



# "THE HELM"

## Newsletter of the Connecticut Council (formerly Western CT Council)

Volume 2020 Issue 1

August 2020

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## Three CT Councils Merge:

In July, Navy League Headquarters decided to merge the three existing Connecticut Councils (Western CT, Hartford, and Eastern CT) and to designate the merged entity as simply "Connecticut Council". This decision was based on the dormant status that had unfortunately overtaken both Hartford and Eastern CT Councils in recent times. It was believed that combining forces into one active Council is in everyone's best interest at this point.

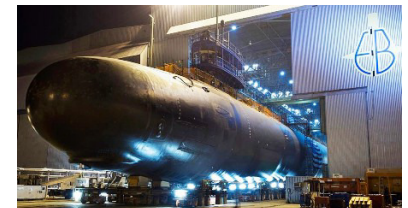
Consequently, we are pleased to welcome aboard our fellow Navy Leaguers from Hartford and Eastern Connecticut! We hope you find our activities of interest and become active members alongside us.

We have benefited greatly from volunteers on our Board, and from other volunteers who support our primary areas

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Eastern CT is home to a sub base and sub builder Electric Boat.



### Upcoming dates of interest:

- **255th birthday of the US Navy:** Oct. 13th

## President's Letter:

Aloha:

It's certainly been a different time for all of us, but wanted to update all of our members on some significant changes that have happened in the past few months.

The Western Connecticut Council has become the Connecticut Council of the Navy League of the United States. We have taken on the Bridgeport (in 2016), Hartford, and Eastern CT Councils with the approval of the National HQ, to form a more focused NL effort in support of Connecticut NL objectives.

We had to postpone our annual dinner, set for March 28th, due to the pandemic; but will update everyone with a new date once we can ensure a safe environment for all. We do have a number of 3 and 4 star dinner guests lined up which will be conducive to interesting and informative dinners.

Our sponsored Sea Cadets and RDAC SEAL Candidates have been re-engaging and have continued their training; see pages 2 and 3.

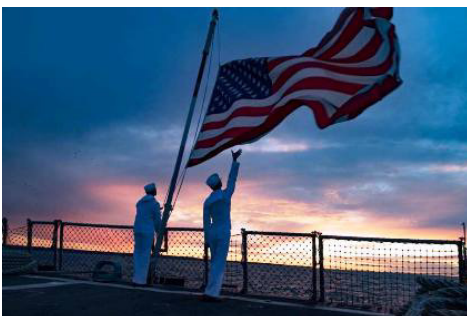
Our sponsored boat, USS Connecticut SSN-22, and ship, USS Winston Churchill DDG-81, have been up to quite a bit. Please see the updates on page 4.

On a most recent note, Vice Admiral Mustin, the principal speaker at our 2018 annual dinner, was just named the new Chief of Navy Reserve. Congratulations Admiral! This follows the promotion of our 2017 dinner speaker, Admiral Mike Gilday, to CNO.

Wishing everyone and your families safe and healthy times!

Best,

Jason  
President, Connecticut Council



## CT Merger (continued):

*(Continued from page 1)*

of focus: the Sea Cadets, SEAL Candidate mentoring program, speaker programs, NJROTC units, adopted ships, etc. Our Council also benefits from those members whose support is primarily from their League membership dues and donations, and we thank them as well.

There is strength in numbers and we look forward to the addition of members from this merger. We are open to ideas and suggestions and these can be sent to:

[navyleague@verizon.net](mailto:navyleague@verizon.net)

**Any Hartford or Eastern CT members who have not replied to the email we sent you, please reply now to the email address above so we know we have a good email address for you.** (We never share emails with any outside organization).

There is the challenge of a larger geographic area encompassing all our members, caused by this merger. But we are reminded that there are many Councils in the U.S. that successfully cover much greater areas.

Again, welcome aboard to prior Hartford and Eastern CT members! We hope to welcome you in person at future Council events.



Hartford skyline.



USS Virginia (SSN 774) and USS Connecticut (SSN 22), at top, at Groton pier in winter 2007.

## RDAC/SEAL candidate news:

Despite the constraints of the ongoing pandemic, the local RDAC SEAL candidate mentoring program managed to operate successfully. Retired Captain and Council Board member Drew Bisset was able to arrange outstanding guest speakers for the weekly Zoom webinars, including: the Deputy Commander of WARCOM (SEAL HQ), a number of senior medical personnel to provide updates on the virus, Captain Tom Norris (a SEAL Medal of Honor recipient), a former senior DEVGRU Officer to speak on necessary SEAL Officer character traits, a nutritionist, a retired SEAL discussing SEAL history, and several prior RDAC Candidates as they graduated from active duty training.

