



# "THE HELM"

## Newsletter of the Western Connecticut Council

Volume 2019 Issue 2

October 2019

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### Inside this issue:

SEAL screener event	2
Other Sea Cadet news	3
Adopted ship news	4
NJROTC news	4

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### Upcoming dates of interest:

- **USNA vs UCONN Nov 1st.** See President's Letter.
  - **Bethel NJROTC Veterans Day event.** See page 5.
  - **Sea Cadets to march in Stamford Veterans Day parade.** See page 3.
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## Cadet Presentation Night:

Deale Division (Sea Cadets) and Training Ship Macintyre (younger League Cadets) gave formal presentations on their summer training experiences at the annual Cadet Presentation Night on October 14th at the Stamford Yacht Club. Family, friends, and a number of Council members attended. Also in attendance were two senior representatives of the city of Stamford.

The training was quite varied, and included the following:

- Recruit training ("boot camp") for new cadets as well as for some older cadets who attended as leaders;
- UAV (drone) construction and operation;
- Fire fighting academy;



*(Continued on page 2)*

## President's Letter:

Aloha!

It has been an exciting summer for our Council. Our co-sponsored event with Stamford Yacht Club and the US Naval Academy (USNA) Offshore Sail Training Squadron over Father's Day was a great success. Thanks to all of you who came out to support!

Most notable is that our Council Dinner Speaker from 2017, Admiral Mike Gilday, who at the time was 10<sup>th</sup> Fleet Commander, has been selected and confirmed as the new Chief of Naval Operations (CNO).

Drew Bissett, our RDAC SEAL mentoring program CO, organized a sailing event to New London with the Riverside Yacht Club.

mand on August 8<sup>th</sup> and the outgoing CO, CDR Carl Trask, won the Vice Admiral James Bond Stockdale Leadership Award for excellence in personal example and leadership. Congratulations CDR Trask!

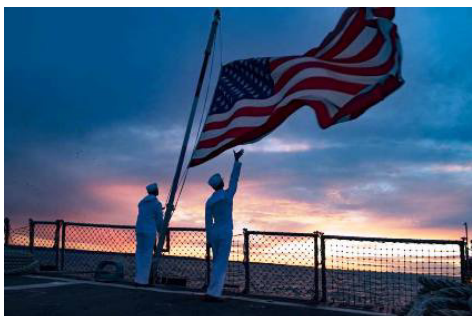
Going forward, we'd like to extend an invitation for our members to attend the NAVY vs UCONN football game on Nov 1<sup>st</sup>. The CT Chapter of the USNA Alumni Association is hosting a tailgate and it is open to NL Members. See details on how to purchase tickets for the game and tailgate by going to: [www.navyleaguewestct.org/NAVUC.pdf](http://www.navyleaguewestct.org/NAVUC.pdf)

I am looking forward to seeing everyone at our 2020 Spring Annual Dinner.

Mahalo,

Jason Wathen,

President, Western Connecticut Council of the U.S. Navy League



Our sponsored submarine, the USS Connecticut (SSN 22) had a change of com-

## Presentations (continued):

*(Continued from page 1)*

- Field operations, including first aid, small arms, and small boat ops.
- Petty officer leadership academy (POLA);
- Seamanship aboard a three mast sailing vessel;
- Aviation electronics training in Texas.

The following cadets earned "Honor Cadet" status, as best performing cadet in their unit: SA Tom Nowak, PO2 Jonathan Christie, SA Thompson, Sebastian Osle and Oliver Jankovich.

Cadet Chief Kyle Kutz achieved the trifecta by attending summer training at three service academies: Naval Academy, Coast Guard Academy, and West Point. He received letters of assurance from all three and plans to attend West Point next year. Bravo Zulu!

The event demonstrated again the value of this Council-sponsored youth program in fostering respect, responsibility, and leadership in young people whether or not they later chose to join the military. CPO Kutz served as master of ceremonies. Bravo Zulu to him and to all the cadets who presented.



Aviation training.



CPO Kutz receiving his West Point certificate from Dealey CO CAPT Alan Gerard.

## SEAL/RDAC screener event:

On the weekend of October 11th, the Naval Special Warfare (NSW) Recruiting District Assistance Council (RDAC) conducted a new annual event, Operation Pugzee, a Screener Event intended to determine how well the various training evolutions of the past year have helped prepare the candidates for the rigors of SEAL BUD/S, especially Hell Week. This event is a continuous 30 hour "beat down" including regular physical training (PT), boat and log PT, rucking (running with a 35 lb rucksack), swimming drills, obstacle course training, boat portages, and a special simulated pilot rescue mission. The nearby photos show the candidates working to rescue pilots downed in "hostile" territory.

On September 20th, Drew Bisset was present at the graduation from BUD/S Class 333 of two local candidates, one of whom was the Class Honorman, selected by the instructors and students as the top member of the class. The local RDAC program success rate now stands at 72%, with 162 candidates graduated out of 225 recommended for BUD/S, a much higher rate than the overall success rate at this extremely rigorous testing.



*(Continued on page 3)*



## SEAL Event (continued):

Also, on Saturday, October 19th, RDAC Candidates will be gathering with Staff at SEAL Mom, Holly Pastula's home in Old Greenwich, to help prepare holiday care packages for deployed SEALs. Members of our Western CT Council are welcome to attend and help stuff packages.



## Other Sea Cadet news:

### Annual Dinner

DEALEY Division cadets supported the Council's annual dinner, providing the color guard with Admiral Mike Franken as the keynote speaker.

