



“THE HELM”

NEWSLETTER OF THE WESTERN CONNECTICUT COUNCIL

Volume 2015 Issue 2

June 2015

Sea Cadet Graduation:

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Parents, veterans, Council members, friends, and undergraduate Dealey Division Cadets and their officers gathered on June 10th to wish “fair winds and following seas” to seven graduating Sea Cadet high school seniors; and to participate in the annual change of the watch ceremony.

The graduates “piped over the side” and where they will be going next were: Patrick Davidson (UConn), Jonathan Welborn (Palm Beach Univ.), Tyler Mehlhouse (Merrimac), Brandon Mehlhouse (US Army),



(Continued on page 2)

President's Letter

Dear fellow Navy Leaguers,

With great joy, I write this letter while enjoying an outside air temperature above 80 degrees. We've had a very busy and productive Spring, and it looks like it will be the same for the Summer.

Our annual dinner at Riverside Yacht Club was, yet again, a huge success, and was enjoyed by all. We had a great turnout from the youth programs we support, along with other programs in the area, including the Sea Cadets, SEAL Candidates, Navy Junior ROTC cadets from Bethel High School, and cadets from the SUNY Maritime Academy. We were also pleased to have Petty Officers from our local Navy recruiting station in Yonkers. Our guest speaker, CAPT Carl Lahti, the Commanding Officer of Navy Submarine Base New London, delivered an informative and very entertaining talk after dinner. Judging from the reactions and responses from the students, I think he may have recruited some future submariners.

On June 8th, I was honored to participate in

the Sea Cadet graduation and Change of Watch. One of our graduates has joined the Army (don't worry, it's ok), and all of the other graduates are headed to college. The Cadets selected for next year's leadership positions in the Dealey Division have been chosen based on their strong track records over the past few years. With LCDR Jennifer Stannard, USNSCC, at the helm as Commanding Officer, the Dealey Division remains in good hands for the next year.

Please join us for the Navy League/RDAC SEAL candidate picnic at Riverside Yacht Club on July 29th. This event is a great opportunity to support our SEAL candidates, and enjoy a Summer early evening in a beautiful setting on the water. I look forward to seeing you there.

I hope you have a relaxing and enjoyable Summer.

Cheers,

CAPT Gerry Tighe, USN retired.
President, Western Connecticut Council

Upcoming dates of interest:

- **Annual SEAL Picnic:** July 29th; see page 5 story.

Cadet graduation (con't.):

(Continued from page 1)

Lucien Metelski (Temple), Juan Alvarez (WestConn), and Brian Cardona (Purdue).

Captain John B. Finneran Memorial Scholarships, totaling \$10,000 were awarded to the six grads who are college-bound. These scholarships were started by the late John (Bucky) Finneran when he was Council president, and were presented by his son, Jack. The scholarships are made possible by the generosity of the Trimble Family Foundation, and we thank them.

Tyler Mehlhouse was also the recipient of a George T. Macintyre Scholarship. This is named for the former CO of Dealey Division, and is funded by his family, parents of former cadets, Dealey staff members, Council members, and former cadets. Tyler's brother Brandon, who enlisted in the Army, received a cash award from our Council.

As the watch was relieved, Cadet William Lesoravage was promoted to Division Petty Officer and received a Theodore Roosevelt Youth Medal from our Council for his overall outstanding contributions in school and at Dealey. Instructor John Davidson was also piped over the side after 5 years of service. We thank him.

We wish all the graduates well as they depart.



Other Sea Cadet news:

Recruiters On Board:

Navy League events are a great way to network. Dealey CO, LCDR Stannard, and NC1 Miguel Amadiz met at last summer's SEAL picnic. NC1 Amadiz was a former Sea Cadet and is now the Leading PO at the Yonkers Recruiting Station. He offered to assist Dealey and the CO gladly accepted. NC1 Amadiz has 'recruited' his staff to help out as well. PO1 Siobhan Kelley, AME1 Raymond Matos, and ABH1 Edward Ramos have all joined Dealey and the Naval Sea Cadet Corps as Instructors.

