

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD ACADEMY★CLASS OF 2017



Cadet 1st class Bravo Company Commander Patrick Hanrahan looks over his company as they assemble for noon formation late last month.

‘Where do I sign?’

New London’s Patrick Hanrahan says he didn’t want the typical college experience

By JULIA BERGMAN
Day Staff Writer

Patrick Hanrahan remembers the day: Super Bowl Sunday 2012. Chris Parsons, head coach of the Coast Guard Academy’s men’s soccer team, called, asking if Hanrahan wanted to go to military prep school and then, a year later, enroll in the academy.

“Without hesitation, I said, ‘Coach, where do I sign?’” Hanrahan recalled in a recent interview on the academy’s campus, where he’s spent the last four years training to become a Coast Guard officer.

A New London native, Hanrahan, 23, said he had decided in middle school that he wanted to attend the academy. He applied to other colleges, but vowed not to visit any other schools until he heard back from the academy. He was wait listed for a week before receiving the

call from Parsons. Hanrahan said he never wanted the typical college experience. And at the academy, his experiences have been vastly different than those of his friends outside of the Coast Guard. Take, as just one example, sailing through the Caribbean on

the Coast Guard barque Eagle, the academy’s training vessel. Going to school in his hometown also had its perks: His parents came to all his soccer games. He was able to get home-cooked meals on weekends. There was even a running joke during his first year that if anyone wanted a free meal, “go down to Mr. G’s with Pat because he’s going to run into somebody he knows and they’re going to pick up the tab for him.” But there have also been low points over the past four years. SEE HANRAHAN PAGE A4

ABOUT THIS STORY

Staff Writer Julia Bergman has interviewed more than a dozen Connecticut residents who are members of the Coast Guard Academy Class of 2017, including eight from New London County. Their stories will run today and Monday. Commencement is Wednesday.

Mystic man pursues fallen brother’s medals

Joseph Keenan, killed in the Korean War, was nominated for military’s highest honor at death

By JULIA BERGMAN
Day Staff Writer

On a bookshelf in Michael Keenan’s Mystic home is a row of binders full of decades of correspondence he’s had with people all over the country. It all really started in 1982, when his mother moved into a senior citizen home, and Keenan obtained the letters his brother had written home

while in the Korean War. Joseph Keenan was killed in action at the age of 20. Michael was just 13. “We really didn’t know any of the circumstances with my brother’s death,” Keenan said, sitting at his kitchen table recently, documents pertaining to his brother’s service spread around him. Keenan has become somewhat of a sleuth over the years to piece together the circumstances of his brother’s death — tracking down contacts, following their leads and gathering any bit of information he could find. “It’s been a long journey but, just

when things start slowing down, something else comes up,” he said. The family was dealt a victory in 1999 when his brother posthumously was awarded the Navy Cross, the second highest medal for bravery in combat. But Keenan, while happy with the Navy Cross, said his brother was nominated for the Medal of Honor, SEE MYSTIC PAGE A5

Michael Keenan is reflected in the display case created in honor of his brother Joseph.

TIM COOK/THE DAY



WEATHER

Today, mostly cloudy, p.m. showers. High 58. Monday, mixed clouds and sunshine, windy. High 63. E8

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POPE: I’LL SEEK COMMON GROUND WITH TRUMP, WON’T PREACH

Aboard the papal plane — Pope Francis says he won’t try to convince U.S. President Donald Trump to soften his policies on immigration and the environment when they meet this month, but wants instead to find common ground and work for peace. Francis said proselytizing isn’t his style — in politics or religion. Speaking to reporters while traveling home Saturday from a trip to Portugal, Francis said he would say what he thinks sincerely to Trump and listen respectfully to what Trump has to say. “I never make a judgment about a person without hearing him out,” the pope said. Speculation has swirled about what Trump and Francis will discuss during their May 24 audience, given Francis has already said anyone who wants to build walls to keep out migrants is “not Christian.” — Associated Press

NEW REPORT SUGGESTS WAYS STATE CAN SAVE \$2 BILLION IN NEXT 5 YEARS

Hartford — A nonpartisan Connecticut think tank is recommending a host of public policy changes it says can save the state \$2 billion over the next five years. Proponents hope the new report, to be released this week, will be embraced as Democratic Gov. Dannel P. Malloy and legislative leaders begin budget negotiations in earnest. The new fiscal year that begins July 1 is projected to have a \$2.3 billion deficit. The Connecticut Institute for the 21st Century estimates the state could save \$1.2 billion over the next five years if the government contracts with more private nonprofit agencies to provide services, such as group homes for people with developmental disabilities and mental health care. It’s one of numerous money-saving ideas the institute says could save about \$2 billion. State employee unions oppose the idea. The report also recommends further reduction of the prison population. — Associated Press

UNDERCOVER AGENTS FIND CHURCH TO BE SEX CLUB

Nashville, Tenn. — Undercover inspectors have determined that a building registered as a church was being operated as a sex club. WTVF-TV reports that the city of Nashville has filed a complaint against the owners for “maintaining a public nuisance by permitting acts of lewd conduct” and violating a state law banning sex clubs from operating within 1,000 feet of a school. The longtime downtown swingers club underwent a conversion in 2015 when it relocated to a run-down office park in the community of Madison, calling itself a church because the new location is near the back of the private Goodpasture Christian School. Two codes inspectors paid \$40 to enter the facility in March and filed affidavits detailing sex acts they witnessed within. The city is seeking to close the club. — Associated Press



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