



Santa Barbara

AIRPAC SQUADRON

UNITED STATES NAVAL SEA CADET CORPS

Santa Barbara Sea Cadet Advances to the Top Rank

SANTA BARBARA -- Michael Gross, a senior at Bishop Diego High School, recently became the first cadet in the history of the AIRPAC Squadron of the United States Naval Sea Cadet Corps (USNSCC) to achieve its highest rank of Chief Petty Officer.



Requiring approval by CAPT Michael Ford, the Executive Director of USNSCC, only one percent of the 10,000 USNSCC cadets receive this appointment.

Michael Gross initially joined the Ben Morrell Battalion, Navy Base Port Hueneme, in September 2002. In April 2004 then PO3 Gross transferred to the newly established Santa Barbara AIRPAC Squadron and on 23 Jul 2006, PO1 Gross was promoted to Chief Petty Officer -- the highest cadet rank in Sea Cadets.

Over the four years as a Sea Cadet, Chief Gross has achieved a long and distinguished list of accomplishments. He has been awarded 14 ribbons for achievement with four appurtenances indicating multiple awards. He has attended a total of six advanced trainings and four Flagship competitions. He graduated the Petty Officer Leadership Training (POLA) in Dec 2003 and the prestigious Hospital Surgical Training in July 2006. To date, he has recruited seven cadets into the program.

LT Chuck Eskew, the Commanding Officer of AIRPAC, says of Michael Gross, "He played an important part in shepherding the fledgling AIRPAC Squadron from the early start-up days of April 2004 to its historic commissioning in July 2006". Eskew continued, "His strong command presence and thorough knowledge of the Sea Cadet program helped make AIRPAC the top-rated squadron it is today."

In addition to Sea Cadets, Chief Gross has impressive achievements in high school. Gross is a starting tackle on the football team at Bishop Diego High School, and is leading his team into the CIF playoffs. He also wrestles at the heavyweight level, winning his weight class as a junior.

When he graduates in June 2007, Gross plans to play football at a small college with an ROTC program. He plans to major in medicine. Upon graduation from college, Chief Gross plans to enter the Navy and pursue a medical career.

The Naval Sea Cadet program is for young men and women between the ages of 11 to 17. Candidates interested in joining the Sea Cadets are required to have and maintain a 'C' average in school. In addition, they must be crime free, drug free, physically fit and a US Citizen. Anyone interested in learning more about AIRPAC Squadron, please contact AIRPAC's Commanding Officer, LT Chuck Eskew at airpacone@sbcglobal.net or call 805-901-0336, or visit the AIRPAC website at visit www.airpacsquadron.org.

