

## **NSA Hampton Roads dedicates athletic park in naval hero's honor**

By Katisha Draughn: NSA Hampton Roads Public Affairs

NORFOLK-- He was more than just a man – he was a hero.

Those words were used to describe a true naval leader and icon during the Capt. Slade Cutter Athletic Park Dedication Ceremony and 5K run, Oct. 14.

Naval Support Activity (NSA) Hampton Roads dedicated the 40-acre athletic park to the late Hall of Fame naval athlete and submariner, who amassed one of the great World War II submarine combat records.

“Honoring this naval athlete by naming our athletic park after him is very appropriate given his unique accomplishments not only as an athlete, but also as a naval officer,” said Capt. Charles Melcher, Commanding Officer of NSA Hampton Roads.

Cutter was a naval officer who was awarded four Navy Crosses, two Silver Stars, one Bronze Star and tied for second place for enemy ships sunk in World War II.

“His list of accomplishments during World War II is massive and his personal awards speak volumes about his character and commitment to the United States and the Navy,” said Melcher.

Cutter's first Navy Cross was awarded for extraordinary heroism as commanding officer of the USS Requin during her second patrol in enemy waters. He was awarded his second Navy Cross as commanding officer of the USS Seahorse during a war patrol where he was cited for aggressive pursuit and expert evasion of the enemy and the sinking of another five enemy vessels. Cutter was awarded two additional crosses for similar acts of bravery, heroism and leadership.

“They say the name makes a man – and what a name,” said Vice Adm. John Richardson, Commander, Submarine Forces, who provided remarks during the ceremony. “Slade Cutter – he was destined for greatness.”

Cutter was born on Nov. 1, 1911 in Chicago, Ill. He had aspirations to become a professional flutist, but instead he attended a prep school for aspiring Naval Academy applicants and was quickly sought after for his athletic ability. His most acclaimed feat as an athlete came in 1934, the day of a wet mud fest against the Army, where he kicked the game winning goal before 79,000 people, giving the Navy its first victory against the Army in 13 years. He won the intercollegiate heavyweight boxing championship, became an All-American tackle and was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame.

He entered the Naval Academy in 1931 and attended submarine school. In 1941, he became the executive officer of USS Pompano (SS 181) under Lt. Cmdr. Lew Parks. He was then assigned as executive officer in early 1943 on the USS Seahorse (SS 304), then under construction. After the fourth patrol of the USS Seahorse, he was assigned as commanding officer of the USS Requin (SS 481). Cutter's four war patrols as commanding officer of the USS Seahorse netted 19 sinkings and more than 70,000 tons of shipping in the postwar accounting.

“His legacy is more than a record of ships sunk and damaged. In addition to the fighting spirit and relentless persistence he showed on patrol in seeking out and destroying the enemy, Capt. Slade Cutter was revered for his natural amiability and abiding concern for the well-being of his crew,” said Richardson.

Cutter's final active duty assignment was in 1965, where he was head of the Naval Historical Display Center in Washington, DC.

At the culmination of the dedication ceremony, Melcher presented Cutter's wife, Ruth, with a framed aerial photo of the athletic park.

“Slade would have loved the fact that this park will have his name,” she said. “I just wish he were here to see it.”

In addition to Ruth, eight of Cutter's family members traveled from places all over the country to include Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Washington and Texas to attend the dedication ceremony.

Sarah Mackay, Cutter's granddaughter, provided remarks during the ceremony on behalf of the Cutter family.

"My grandfather is my moral compass and he lives in me every day," she said. "When I have to make choices or hard decisions in life, I always think about him."

Mackay described Cutter as being funny, delightful, a good cook and a nature person. After the ceremony, she participated in the 5K run in her grandfather's honor with approximately 180 other runners.

"I ran in the race because I know my grandfather would have wanted me to compete and he definitely would have wanted me to win," she said.



111014-N-YT963-365- MC2 D. Keith Simmons- Ruth McCracken Buek Cutter is presented a framed photograph by Capt. Charles Melcher, Commander, Naval Support Activity Hampton Roads (left) and Vice Adm. John Richardson, Commander, U.S. Submarine Forces Atlantic (right) at the Capt. Slade Cutter Park Dedication Ceremony in Norfolk, Oct. 14.