



THE HELM

Western Connecticut Council Newsletter

Volume 2013 Issue 2

April 2013

Welcome home, Churchill

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Our Council-adopted ship, USS Winston S. Churchill (DDG 81), returned to her homeport of Norfolk on March 28th, after a nine month extended deployment.

Churchill travelled more than 56,000 nautical miles, while safely conducting 41 underway replenishments, 35 weapons exercises and more than 1,000 hours of flight operations.

The ship made port visits to Albania, Jordan, Montenegro, Portugal, and United Arab Emirates, where the crew participated in a number of community relations projects.

Notable events on the deployment included the

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Construction Mechanic 2nd Class Jeff Reyes meets his baby for the first time as the ship arrives in Norfolk.

President's Letter

Upcoming dates of interest:

- **Sea Cadet graduation:** June 10th at Marine Center 7pm.
- **Naval Academy sailboat visit:** June 14-17 at Essex, CT. 5 boats.
- **SEAL B. Bill memorial golf:** June 17th in Stamford. See page 5 for details.
- **Annual SEAL picnic:** July 24th Riverside Yacht Club. Details to follow.

Greetings to all as we finally welcome spring time to Connecticut. With equal pleasure I enjoy watching the flowers bloom and the mooring fields fill up.

Both the Navy League and our Sea Cadet division are facing serious issues these days. Sequestration has drastically curtailed funding for our nation's sea services, which in turn has reduced training, maintenance, and operations.

The budget cuts have also greatly reduced the funds available for Sea Cadet training this year, along with fewer training opportunities for the Cadets.

On top of the critical funding issues, the city of Stamford is considering a real estate development for the land that holds the building where the Dealey Division Sea Cadets have trained for over 50 years (see page 3 for more details on this).

Earlier this month we met with Congressman Himes to discuss these issues and explore funding options. Congressman Himes also offered to send a letter to the Mayor of Stamford to provide assistance in resolving the Sea Cadet training building issue.

While in Washington DC this week, I visited the Navy League headquarters in Arlington, Virginia and met with the President of the Navy League and the Executive Director of the Sea Cadets program and discussed these same issues.

We do not yet have solutions for these critical problems, and we welcome any ideas from Council members.

Sincerely,
Gerry Tighe
President, Western Connecticut Council of the Navy League.

Churchill returns (continued)

(Continued from page 1)

helicopter rescue in challenging weather of an injured merchant sailor; the first joint anti-piracy exercises with a Chinese frigate; and joint naval exercises and operations with Montenegro, Albania, United Arab Emirates, Canada, Australia, Britain, Spain, and Jordan.

The ship initially deployed with the USS Eisenhower (CVN 69) Strike Group. When that carrier returned to Norfolk, Churchill remained on station in the Arabian Gulf, attached to the USS Stennis (CVN 74) Strike Group.

Churchill is the only Navy ship to have a Royal Navy officer assigned permanently, a symbol of the partnership between the British and American navies. It is also the only Navy vessel to fly a foreign ensign - the Royal Navy's White Ensign is flown as well as the Stars and Stripes. The ship carries a complement of 259 Sailors and 39 officers.

Additional deployment details and photos are on our Council website at:

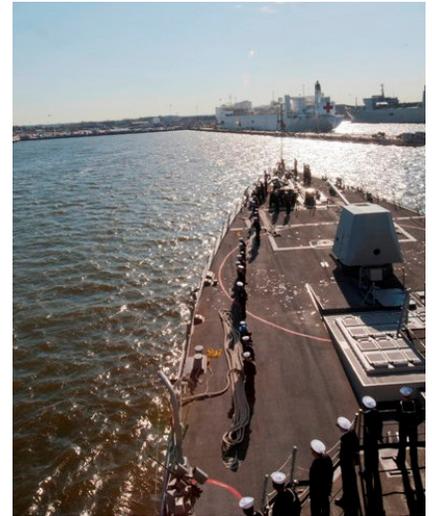
<http://www.navyleaguewestct.org/deploy.html>

"It's an honor to command these exceptional men and women. This is truly a special ship and a special crew," Churchill's CO, Commander Chris Stone, was quoted as saying upon the ship's return.

We add our own Council "well done and welcome home!"



Above and below: scenes from Norfolk on March 28th



Churchill awarded Battle "E" ... again:

In March, the Churchill was the recipient of Destroyer Squadron 28 Battle Efficiency Award. This marks their third consecutive Battle "E." This honor is awarded annually to ships and crews that exhibit the maximum condition of departmental readiness in their group, and the highest capability to perform their war-time tasks.

