



THE HELM

Western Connecticut Council Newsletter

Volume 2013 Issue 3

July 2013

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 five graduating Sea Cadet high school seniors, and to participate in the annual change of the watch ceremony. The graduates "piped over the side" were: CPO Matthew Davidson, CPO Olivia Welborn, PO2 Butler, PO3 Matthew Baxendale and SN Brendan Walsh. Each is setting a course for college and Brendon will also participate in college Army ROTC.

Captain John B. Finneran Memorial Scholarships, totaling \$10,000 were awarded. These scholarships were started by the late John

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Change of watch ceremony in 2012.

President's Letter

Welcome to summer, and greetings to all.

This spring our adopted ship, the USS Winston S. Churchill (DDG-81), returned from a lengthy deployment, and in May I had the privilege of visiting onboard in Norfolk.

I was greeted at the pier by ENS Hagen, the Public Affairs Officer—and newly selected Gas Turbines Officer. We proceeded to the wardroom for lunch where I was well hosted by the CO, CDR Chris Stone, and XO, CDR Christine O'Connell, and joined by the ship's Department Heads. Our conversation ranged from international affairs, federal budget impacts on ships' training regimens, to promotion opportunities, professional development, and crew morale. I very much appreciated the time the busy officers took to converse.

Following lunch, ENS Hagen led a tour of the ship, and I had the opportunity to speak with a

number of the men and women of the crew, and was impressed with the pride and professionalism that was common in all the sailors.

The USS Churchill is a ship and crew of which we are rightly proud.

In June, I had the privilege to attend the Sea Cadet graduation, and participate in the ceremony. Details are given in the article above. The graduating seniors heading to college set the example of combining academic excellence with leadership and community service; and our sincere thanks go out to those who made the awarded scholarships possible.

Later this month, please join us for the Council and SEAL RDAC summer evening

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Upcoming dates of interest:

- **Annual SEAL picnic:** July 24th Riverside Yacht Club. Details on page 5.

Cadet graduation (continued)

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(Bucky) Finneran when he was Council president. The scholarships are made possible by the generosity of the Trimble Family Foundation, and we thank them.

CPO Matthew Davidson, who has been in the program since he was 11 years old, was the recipient of the third George T. Macintyre Scholarship in the amount of \$3,000. This is named for the former CO of Dealey Division, and funded by his family, parents of former cadets, Dealey staff members, Council members, and former cadets. Donations are welcome as we strive to make this an annual scholarship - see this page on our Council website:

www.navyleaguewestct.org/scholarship.html

As the watch was relieved, PO3 Patrick Davidson moved into position as Division Petty Officer supported by PO3 Jonathan Welborn as Department Head of the Sea Cadets. LC4 Stanley Villard moved into position as Department Head of the League Cadets supported by LC3 Derrick Daniels.

Unfortunately, the weather was uncooperative and the ceremony was held amidst cramped quarters inside. Still, the event was a success and we wish the graduates well as they depart the unit.



Sea Cadet senior graduates (from left): Welborn, Butler, Davidson, Walsh, Baxendale.



President's letter (continued)

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picnic on July 24th. Please see the associated article on page 5 for details. This is always a sell-out event, so RSVP ASAP!

In conclusion, let me point out that the current "sequestration" has **severely** reduced the operating and training budgets of our ships. There is no question this affects the readiness of our Navy. This same lack of funding hits at the local level on the Sea Cadet summer training. Per the Navy League charter, we have been meeting with our local elected federal representatives to discuss our concerns. We will keep these conversations open, and keep you informed of their support.

Sincerely,

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

Gerry Tighe on Churchill's fore-deck with ENS Jaylyn Hagen.



Other Sea Cadet news:

NEW ENGLAND FLAGSHIP COMPETITION:

Dealey Division (Sea Cadets) and Training Ship Macintyre (younger League Cadets) competed in the New England Flagship Competition in April versus other area units. The ranks were buoyed with many newly-recruited cadets and all participated. The League Cadets captured first place under the command of LC4 Zachary Welborn, assisted by LC4 Gregory Villard. First place in the League Cadet Division is awarded the Macintyre Trophy (new as of last year) and our unit has won it 'since inception'.

