



"THE HELM"

Newsletter of the Western Connecticut Council

Volume 2018 Issue 1

January 2018

Inside this issue:

SEAL holiday party	2
Sea Cadet news	3
New CT members	3
Adopted ship news	4
NJROTC news	5

Upcoming dates of interest:

- **Annual dinner March 24th.** See lead story.
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Annual dinner March 24th:

Our annual members' meeting and dinner will take place on Saturday March 24th at the Stamford Yacht Club (off I-95 Exit 8). Kindly mark your calendars now. Full details, including how to make reservations, will be separately emailed to members soon.

We are pleased to announce that our principal speaker will be Rear Admiral John Mustin, Deputy Commander, Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet. He is a native of Alexandria, Virginia, and a graduate of the US Naval Academy, receiving his commission in 1990. He holds masters degrees from both the Naval Postgraduate School and Babson College. His shipboard assignments included serving as combat

(Continued on page 2)



Rear Admiral John Mustin

President's Letter:

Greetings!

Though winter is fully upon us, the fall and winter have been quite busy for our Sea Cadets and SEAL RDAC candidates. Please enjoy the updates included in these pages.

Please join us for our Annual Dinner and Meeting which will be held on Saturday, March 24th at the Stamford Yacht Club. It will be a fun evening with friends at a great venue with good food and a wonderful and timely speaker.

The guest speaker will be RDML John B. Mustin, Deputy Commander, Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet. RDML Mustin is a 1990 graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy and a veteran Surface Warfare Officer (see fuller bio in the story above) His thoughts on the current state of affairs in the Surface Warfare community alongside the ongoing changes underway in the Pacific Fleet should provide valuable insight and we are fortunate that he is able to take the time to be our guest and speaker here in Connecticut in March.

We will also hold our Annual Meeting and election of Council Board members for 2018.

Please be on the lookout for specific details to RSVP for the dinner and meeting in the announcement which will be hitting your email shortly. Please invite anyone you believe has an interest in the sea services or in hearing from our speaker.

A copy of the Annual Dinner announcement flyer will also be available on our Council's website once it is emailed out at:
www.navyleaguewestct.org

Feel free to forward the flyer to everyone interested in attending.

I look forward to catching up with each of you on March 24th!

Fair Winds and Following Seas,

Jason Wathen
President, Western Connecticut Council



Sea Cadet color guard "at ease" at Stamford Veterans Day ceremony.

Annual dinner (continued):

(Continued from page 1)

information center officer, and later as Navigator, aboard USS Vincennes (CG 49). He was pre-commissioning operations officer on USS Donald Cook (DDG 75).

Affiliating with the Navy Reserve in 2001, Rear Admiral Mustin served as Battle Group Staff 2 assistant operations officer in support of USS George Washington (CVN 72) strike group during Operation Enduring Freedom, and numerous other reserve command billets.

In light of the high visibility events that occurred in the Surface Force of our Pacific Fleet in the last year, we anticipate a highly informative and topical presentation, with questions and answers.

Members should feel free to invite family and friends who have an interest in the sea services. It may be wise to make reservations early, as soon as you receive the official announcement flyer via email, as this annual event has often sold out in the past.

We will also briefly hold our Annual Meeting at the dinner to include the election of Council board members for 2018.



Scenes from prior annual dinners.



SEAL/RDAC holiday party:

Our local Navy SEAL candidate mentoring, program in conjunction with the Recruiting District Assistance Council (RDAC), held their annual holiday party in December. It is an opportunity for SEAL candidates and their families to meet with active duty SEALs and learn about the community. It also serves to raise funds for the scholarship programs named in honor of fallen SEALs who had come through the local program.

The principal guest speaker at dinner was retired Commander Rich Diviney, former ops department head for the SEAL Development Group (often referred to in the media as SEAL Team 6). Candidates reported that his speech was inspiring and motivating.

Program head, retired Captain Drew Bisset, who is a member of our Council's board, swore in two new officer candidates on their way to Officer Candidate School (OCS) in Newport.

Ten teams competed in an abbreviated SEAL Physical Screening Test (PST). Families and friends seem to enjoy the dive portion of the PST the most.



Retired SEAL Commander Rich Diviney, was guest speaker at the RDAC/SEAL holiday party.

Sea Cadet news:

Parades: DEALEY Division, led by Division Petty Officer Clayton O'Brien, participated in the Stamford Veterans Day parade on November 12th. As usual the DEALEY Cadets were perfectly in step and impeccably dressed in Service Dress Blue uniform. DEALEY also again represented the Navy League during the Stamford Parade Spectacular. DEALEY is one of the few military-related units allowed to march, which is an honor and well earned.