In the middle of July, in-person physical training resumed at Pugzee Farm and at the Greenwich YMCA pool. It was gratifying to note that the individual training regimens in place prior to the restart allowed the candidates to retain their superior physical fitness.

Also in mid-July, two RDAC Officer Candidates reported to BUD/S training: one from Fordham's NROTC Program and one from the US Military Academy (yes, West Point!). RDAC also transferred three Enlisted Candidates in June and July to Navy Boot Camp at Great Lakes, IL, where they underwent 14 days of quarantine before beginning basic training.



Photos from training in July at Pugzee Farm.

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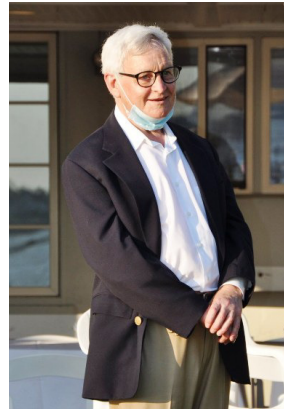


## Sea Cadet news:

Needless to say this has been a unique year for DEALEY Division sea cadets. We started the year looking forward to defend our Flagship Competition title and send new recruits to "boot camp" (recruit training and navy league orientation). We were going strong with a great unit annual inspection that ultimately placed us in the top 10% of all units inspected. A credit to all the hard work of cadets and staff. And then the corona virus hit. But we did not let that deter us. Through virtual means we continued to drill and provide training opportunities to all cadet so they could be advanced and learn new skills.

Fortunately, restrictions were lifted enough so we could have a real graduation ceremony in person at the Stamford Yacht Club in June. Despite the social distancing and mask wearing we ceremoniously bid fair winds and following seas to six of our cadets and one staff member.

Long time adult volunteer and supply officer, Mr. Julian Booth, has retired from the Division after 34 faithful years of service. As a long time member of our Council, Julian has been a staunch supporter of the sea cadet program and all matters naval. He has a British naval tradition in his family that served our Cadets well. He worked diligently under 4 unit CO's in his 34 years. We wish him well and are grateful for his service!



Mr. Julian Booth, adult volunteer for 34 years. We send our Council thanks for his dedicated service!

Covid reality at the graduation.



We had a great graduating class, with three cadets earning the highest cadet rank of Chief Petty Officer (CPO). Chief Kyle Kutz will attend the U.S. Military Academy. Chief Eleonore Burns will attend Norwich University and is looking at ROTC options. Chief Tyler Getlik is following his calling to become a Catholic priest by attending Thomas Aquinas College. Petty Officer (PO) Erik Garrido will attend Norwalk Community College studying digital marketing. Petty Officer (PO) Peter Jenkins will attend University of New Hampshire in the Army ROTC program. Seaman (SA) Treyvon Jones will attend Norwalk Community college and pursue a career in law enforcement or firefighting. Seaman Robert Thompson will enlist in the U.S. Army with a special forces contract. We are sad to see them go but wish them all the best.

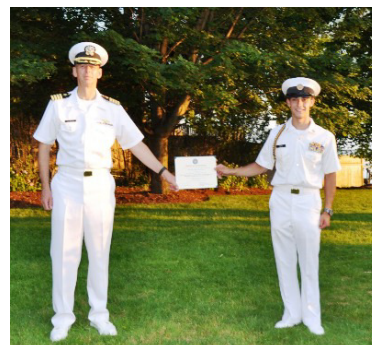


Graduating seniors from left: CPO Kyle Kutz, SA Robert Thompson, SA Treyvon Jones, PO Erik Garrido, CPO Eleonore Burns, PO Peter Jenkins, CPO Tyler Jetlik.

Also at the graduation, we awarded a number of scholarships including five in honor of Captain John "Bucky" Finneran through funds generously donated by the Ida White Trimble Family Foundation.

This years Navy League Youth Award recipients are PO1 Jonathan Christie who will be the Leading Petty Officer for DEALEY Division sea cadets and PO3 Sebastian Osle who will be the LPO for Training Ship MACINTYRE league cadets.

We are looking forward to reduced Covid 19 rules and a return to in-person drilling. We thank the Council for the great and continued support of our program.



CPO Kyle Kutz with Dealey CO, retired Navy Capt. Alan Gerard.

## Adopted ship news:

### USS Winston S. Churchill (DDG 81):

For the benefit of our merged new members, our Council "adopted" the Arleigh Burke class guided missile destroyer, USS Winston S. Churchill (DDG 81), following her port visit to Stamford, CT in August 2003. The ship is based in Norfolk and is having a distinguished active service, including receipt of the "Battle E" efficiency award in 5 consecutive years and completing numerous overseas deployments.