It is great to have active duty sailors on deck to bring the reality of the USN mission and experience to the cadets. They have done a fine job and we appreciate their help!

Haze Gray and Underway:

Three cadets transited aboard the USS San Antonio (LPD 17) from Norfolk to Manhattan for Fleet Week 2015. SN Cheyenne de la Rivera, SN Andres Arias and SN Christian Peralta were accompanied by two of the USN Recruiters



Ashore in NYC after transit on USS San Antonio (LPD 17)



Underway training



Other Sea Cadet news (con't) :

from Recruiting Station Yonkers.

The cadets were thrilled, learning everything they could. They volunteered to serve chow for a meal and generally enjoyed connecting with the sailors. Before departing Norfolk, ABH1 Ramos took them onboard carrier USS George H.W. Bush (CVN 77), his former ship. They were amazed at the size!

Andres Arias thought standing watch was "really cool" as was seeing the ocean at night through night vision goggles. The highlight of the trip was manning the rails in whites alongside the ship's sailors and marines as they came up the Hudson. Tying up to the pier, the three cadets all stepped off as sea cadet PO3's, no longer SN's, having finalized their training requirements for promotion.

2015 New England Flagship Competition:

The Dealey Division sea cadets and the younger league cadets of Training Ship Macintyre traveled to the Mass. Military Reservation on Cape Cod for the annual Flagship Competition. The unit did an excellent job and brought many a trophy home but alas, they did not take 1st overall as the competition was fierce.

Competing in firefighting, line heaving, first aid, drill and other events, the unit's esprit de corps was evident through the weekend. The senior PO's did an excellent job, working together at this event for the first time. The cadets stayed 'on task' and were ready for the 'bowling liberty' Saturday evening. Our support crew from Recruiting Station Yonkers was part of the team throughout.

Memorial Day:

The unit was at 'all ahead full' for the Memorial Day weekend. Beginning the weekend before, cadets assisted the Springdale VFW with placement of flags at deceased veteran headstones in St. John's Cemetery. Through the rain the cadets worked for three hours side by side with the vets.

Memorial Day weekend was full of sunshine and the cadets trooped the colors through the Stamford streets on Sunday. SR Brian Cardona and SN Gregory Villard stood watch and handled the placement of the Memorial Wreath at the Veteran's monument. Mayor David Martin joined the cadets for a group photo.

Monday the unit marched in New Canaan. League cadets Patrick Ulloa and Sophie Napolitano carried bouquets of red roses along the parade route which the unit placed individually at war veteran graves. The Firing Detail, ably directed by PO3 William Lesoravage, fired volleys for the conclusion of the service honoring those who have gone before.



Flagship competition

New Canaan parade



More Sea Cadet photos are on pages 7-8 in email version.

Annual dinner held in March:

Our annual meeting and dinner was held at the Riverside Yacht Club in March. Special guest speaker was Captain Carl Lahti, Commanding Officer, US Submarine Base, New London. His lively and entertaining talk covered the importance of submarines to our defense and the transformation of the Sub Base. He was formerly CO of USS Nebraska (SSBN 739), completing four undersea deterrent patrols. He is shown in the nearby photo talking with Bethel High School Navy Junior ROTC cadets.

Voting was also held to formally elect the 2015 slate of Council officers and Board members.



USS Churchill news:

Our Council-adopted ship, the Arleigh Burke class guided missile destroyer USS Winston S. Churchill (DDG-81), departed Norfolk on March 9th with the USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71) Strike Group for overseas deployment.

Churchill made a port visit after transiting the Atlantic in Portsmouth, UK and some of the ship's officers were treated to a private showing at the Churchill War Rooms museum in London. As we did on Churchill's last deployment in 2012-2013, there is a special section of our website devoted to deployment news beyond what we report here, so that members may keep more up-to-date at:

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

Among Churchill's duties on deployment to date has been to act as escort supporting USS Theodore Roosevelt in the air war against ISIS terrorists in Syria and Iraq. We wish all those deployed in our defense, and especially the men and women of Churchill, full success in their mission and a safe return home.