Holiday Dinner: DEALEY Division (Sea Cadets) and Training Ship MACINTYRE (younger League Cadets) held their annual holiday dinner at the Stamford Government Center in December. Parents and friends assembled to celebrate the year of achievements. The Division recognized cadets for their performance at summer training and recognized the rank advancement of many cadets which included: Nicolas Chavez, Jonathan Christi and Tyler Getlik to Seaman Apprentice (SA); Matthew Alvarado, Eleonore Burns, Keilani Caruso, Peter Jenkins and Kevin Marin to Seaman (SN); Kyle Kutz, Daniel Lee and Stanley Villard to Petty Officer Third Class (PO3). As usual the food and camaraderie were abundant.

Winter Training: Off-site winter training during the holiday break was more heavily attended than usual and led to additional promotions. Five cadets attended Petty Officer Leadership Academy (POLA) in Rhode Island and three attended Recruit Training in Illinois, yielding promotions to Seaman Apprentice (SA) for Devon Dupray, Aiden Mardis-Rickard, and Katherine Riffice. Eric McDonald, our Leading Petty Officer (LPO), will be promoted to Petty Officer Second Class (PO2).

Upcoming Events: The next few months will be busy preparing for the annual inspection in March and the Northeast Regional Flagship Competition at the Massachusetts Military Reservation. We encourage Council members to visit during one of our weekly meetings (Mondays at 7pm at the Stamford Marine Center) and if any member would like to attend the annual inspection, please use the "contact us" section of our Council website at:

www.navyleaguewestct.org



Above, waiting for parade start.



At left, winter training.

For more Sea Cadet photos, see page 6.

Welcome aboard to new CT members!

Navy League Headquarters informed us in January that 261 new members would be added to the rolls of our Western CT Council.

These new members come from a one time program between the Navy Federal Credit Union (NFCU) and the San Diego Council that, in exchange for joining the Navy League with a 12 month e-membership costing \$25, someone could join NFCU without the usual requirement of being a military veteran or family member of a veteran. Some 18,000 people nationwide took advantage of this program from July 2016 to May 2017. Those 261 whose zip codes put them in our area of responsibility in CT have been assigned to our Council.

We sent an emailed "welcome aboard" message to each of these new members, encouraging them to view our website, read past copies of this newsletter, and to consider attending future Council events so that we can welcome them in person.

We again offer our best "welcome aboard" to these new members with the hope that they learn enough of what we do to decide to renew their membership when the time comes, to help contribute to our youth programs, and adopted ship and SEAL efforts.



Adopted ship news:

USS Winston S. Churchill (DDG 81):

Our adopted Norfolk-based guided missile destroyer recently sent this news:

Following an enjoyable holiday season, USS WINSTON S. CHURCHILL is preparing for and will be underway the entire month of February participating in COMPTUEX with the USS HARRY S. TRUMAN (CVN 75) Carrier Strike Group. COMPTUEX is the deployment certifying event for CHURCHILL. The destroyer is then scheduled to deploy to the 5th and 6th Fleet areas of operation from April to November 2018. The crew is excited and looking forward to the challenges and experiences associated with ship operations in those areas of the world. (The 6th Fleet is based in the Mediterranean Sea and the 5th Fleet covers the Persian Gulf, Red Sea, Arabian Sea, and parts of the Indian Ocean).

The ship also has a new Executive Officer (XO), Commander Ben Abbott, who checked onboard in November. He is a native of Milford, DE and a 2001 graduate of the Naval Academy. We send our Council's "welcome aboard" to the new XO, and wish all the officers and crew best wishes as they prepare for the upcoming deployment, made in our defense.

USS Connecticut (SSN 22):

Unlike in our last edition, we do not have updated news on our adopted Bremerton-based nuclear attack submarine, USS CONNECTICUT. Perhaps, in keeping with the long and illustrious history of the "Silent Service", they are quietly busy. We appreciate that, and wish them well.

Our readers may want to visit the USS CONNECTICUT section of our website at:

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

It includes photos and videos from the sub's operations since commissioning in 1998. It also includes a history of the four prior Navy ships to bear the Connecticut name. These four were a flat bottom barge with cannon (1776), a wooden frigate (1799), an iron-hulled blockade steamer (1861), and a battleship (1906) that was the flagship of Teddy Roosevelt's Great White Fleet. None could match the power, speed, and endurance of the newest CONNECTICUT, of course.



Sunrise at sea aboard USS Winston S. Churchill (our thanks to Churchill's Captain, CDR T. Van Scoten, who sent this and the photo on page 6).



Submarine launch of a Tomahawk cruise missile; one of the weapons systems onboard USS CONNECTICUT. (A surface warship version of Tomahawk is also installed on CHURCHILL).

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 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 422
members (see
story on page 3).**

There is now 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.