### Flagship Competition

DEALEY Division again took overall first place at this year's Flagship Competition at Camp Edwards MA. The cadet teams took first place in the majority of the competitions against other units from around the New England area.

### Memorial Day Events

Cadets had a busy May. The color guard performed at ceremonies for the Halloween and Stamford Yacht clubs while the entire group marched in the New Canaan parade and planted flags in Stamford at the gravesites of veterans along with VFW members. A select few cadets provided "side boys" at the Stamford Memorial Day ceremony. In June, cadets met with USMA Midshipmen to discuss life at the academy and hints on how to apply.

### Graduation

Three seniors graduated the program and were recognized in June at the Stamford Yacht Club. Chief Clayton O'Brien is attending the University of Connecticut. Petty Officer Third Class Katharine Riffice is also attending UCONN on a combined ROTC and National Guard Scholarship leading to a commission in the Army. Seaman Katelyn Guzman is attending Central Connecticut State College. At the graduation ceremony League Cadet Logan Arena and Petty Officer Eleonore Burns were awarded the Navy League Youth Medal as cadets of the year.

### Veterans Day

Please come and see the cadets march in the Stamford Veterans Day Parade on 11 November. Any Navy League veterans who would like join in marching, please contact the DEALEY CO at [co.012dea@seacadets.org](mailto:co.012dea@seacadets.org) or 203-918-0329. Remain afterwards for a ceremony dedicating the reopening of Stamford's Veterans Memorial Park.



Cadets with ADM Franken at annual dinner.



2019 Flagship champs

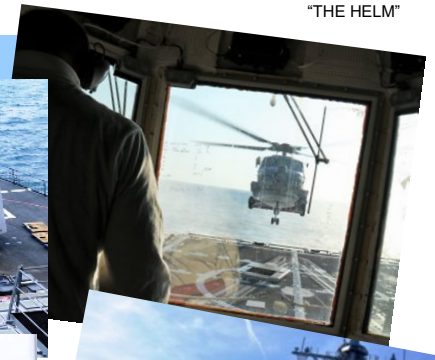


Graduating senior cadets.

## Adopted ship news:

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

Earlier this year the ship completed a Selected Restricted Availability (SRA) in a shipyard to make routine scheduled repairs and updates. The officers and crew are now undergoing a series of at-sea exercises to hone their high level skills, as they work up for future overseas assignment. Photos nearby highlight gunnery, helicopter, and at-sea refueling efforts, all successfully completed in the past few weeks.



### USS Connecticut (SSN 22):

Our adopted submarine returned to the west coast in January from a deployment to the western Pacific. Connecticut departed Bremerton homeport for routine ops in early March and later that month entered drydock. The submarine was awarded the coveted "Battle E" award in 2019 (Bravo Zulu!). On August 8th, CDR Cameron Aljilani relieved CDR Carl Trask as Commanding Officer in a ceremony at the Naval Undersea Museum in Keyport Washington. In early Oct., the sub was operating at sea off San Diego.

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



File photo of Connecticut with USS George Washington (CVN 73) in Pacific.

## NJROTC news:

We are proud to support the three Navy Junior ROTC units in area high schools. Some news from them:

**Brian McMahon High School:** On Oct. 6th, the unit recognized 33 cadets who took part in Basic Leadership Training (BLT) at Camp Nett in Niantic during Sept. The majority are 9th graders who started high school less than a month before. Over four days, they were exposed to the Navy's core values: honor, courage, and commitment. Six upper-class cadets served as Cadet Aides, mentoring and supervising new cadets alongside the JROTC instructors. During the public awards ceremony, cadets received the Basic Leadership Ribbon and were promoted to Cadet Seaman Apprentice. Some were singled out for extra efforts.

Also this year, the unit is participating in a variety of Norwalk community service events: American Legion Flag Ceremony, Alzheimer's Walk, and Kidzfest.



**Bethel High School:** This year, instead of their usual Veterans Day ceremony, the unit will be marching in the New York City parade. But Bethel will be having a ceremony at the school that day and are looking for veterans who are willing to talk about their service to students. LCDR Dwinells, the unit senior instructor, is asking any Council veterans to consider doing this. For details, please go to this link:

[www.navyleaguewestct.org/BethelVetDay2019.pdf](http://www.navyleaguewestct.org/BethelVetDay2019.pdf)

**Bridgeport Military Academy:** The unit has a new senior instructor, LCDR Travis Brewster, USN (retired). He relieved Captain Bill Glass in May. Our Council best wishes go to LCDR Brewster in this new role impacting the lives of young people for the better.



## LCDR George Walsh, WWII carrier pilot, 98

George Walsh, Darien resident, and life member of the NY Council of the Navy League, passed away in September at age 98. He was a dive-bomber pilot flying SB2C Helldivers off USS Ticonderoga (CV 14) and USS Hancock (CV 19) in the Pacific in 1944-45.

He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Medal for sinking an enemy cruiser in Manila Bay during the battle to retake the Philippines. He also flew in the battles of Iwo Jima, Okinawa, Formosa and the Japanese mainland. After leaving the service, he was an executive on Madison Avenue in the 1960's and 1970's.

LCDR Walsh was a lifelong researcher on the Battle of Midway and recently served as technical advisor on the new "Midway" film being released in November. Our Western CT Council presented him an award commemorating the Centennial of Naval Aviation.



## 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. Or ask any Council Board member for a form. Thank you.

**Our Western  
Connecticut  
Council has 156  
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)

## 2019 Council Board

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



**9/11 memorial service on our Council-adopted destroyer,  
USS Winston S. Churchill (DDG 81), at sea on September  
11th.**