The Sea Cadets came in third in a close race. CPO Matt Davidson led the cadet's through the various competitions and all enjoyed the weekend.

HASKELL MEMORIAL SWIM MEET:

Swimmers for Dealey Division and Training Ship Macintyre swept the competition at the annual event held at Massachusetts Maritime Academy. Team Captain, SN Jack Garfield, kept the swimmers motivated throughout. The addition of new cadets Sophia Henao, and Annamaria, Marco, and Giancarlo Ceci were a great spark. The effort in training and preparation by our coach, Sea Cadet staff ENS Fotis Boliakis, paid off. Sea Cadets Jack Garfield, Patrick Davidson, Annamaria Ceci and Giancarlo Ceci along with League Cadets Matthew Vargas, Eric McDonald, Marco Ceci and Sophia Henao swam for the gold. E2T Andres Arias, E2T Gerardo Palomo and E2T Cheyenne de la Rivera cheered the teams on to victory.

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 Sea Cadet staff LCDR Jennifer Standard at: www.dealeydivision.org

Threat to Sea Cadet meeting space: We have no further news on this important topic that was first raised in our April 2013 edition of "Helm". Here is a summary of the situation:

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. News articles in the Stamford Advocate caused 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.



League Cadet Flagship trophy winners. Bravo Zulu!



Swim team winners. Congratulations!



Left & below: Cadets at various training exercises: water survival, CPR, and charting.



NJROTC news :

Bethel High School NJROTC:

Past Council President and current VP of Youth Programs, Steve Gravereaux, made the presentation of the Navy League Youth Medal at the annual Bethel High School Junior Naval ROTC awards event in May. Award recipient was Cadet Romana Pilepich.

Romana is the number one student academically at Bethel High School with a 4.8 GPA on a 4.0 scale, due to her taking all Advanced Placement classes. She is an award winning ballroom dancer, poet, and editor of the school's literary magazine which is #1 in the state. She is a varsity athlete, National Honor Society member, led the mock trial team to the state championship, and is an accomplished public speaker. She was recently named the Bethel NJROTC Battalion Commander for next year and we know she will wear the Navy League Youth Medal with pride.

Romana is pursuing admission to Harvard University after graduation in spring 2014 and would welcome the help or advice of any Council member.



From left: LCDR Mark Dwinells, Bethel NJROTC lead instructor; Council VP Steve Gravereaux; and Navy League award recipient Cadet Romano Pilepich.

USS Churchill news:



As detailed in our last Helm edition, our Council-adopted ship, USS Winston S. Churchill (DDG 81), returned home on March 28th after a nine month overseas deployment. They are currently involved with local operations and training, including hosting the training of a number of Naval Academy midshipmen.

See page 1 for news of Council president Gerry Tighe's visit to the ship in May.

Our Council Board voted to continue our sponsorship of awards for the selected Churchill Sailors of the Quarter and of the Year, as we have done in past years. We are happy to help recognize these stand-out sailors.



Squall line greets Churchill as she returns to Norfolk from local ops in June.



The annual ***Rebuilding Together*** event was again held in April. The local goal is to help elderly veteran homeowners with heavy maintenance items. The photo at left shows the volunteer crew along with the 2013 homeowner.

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 Picnic July 24th:

Join us at the Riverside Yacht Club at 5:30 pm on July 24th for our annual Picnic to see area SEAL candidates demonstrate swimming and physical fitness tests that are parts of their quest to become Navy SEALs; and to hear them describe why they want to become SEALs.

Special guest speaker at the dinner will again be CAPT Pete Wikul, retired SEAL and Bulldog 13. "Bulldog" refers to the oldest SEAL on active duty, and CAPT Wikul was the 13th SEAL to hold that title before retiring.

This event habitually sells out, so members wishing to attend should get their reservation form in quickly. The form and picnic details were sent to members the week of June 24th; a copy is available by visiting our website homepage at:

www.NavyLeagueWestCt.org



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

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 Cadets at left during Stamford's Memorial Day observance.

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

c/o E. Fitzgerald
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Navy SEALs in training. Join us at our annual SEAL picnic to recognize local SEAL candidates. See page 5.