Battle "E" awardees demonstrated sustained superior performance in the following categories: Maritime Warfare; Engineering and Survivability; Command, Control, Communications, and Information Warfare; Logistics Management; and Ship Safety.

Winning the Battle 'E' is the culmination of a year's worth of hard work and extraordinary effort by the entire crew.

Our Council congratulations go out to Churchill. Bravo Zulu.



Sea Cadet news:

Annual Inspection: Dealey Division was inspected by the Regional Director and his staff at the Government Center in Stamford before a large audience of parents, friends and family on March 25th. The Division, having grown to over forty cadets, so the room was filled. In addition to LCDR Mike Campbell and CDR Duncan Rowles, Captain Gerry Tighe and Stamford Mayor Michael Pavia inspected the Cadets.

Following the personnel inspection, the Mayor addressed the Cadets and parents, saying how impressed he was with the cadets and the entire program and how pleased he was to be able to host the inspection at the Government Center. Dealey Division has not yet received the results of the inspection but is hoping to retain the Millennium Award as the best unit in the region. Dealey has won that award for ten out of the last twelve years.

Other upcoming competitions: In addition to regular classes and drills, Dealey has been preparing for competitions. On April 26-28, Dealey will be attending the Flagship Competition at Massachusetts Military Reservation on Cape Cod, where it will compete against other Sea Cadet units from New England in events including military drill, personnel inspection, honor guard, Morse code, signal flags, semaphore, line heaving, first aid, marksmanship, and firefighting. In May, Dealey will compete in the Haskell Memorial Swim Meet held at Massachusetts Maritime Academy in Bourne. These travel competitions give our Cadets the chance to meet other Cadets from the region and provide the senior Cadets the opportunity to perform in leadership roles.

Staffing needs: As Dealey Division continues to grow, its needs for adult instructors and administrative help becomes more pressing. If you know of anyone who can help, please contact LCDR Jennifer Stannard at:

www.dealeydivision.org

Cadet Graduation: Support Dealey by attending the annual graduation and change of watch ceremony at the Marine Center June 10th at 7pm. It is always a worthwhile and motivating event.

Threat to Sea Cadet meeting space: Dealey Division has been housed at the Marine Center off Magee Avenue in Stamford since the Division was formed as the first unit in New England in 1958. Recent news articles in the Stamford Advocate cause us serious concern about possible use of that space for other purposes.

Specifically, the city is supporting the construction of a huge commercial building on the former Yacht Haven West boatyard site and is looking for alternate land for a replacement boatyard. It is unclear if that might include the current Marine Center but, if it does, then our Sea Cadets would be displaced and finding a suitable replacement will be difficult at best. Thousands of cadets have called the center "home" over the years. The possible loss might well be the demise of this outstanding program.

The City has owned the building since it was gifted by the Navy. The gift stipulated the City maintain a portion of the building as a Marine Center, for use by units such as the Sea Cadets, Power Squadron and Navy League, among others. We are using our contacts to ask the City to keep us informed of their plans, and as we learn more, we may well seek assistance from our Council members to advocate for our primary mission of sponsoring the Sea Cadet youth program.



Photos from Annual Inspection.



NJROTC news :

Bethel High School NJROTC:

The 250 Bethel Navy JROTC cadets remain very active this school year. The big annual social event is the Military Ball. This year 621 guests attended, including several of our Council members. The naval traditions, pomp and ceremony, and the social etiquette and protocol observed and demonstrated at the Bethel Ball make it a truly unique and engaging event. LCDR Dwinells, Senior Naval Science Instructor at Bethel, wants Council members to know they are all welcome to attend the Ball in the future. The cadets wrote a wonderful online article for the Ball at this link:

http://bethel.patch.com/blog_posts/bethel-navy-jrotc-cadets-celebrate-freedom-and-liberty



Bethel cadets with Captain Mary Kline.

The cadets have also been very busy in class. The seniors learned to write fitness reports and understand the leadership principles associated with criticism and evaluation. The juniors completed a study of the Korean War and how the lessons of that era apply to current events. They are busy interviewing Korean veterans and will be posting lessons learned in the local blog. All cadets have completed marksmanship training this year under the guidance of Marine Master Sergeant Joseph Meehan. Given serious recent local events, the Bethel instructors felt it necessary to complete this training, which is done in accordance with the Civilian Marksmanship Program, to make sure they de-glamorize the preconceived notions many teens have regarding guns and violence.