Local NJROTC news:

Our three local Navy Junior ROTC high school programs are well into their 2017-2018 academic school years. Below are some updates:

Bethel High School: In December the Cadets competed in the Marching Drill Competition at Southold, NY and placed 3rd overall with 14 teams competing. They also conducted their annual inspection then, taking meticulous care to prepare. Commander Jim Miller, the NJROTC Northeast Region (Area 4) Manager, praised the cadets as they presented their goals, objectives, and numerous accomplishments during a formal briefing.

Bethel cadets are also participating in the national Cyber-Patriot code-breaking and computer challenge, making it into the top 10% nationwide. They also competed in the National Joint Leadership Academic Bowl, and made it to the next level into the top 30% nationally. Both competitions continue into spring. Other competitions include Marksmanship, Sea Perch underwater robotics program, and the Brain Brawl.

The cadets are holding their annual military ball on March 4th. Council members are welcome to attend this wonderful event (see separate details).

Bridgeport Military Academy (BMA): Cadet Commander A. Merced relieved Cadet Commander F. Cremel as Battalion Commander of the 212 member NJROTC unit at Bridgeport Military Academy (BMA) on 15 December. During the ceremony, new staff, company commanders and platoon leaders were installed, and Cadet of the Quarter awards were made to four outstanding cadets.

BMA also passed it's annual Area Manager's Inspection in November with a grade of Above Average, the highest grade it has ever received for this inspection. Bravo Zulu.

Brien McMahon High School (Norwalk): See photo at right of the McMahon cadets marching during a formal inspection in late December. To see a one minute video of this evolution, click:

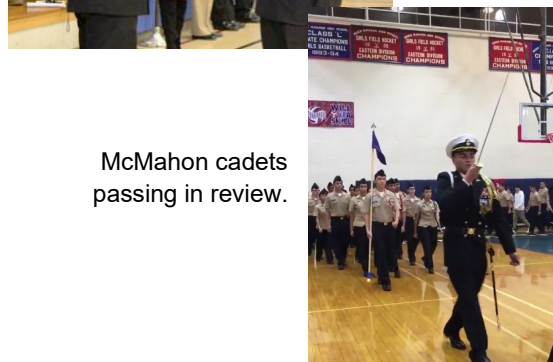
<https://twitter.com/senatorduff/status/943524251780419584> (then click on video itself to hear rousing marching music). Nicely done, cadets.



Bethel senior class at their military ball in March 2017. At front row ends are the two Bethel instructors.



Cadet Commander Merced reporting to BMA senior naval science instructor, Captain Bill Glass.



McMahon cadets passing in review.

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

2017 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.....William McDaniel

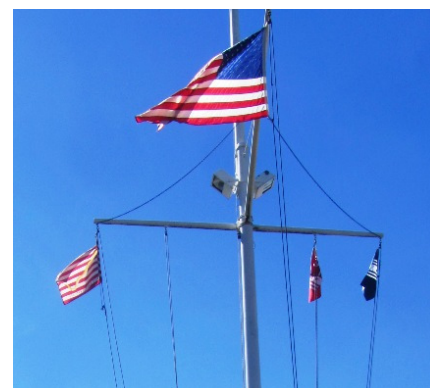
Emeritus member:

David Ellis

BOARD MEMBERS

Miguel Amadiz	Don Logan
Louis DiGiusto	David Pascoe
Edward Fitzgerald	Robert Perkin
P. Alan Gerard	Jennifer Stannard
Theodore Jenkins	Gerard Tighe
Joseph Latwin	John Weigold

* 2018 Board will be elected at the Annual Dinner on March 24th (see story on page 1).



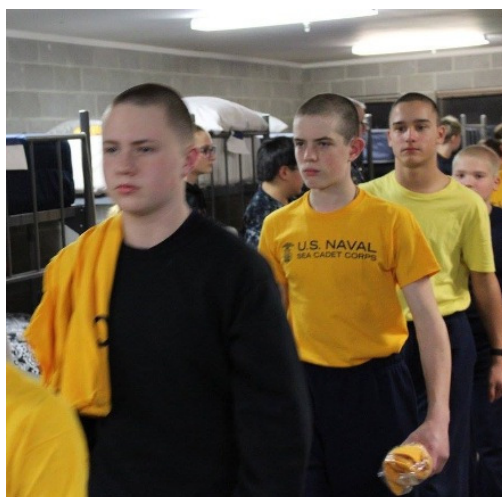
More Sea Cadet photos:



"At ease" at Stamford Veterans Day ceremony.



Left & above: muster before holiday dinner.



Cadets at winter training.

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

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



This space had been reserved for address labels for those newsletters that were sent via postal mail. This edition is the second one to be 100% paperless email/online distribution. We are using the savings in print and postage costs for our vital youth programs.

Our adopted guided missile destroyer, USS Winston S. Churchill (DDG-81) at right, underway replenishing from USNS John Lenthall (T-AO-189) in Sept. 2017.

