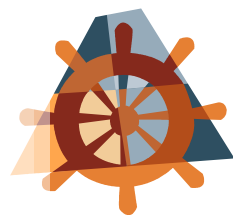




“THE HELM”

Newsletter of the Connecticut Council



Volume 2026 Issue 1 July 2026

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Upcoming dates of interest:

- **Birthdays:** Navy October 13th; Marine Corps November 10th (both date from 1775).

CHURCHILL completes record deployment:

Our Council's sponsored destroyer, USS Winston S. Churchill (DDG 81), returned on May 16th to homeport (Mayport FL) from an 11 month deployment; the longest since the ship's commissioning in 2001.

CHURCHILL served as the air and missile defense commander for the USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78) carrier strike group, an assignment previously reserved for cruisers. The deployment included operations in the Middle East, Europe, and the Caribbean; over 57,000 miles sailed. In February, the ship launched Tomahawk cruise missiles at military installations inside Iran.

Our Council “adopted” this Arleigh Burke class guided missile destroyer following a port visit to Stamford, CT in August 2003, under a national Navy League program to support active duty warship crews. Since then, the ship has earned many operational excellence awards. We welcome home the CO, Captain Judson Mallory, and his officers and crew, and thank them for their long days at sea away from families, while serving in our nation's defense. Well done, CHURCHILL!



Welcome home.

President's Message

Fellow Council members and friends:

The Navy League is now offering a membership **at no cost** if you forego the printed monthly SEAPOWER magazine (but you can read it online or choose a higher level membership to get hard copies and other benefits). You will also become a member of the Connecticut Council (with no dues!)

To sign up as a new member, go to: www.navyleague.org/join/ Current members may sign up for the new no cost option when their current membership period expires. For Life Members, there is no change.

The **CT Council** has over 200 members. We support Sea Services personnel, as well as Sea Cadet and League Cadet units in Stamford, Bridgeport, New Haven, Plainville, and

Groton; and five CT high school Navy/Marine Corps Junior ROTC units. We also sponsor Yale's Navy ROTC annual leadership conference, and much more.

We support a highly successful local SEAL candidate RDAC program that produces a 70+% success rate at the arduous SEAL qualification testing (“BUD/s”), where the overall success rate is only 25%.

We sponsor three active duty warships; see details elsewhere in this newsletter.

Visit our council website at: www.navyleaguewestct.org/ for more information, and join us, or renew when your membership expires.

Joe Latwin



Council President Joe
Latwin

2026 Council Board:

OFFICERS

President..... Joseph Latwin
 Treasurer.....Richard Koch
 VP Sea Services.....Andrew Bisset
 VP Membership.....vacant
 VP Youth Programs.....Matthew Reith
 Secretary.....Tara Louise Edwards
 Communications.....Edward Fitzgerald
Emeritus member: David Ellis

OTHER BOARD MEMBERS

Robert Perkin Tess Oxenstierna
 Gerard Tighe John Weigold

SEA CADET CO BOARD MEMBERS

P. Alan Gerard, CO Dealey Division Stamford
 Robin Flanga, CO Edson Division New Haven
 Joseph ASIello, CO Nautilus Div. Groton
 Stephen Smith, CO Barque Eagle Div. Plainville
 Sean Jones, CO Bundy Division Bridgeport

All who serves in these and other Council positions are volunteers. Any member who wishes to be more involved, with many or few monthly hours, please email us at:

contact@navyleaguewestct.org . You'll be supporting our worthwhile efforts.

Council honors past president:

At the Council dinner in September 2025, our Council was pleased to present a Certificate of Appreciation to past president and major Council contributor for many years to CDR Steve Gravereaux, USNR (retired).

Steve is shown in the photo receiving the award with current president Joe Latwin and northeast area Navy League regional president Norma Milio. Steve served as president for multiple years and most recently as VP of Youth Programs. Much of what our Council has accomplished is due to his tireless efforts.

Thank you, Steve!



Council Website

Visit our Council's award-winning website for special features and updates occurring between the editions of this newsletter at:

www.navyleaguewestct.org



Website homepage
screen shot.

Sea Cadet News:

Our Council is pleased to serve as a prime sponsor and advocate for the State's five US Naval Sea Cadet units, located in:

- Bridgeport (Bundy Division)
- Groton (Nautilus Division)
- New Haven (Edson Division)
- Plainville (Barque Eagle Division)
- Stamford (Dealey Division)

With schools out for the summer, many of the cadets are away on formal Sea Cadet training at various military bases around the country. This training is a major part of the Sea Cadet program and provides the Cadets valuable lessons they can use in the future whether or not they later volunteer to serve in the military.

Nearby photos show recent events involving several of the five units.

Finally, our Council thanks the adult staff volunteers at each of the units for their dedication to the important goals of this program.



Above and right:
Nautilus Division held a cadet and family fun gathering at McCook's Beach on July 19th.



Dealey Division at Stamford Memorial Day ceremony; they also marched in the parade.

Dealey Division group that placed flags on veterans' graves for Memorial Day.