The female cadets Lady Leadership program would like to thank Captain Mary Kline for meeting with them in March and giving her words of advice. Captain Kline brought keepsakes from her Navy career and made a wonderful impression on the cadets with her message of leadership and confidence as a lady in the Navy.

The cadets are always open to Council members who want to meet or make presentations, or just to share their stories and wisdom.

The cadets are very active in community service and are proud of their work with "Operation Sweet Tooth" that the cadets take the lead on annually. Former Bethel cadet and now Marine 1st Lt. Erick Laque reported back from Afghanistan with the words "mission accomplished". Details of the event are available at:

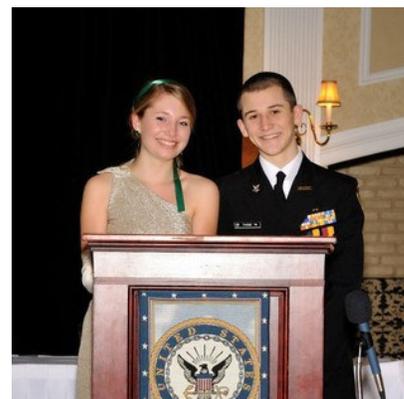
http://bethel.patch.com/blog_posts/ambassador-of-bethel-in-afghanistan-reports-mission-accomplished

All cadets actively participate in staying connected using Google G-Mail and Google calendar. The chain of command uses these to keep the unit organized. The unit is looking into purchasing Google Chromebooks for classroom use and would welcome the advice of any Council members who have technical skills that could help take their classroom to the next level.

The Unit also established a support group and alumni association as a 501(c)3 charitable organization. In the past 10 years over one-thousand cadets have passed through the program and are solid citizens for having done so. The alumni association is open to all and is seeking support for the current cadets in the form of donations, scholarships, job placement, internships and other forms of assistance.



Photos from the Ball.



NL membership:

Help recruit new Navy League members

The Navy League was founded in 1902 with a clear mission: to support the members of the sea services; to educate the American people and their elected leaders about the critical importance of sea power; and to help build America's future through successful youth programs. 270 Councils throughout the world continue to carry out this mission. Membership is open to all interested citizens, whether they ever served in uniform or not. There is strength in numbers in accomplishing our important mission.

Please renew your membership and help recruit new members. Invite potential new members to attend Council events. Membership sign-up and renewal forms are available online at our Council website, www.navyleaguewestct.org then click "join/renew". Or ask any Council Board member for a form. Thank you.

Our Western Connecticut Council has 135 active members.

SEAL update:

SEAL Brian Bill memorial golf tournament: will be held June 17th at the Rockrimmon County Club in Stamford in honor of the late SEAL CPO Brian Bill, who was killed in action in Afghanistan. Proceeds go to a Norwich University scholarship in his name. For information please go to: www.alumni.norwich.edu/2013brianbill

Annual SEAL picnic: will be held July 24th at the Riverside Yacht Club. Details will be separately sent out to Council members.

SEAL officers: of the 25 SEAL BUDS training graduates last year who went on to become officers via Officer Candidate School (OCS), 5 were graduates of the local SEAL mentoring program coordinated by Council Board member and retired SEAL Captain Drew Bisset.



See our Council's award-winning website for special features and timely updates that occur between the quarterly editions of this newsletter at: www.navyleaguewestct.org

If you would like a copy of Teddy Roosevelt IV's speech from our Council's December 2012 dinner, please send an email to navyleague@verizon.net and we will send it out to you.

2013 Council Officers and Board:

OFFICERS

President.....Gerard Tighe
 Treasurer.....David Martin
 VP Sea Services.....Andrew Bisset
 VP Membership.....Robert Kenyon III
 VP Youth Programs...Stephen Gravereaux
 Chaplain.....Rev. Richard Futie
 Judge Advocate.....Douglas Brown
 Secretary.....Peter Brown

BOARD MEMBERS

Mark Adams
 Louis DiGiusto
 Peter Dixon
 Edward Fitzgerald
 William Grep
 Chris Hughes
 Joseph Latwin
 Don Logan
 Robert Perkin
 Jennifer Stannard
 John Weigold



Sea Cadet color guard December 2012.

**Western Connecticut Council
Navy League of the United States**

c/o E. Fitzgerald
111 Nursery Road
Ridgefield, CT 06877



**Crew of USS Winston S. Churchill manning the rail on
March 28th, entering Norfolk after 9 month deployment.**

