point in downtown Fayetteville lists the names of the patriots. On this corner of Bow and Person streets in Fayetteville, a blow for freedom was struck on June 20, 1775.

On Saturday, September 13, 2003, the marking of his resting place recognized James Gee's act of courage with a Sons of the American Revolutionary Patriot grave marker. Participants in the event beside the students were the vice president of the NC State SAR chapter, Lt. Col. Joe Harris, USA, Ret., the Marquis de Lafayette Chapter President Steve Pittard; Liberty Point Chapter DAR Re-



From left, Maj. Dick Bishop, Jamie Stark, Danielle Pope and Lt. Col. Frank Horton.

gent Mary Anne Peoples; NC State SAR Chaplain Clark Wisner, the Fayetteville Independent Light Infantry Color Guard; the Marquis de Lafayette Chapter member, Dr. Robert Downing, who played a church hymn from the period and who also played taps; Marquis de Lafayette Chapter Vice president Lt. Col. Lloyd Leitz, USA; and Chapter Historian Major Dick Bishop, USA Ret., as well as other members of the chapter. Those officials led the SAR Pledge and Recessional. Also in attendance was the Robert Rowan DAR Chapter Regent, Mrs. Dixon, members of other DAR Chapters and members of the Gee family, many who drove to Fayetteville from Florida and Georgia for the occasion.

NC State VP Lt. Col. Joe Harris, USA, Ret unveiled the Patriot marker. And Paul Gee, a direct descendant of Patriot Captain James Gee, SAR Chapters throughout the nation, actively participate in the marking of grave sites of the Patriots who gave so much that this nation might be free.

The Sons of the American Revolution welcomes all men 18 years and older who descend from Patriots who helped in any way during the Revolutionary War.

The next ceremony the Marquis de Lafayette Chapter will sponsor and support is the recognition of the Battle of King's Mountain on October 7, 2003. On that day, the Over the Mountain Men will march to the battle site to honor those patriots who defeated the British and their loyalist supporters there on October 7, 1781. The wreath

commemoration service will be at 11 a.m. that day with other activities following.

Danielle and Jamie took many pictures of the James Gee grave marking and their photos are displayed here.

As a side note, some very decisive battles of the Revolutionary War were fought here in this area. Battles such as Moore's Creek, Camden, King's Mountain, the Cow Pens, and Guilford Courthouse, are some of the most famous. The battle at the Cow Pens is still studied at military schools today. In addition, the skirmishes in and around Charlotte got that city nicknamed the Hornet's Nest. One also cannot forget Ramseur's Mill and Cowan's Ford, where Patriot forces delayed the British until the Battle of Guilford Courthouse. Following Guilford Courthouse, the next major battle was the siege at Yorktown, which ended in the British surrender. However, warlike activities continued throughout the Americas until 1783 with the treaty of Paris.

Lt. Col. Frank Horton, USA, Ret., is a member and registrar of the Marquis de Lafayette Chapter and the Halifax Resolves Chapter, Sons of the American Revolutionary. He is also the North Carolina Society Sons of the American Revolutionary secretary. He belongs to several lineage societies interested in preserving history and ensuring that America's Patriots' deeds are part of today's educational activities. He regularly presents programs on the building of the American flag coupled with the Revolutionary War in the south.



From left, Paul Gee and Lt. Col. Joe Harris.



From left, Lt. Col. Frank Horton, FILI Color Guard Sons of the American Revolutionary members Dan Jutson and Waverly McLeod.