Sea Cadet Scholarships Awarded:

A sub-committee of the Council board recently reviewed submissions for college scholarships from area graduating high school Sea Cadets. The result was the granting of **\$4,000 Council scholarships to each** of these two recent grads:

- Ethan Simpson, from Bundy Division in Bridgeport, will attend St. Louis University studying aeronautics. His goal is to become an airline pilot.
- Samantha Smith, from Barque Eagle Division in Plainville, will attend Liberty University studying pre-law, and will enroll in Army ROTC there.

Our Council congratulates these two students!



Other Adopted Ship News

USS Connecticut (SSN 22) and USS Hartford (SSN 768):

In addition to our adopted destroyer (see story on page 1), your CT Council sponsors two nuclear submarines. Both USS Connecticut (SSN 22) and USS Hartford (SSN 768) are in shipyards. CONNECTICUT is in a Washington State yard for \$80 million repairs necessitated by an undersea collision with a sea mount, and HARTFORD is in the Groton CT yard for \$1 billion major upgrade.

HARTFORD is slated to complete its overhaul in late 2026 or early 2027, at which point the sub will shift its homeport from New London to San Diego. CONNECTICUT is currently set to return to active service in late 2026; its homeport will remain in Washington State.

Earlier this year, our Council board **voted to contribute \$4,000 to each of the two sub's crew welfare accounts**, for use in holding crew and family events. Both subs involved their local Navy JAG legal offices to ensure we complied with any related regulations governing such gifts. We received grateful thanks from both subs.

Long shipyard periods are challenging for crews, with disruptions to ship's power, plumbing, etc. without the exhilaration and stimulation of at-sea service. We wish officers and crew of both subs our best in getting their vessels again ready to stand to sea in our defense.



Yale NROTC conference:

Our Council was again a principal sponsor of the Yale University Navy ROTC annual leadership and strategy conference held March 27 to 28 in New Haven.

The Yale midshipmen themselves run the event, with a list of prestigious speakers, and midshipmen and cadet attendees from other colleges and the service academies. Also in attendance were students from several of our NATO allies.

Yale is the only college NROTC program in CT and we are pleased to support them. See their website for further details: www.yalenrotcleadershipconference.org/



NJROTC News:

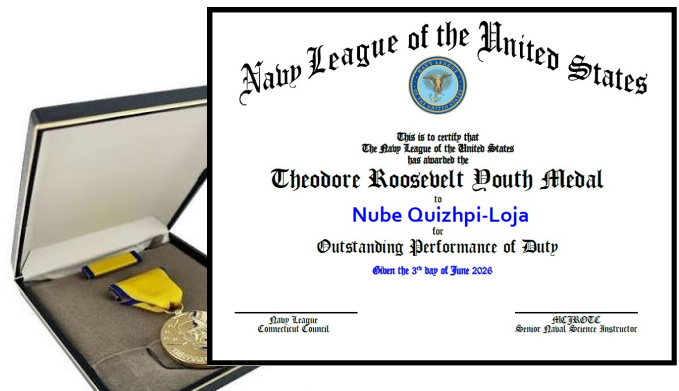
Our Council proudly supports the four state high schools that have Navy Junior ROTC (NJROTC) programs, located in Bethel, Bridgeport, New London, and Norwalk; and the one Marine Corps Junior ROTC (MCJROTC) unit in Waterbury.

Before these schools closed for summer vacation, Council representatives presented Navy League Teddy Roosevelt Leadership Awards to deserving cadets at Bethel, Brien McMahon (Norwalk), and Wilby (Waterbury) High Schools.

Recipients were:

- Cadet Lukas Battle, at Bethel
- Cadet Shawn Jimenez, at Brien McMahon
- Cadet Nube Quizhpi-Loja, at Wilby

All three recipients are expected to be the leading cadet at their schools in the fall semester. Congratulations!



Sample medal and award certificate.

SEAL Candidate Mentoring News



The local Navy SEAL Recruiting District Assistance Council (RDAC) candidate mentoring program, led by Council Board member and retired Navy Captain Drew Bisset, continues to maintain its training momentum, preparing these impressive local area young men for the arduous SEAL screening and training to come.

One recent competitive event, the Michael Murphy memorial race was held June 27th in Ronkonkoma NY. LT Murphy, an alumni of the local RDAC program, was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for heroism as a SEAL.

Twelve Candidates competed in the 4 mile race, and were highly successful in winning the team competition against 28 other civilian and military teams. RDAC Candidate William Russel placed first overall, with over 2,500 total racers.

SEAL Candidate competitors, at June 27th race; with several RDAC staff and first place trophy.

SEAL Candidates must demonstrate that they can complete a 4 mile course in under 30 minutes, as part of the rigorous BUD/s qualification testing to come. So this competition was one part of their preparation training.

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 when due and help recruit new members. Renewal is online at our Council website, www.navyleaguewestct.org then click "join/renew" at the top. Note that there is a **new \$0 membership level** (see President's Message on page 1).

Thank you.

**The Connecticut
Council has 202
members.**