Churchill had a change of command ceremony in May, when the incoming skipper, CDR Timothy Shanley, relieved CDR Ben Abbott. CDR Shanley had been Executive Officer of the ship from Dec. 2018 to Feb. 2020. Our Council sends our hearty "welcome aboard" as new CO to CDR Shanley.

In recent weeks, Churchill's officers and crew have been honing their war-fighting skills in the Atlantic, as the photos nearby demonstrate. The ship departed Norfolk on an independent deployment overseas on August 10th.

### USS Connecticut (SSN 22):

Our Council adopted the Seawolf class nuclear fast attack submarine, USS Connecticut (SSN 22), in 2016. The sub's motto is "Arsenal of the Nation" in recognition of our state's history, and is based in Bremerton, WA.

Connecticut again participated in the biennial 2020 Arctic Ice Exercise (ICEX), along with USS Toledo (SSN 769). Both subs surfaced through ice in March. ICEX maintains operational readiness and regional stability, while improving capabilities to operate in the Arctic environment. The Arctic Submarine Laboratory (ASL), based in San Diego, established a remote ice station on a moving ice floe that provided a stable platform where a tracking range, sensors, communication equipment and personnel could be safely moved to and from participating submarines.

In other news, LT Robert Chapin from Sheridan WY, Connecticut's weapons officer, received the 2020 "Pilly Lent Award" as the most tactically proficient dept. head in the Pacific sub force. The award is named for the CO who fired the first torpedoes against the Japanese in WW2. Our congratulations to Lieutenant Chapin.

The Council sends our best wishes to Captain Aljilani on Connecticut and Captain Shanley on Churchill, as they and their officers and crews continue operating in defense of our nation.



Above: SM2 missile launch from forward VLS on July 16th.



Top right: 5" gun firing 70 lb shell.



To right: retrieving torpedo counter-measure (note face masks).



USS Connecticut and USS Toledo (at left) surfaced in the Arctic.

Aurora borealis over temporary ice station.



## NJROTC news:

We are proud to support three Navy Junior ROTC (NJROTC) units in area high schools: Bethel High School, Bridgeport Military Academy, and Brian McMahon High School in Norwalk. Most in-person activities at these schools have been restricted by the ongoing Covid 19 virus; but we expect to have news from them soon, as hopefully circumstances allow them to re-start.



## SEAL news (continued from page 2)

On 24 July, all 3 of the RDAC BUD/S's candidates in Class 343 finished the infamous Hell Week. This represents an almost 10% share of the class, as only 35 out of the original 72 starters made it to the end! Early in August, RDAC will have 4 Enlisted Candidates graduating with SQT Class 338 and moving on to active duty with SEAL Teams. HOOYAH to them all!

Finally, in the first half of August, RDAC will have 12 prospective Officer Candidates from NROTC Units, the Fleet, and from the civilian world reporting to Navy Special Warfare Command, Coronado to compete in the annual SOAS (SEAL Office Assessment & Selection) Program. This is the largest contingent that the local program has ever sent to SOAS and great things are expected from them!



More training  
at Pugzee  
Farm in July.



## 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 on the critical importance of sea power; and to help build America's future through successful youth programs. Over 200 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.

Please renew your membership and help recruit new members. Invite potential new members to attend Council events. Membership sign-up and renewal is available online at our Council website, [www.navyleaguewestct.org](http://www.navyleaguewestct.org) then click "join/renew" at the top. Thank you.

Our new Connecticut  
Council has 267  
members, subject to  
change as we verify  
new members.

**There is an optional \$25 reduced annual NL dues rate, that substitutes online SeaPower magazine in place of the mailed paper copy. All other benefits are the same.**

**WEBSITE:** See our Council's award-winning website for special features and updates that occur between the editions of this newsletter at: [www.navyleaguewestct.org](http://www.navyleaguewestct.org)

## 2020 Council Board

### OFFICERS

President.....Jason Wathen  
Treasurer.....Richard Koch  
VP Sea Services.....Andrew Bisset  
VP Membership.....R. (Pete) Kenyon III  
VP Youth Programs...Stephen Gravereaux  
Secretary.....Tara Louise Edwards

### Emeritus member:

David Ellis

### BOARD MEMBERS

Louis DiGiusto	Robert Perkin
Edward Fitzgerald	Jennifer Stannard
P. Alan Gerard	Gerard Tighe
Joseph Latwin	John Weigold
David Pascoe	





**Crew of our Council-adopted submarine, USS Connecticut (SSN 22), enjoying "ice liberty" in the Arctic in March.**



**Our Council-adopted destroyer, USS Winston S. Churchill (DDG 81) at pier-side in Norfolk.**