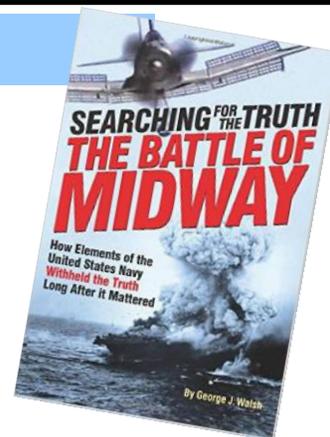
Churchill was awarded her 5th consecutive Battle "E" efficiency ribbon, making her the only such ship currently in the Navy. Well done, Churchill!



Churchill going alongside carrier Roosevelt for underway fuel replenishment while in mid-Atlantic.

Book: Midway revisited

4 June 1942 at 1022 hours the Navy was losing the Battle of Midway; no damage to enemy fleet, Midway bombed, huge losses to Torpedo squadrons. At 1027 hours the Navy had won the Battle. Three enemy carriers sinking. A fourth sunk later. In just five minutes SBD Dauntless dive bombers lead by LCDR Wade McClusky found and attacked the enemy fleet. The victory changed the course of WWII in the Pacific. Darien resident LCDR George Walsh, USNR (Ret), a WWII combat carrier pilot, has released his new book on Amazon which documents new information based on recently declassified files. Our Council recognized LCDR Walsh during the Centennial of Naval Aviation in 2011.



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

Help recruit new 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 around 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 118
active members.**

NJROTC news:

Our Council annually presents the Theodore Roosevelt Youth Medal award to outstanding cadets in our two local Navy Junior ROTC programs, at Bethel and Brien McMahon High Schools. This year the awards went to Cadets Marko Pilepich at Bethel and Brendon Walsh at McMahon. Brendon will attend college on a full NROTC scholarship; Marko is going into his senior year at Bethel.

On March 25th, 55 Navy Junior ROTC McMahon cadets and chaperones traveled to the Navy Submarine School and Submarine Force Museum in Groton. Cadets enjoyed a beautiful day as they toured the facilities and observed sailors learning how to escape a submarine in case of emergency, how to stop flooding, put out three classes of fires and how torpedoes are handled and loaded. They also ate in the base enlisted mess and visited the Nautilus museum (ex-SSN 571), the world's first nuclear sub. Photo at right shows the group by the conning tower from USS George Washington (ex-SSBN 598).



SEAL Picnic July 29th:

Join us at the Riverside Yacht Club at 5:30 pm on July 29th for our annual Picnic to see area SEAL candidates demonstrate swimming and physical fitness tests that are part of their quest to become Navy SEALs; and to hear them describe why they want to become SEALs. There will be a special guest speaker and other festivities.

This event always sells out, so Council members wishing to attend should get their reservation form in quickly. The form and picnic details will be sent separately to members soon; a copy will be available by visiting our website homepage at: www.NavyLeagueWestCt.org

Nearby photos are from the 2012 and 2014 picnics.



2015 Council Officers and Board:

OFFICERS

President.....Gerard Tighe
 Treasurer.....open *
 VP Sea Services.....Andrew Bisset
 VP Membership.....Robert Kenyon III
 VP Youth Programs...Stephen Gravereaux
 Chaplain.....Deacon Louis Howe
 Judge Advocate.....Douglas Brown
 Secretary.....Peter Brown

* S. Gravereaux is acting Treasurer

BOARD MEMBERS

Mark Adams
 Michael Case
 Louis DiGiusto
 Edward Fitzgerald
 William Grep
 Joseph Latwin
 Don Logan
 David Martin
 Robert Perkin
 Jennifer Stannard
 John Weigold



Council Board member Rear Admiral John Weigold (right), with outgoing CinC, US Pacific Command, Admiral Sam Locklear at change of command ceremony at Pearl Harbor May 27th.

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

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



USS San Antonio (LPD 17) entering New York during Fleet Week 2015. Manning the rails with the crew were embarked Dealey Division sea cadets. See page 2.



Bonus photo section (in email/online version only)

Sea Cadet graduation and change of watch:



Flagship competition:



Bonus photo section (con't.):

Memorial Day activities:

