



"THE HELM"

NEWSLETTER OF THE WESTERN CONNECTICUT COUNCIL

Volume 2016 Issue 2

May 2016

SEAL Picnic at Pugzee's Farm:

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Upcoming dates of interest:

- **Annual SEAL Picnic:** June 18th, see page 1
- **Brian Bill memorial golf outing:** June 13, see page 4.
- **Sea cadet graduation:** June 13th 7 pm, Marine Center.

USS Connecticut (SSN 22), 5th warship to bear our state's name.



Departing from recent tradition, this year's SEAL Picnic will be held on Saturday June 18th, not at Riverside Yacht Club, but rather at "Pugzee's Farm" in Washington, Mass. near Lenox.

Pugzee's Farm is owned by Mr. Eyal Shapiro, a strong supporter of our local highly successful RDAC SEAL Candidate mentoring program. His Farm has an obstacle course fashioned after the course used at the basic SEAL training (BUDS) program, that all candidates must pass to become SEALs. He has also hosted a number of generous programs at the Farm for veterans and their families.

The Picnic will include seeing our local SEAL candidates perform some of the physical tests that are part of BUDS. A number of the local candidates will also speak, telling

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Scenes from 2015 Picnic.

President's Letter:

Greetings to all, as we patiently wait for Springtime to arrive in earnest.

Thank you again to all of our Navy League members that joined us for our annual meeting at Giovanni's Water Edge with our guest Rear Admiral Buck. RADM Buck scrapped his brief and spent an hour fielding questions, and discussed topics from the South China Sea, Russia aggression, cyber security, and leadership for all ages. The evening was a tremendous success.

In just a few weeks New York City will host Fleet Week 2016, with sixteen ships from the Navy, Coast Guard, Naval Academy, and Canada. There will be more ships than have visited in over a decade.

Events include ship tours, band concerts, drill teams, promotion and reenlistment ceremonies, and much more. May 25th to 31st. Most events are free and open to the public. Check out all the options at this website:

www.fleetweeknewyork.com

Just recently we received a letter from CDR Brian Taddiken, Commanding Officer, USS Connecticut (SSN 22), a Seawolf-class attack submarine, home-ported in Bremerton, Washington. CDR Taddiken is interested in reconnecting his boat with our state and the Navy League. Our Council intends to "officially adopt" the USS Connecticut, so we will sponsor her along with our long-standing sponsored destroyer, USS Winston S. Churchill (DDG 81). In June, one of our Board members, Ted Jenkins, will be on the west coast on business, and will add a side trip to Bremerton to meet the Skipper and

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SEAL Picnic (con't.):

(Continued from page 1)

why they chose to try to become SEALs. This is always well received as a memorable part of the Picnic. A yet to be named principal outside speaker will also be on the program.

Washington is approximately a 2.5 hour drive from Stamford. As always, all Council members and friends are invited to attend. For further questions and reservations, please contact Captain Drew Bisset by June 1st at bisset45@aol.com or 203-325-9240.

Captain Bisset leads the local SEAL candidate mentoring program and is a Council Board member. His program has had a remarkable success rate in getting candidates through the famously rigorous SEAL training. Our Council thanks go to him and also to Mr. Shapiro for his generous support of the program.



Photos from
2015 SEAL
Picnic



President's Letter (con't):

(Continued from page 1)

crew and personally welcome them. The sub will be a great addition to our Council and community. Here is a video of the sub after breaking through the arctic ice. Who knew deployments could be so fun...?!

www.youtube.com/watch?v=JFaY7wXm-I

See you at Fleet Week!

All the best,

CAPT Gerry Tighe, USN (retired)
President, Western Connecticut Council



2007 in arctic.

SEAL candidate community outreach:

About 15 SEAL Candidates and 5 Staff members of the SEAL RDAC volunteered their services to paint this historic Putnam Cottage in Greenwich which was built in the 1690's. Both Generals Washington and Putnam stayed there during the Revolutionary War. It is a historic treasure that needed a lot of work.

Under the direction of student leaders Reid Thomas and Brad Marquart, they finished the job in record time with two coats of exterior paint. They were also joined by members of the local Business Network Intl (BNI) who provided pest control, electrical services, and photography.

Our Council also participated by donating and providing lunch to all the workers. Thanks to LT Dixon, CDR Brown and Rob Perkin.

It was a great day and everyone was uplifted by a tremendous sense of accomplishment and the proud feeling of being able to give back to the community.



Sea Cadet news:

Annual Flagship competition—1st place for League Cadets:

37 cadets and 6 staff traveled to the Massachusetts Military reservation for the weekend of May 1st. The cadets competed in numerous events such as semaphore, Morse code, fire-fighting and military drill. The competition was fierce with 9 units in attendance. Dealey Division (Sea Cadets) tied for third place in their division and did well throughout the weekend. Training Ship Macintyre, the 11 - 13 year old League Cadets, stormed the ramparts taking no prisoners! They won the League Cadet Division and brought home almost every event trophy. Their necks were bent by so many medallions around them! Capping off the competitions was the Triple Threat (Timed Firefighting, First Aid and Line Heaving) which the "USN Barracudas" (our own PO Instructors from the Yonkers Recruiting Station) won for the second year in a row! BZ to all competitors and to the Staff that accompanied them: LCDR Stannard, LT Latwin, NC1 Amadiz, NC1 Matos, NC1 Ramos and INST Burns.



Cadets with trophies.



Chow time at Flagship competition.

Farewell to OS1 Kelley:

OS1 Siobhan Kelley came to Dealey Division about a 16 months ago. Attached to the Yonkers USN Recruiting Station, she joined NC1 Amadiz with the Recruiting crew and traveled most Monday evenings to Stamford to assist in training our cadets. She served as the female escort last May accompanying 4 cadets to Norfolk and back aboard the USS San Antonio (LPD 17) which fanned her desire to return to the Fleet. A quiet, confident sailor with a serene smile, she fit right in to the Cadet program and worked with the League Cadets. The Division will miss her but we send our best wishes for fair winds and following seas as she serves our country aboard the USS John C. Stennis (CVN 74) home-ported in Bremerton.



Well earned farewell cakes for OS1 Kelley, center.

ANNUAL INSPECTION:

Stamford's Government Center was once again the location for the Annual Inspection. The cadets looked sharp and their parents were appreciative of the visible attentiveness of the cadets to the Inspecting Party. The unit earned highest score ever achieved by the Dealey, a 3.76 for the League Cadets and a 3.90 for the Sea Cadets. Alas, the New London Sea and League cadets nudged us out of 1st place (by 1/100th of a point for Sea Cadets). Still, a strong showing by all!



USS Churchill news:



With our Council-adopted ship, the Norfolk-based Arleigh Burke class guided missile destroyer USS Winston S. Churchill (DDG-81) back in her homeport after an 8 month deployment, we are committed to renewing our support to the ship's company. That support dates to 2003 when Churchill moored off Stamford and we hosted their city visit.

So on April 17th, Council Board member CAPT Philip Alan Gerard, USNR, paid a visit to the men and women of Churchill. The ship is currently in the downtown Norfolk ship yards undergoing approximately 4 months of ship's maintenance availability period. CAPT Gerard met with the ship's commanding officer, CDR Paul Allgeier, along with the executive officer, CDR Tom Van Scoten, and Command Master Chief Sean Howe.

During his visit, CAPT Gerard extended our Council's offer of assistance, drawing on examples of past support. They also discussed the ship's schedule and availability to provide training opportunities for our Dealey Sea Cadets. He invited the CO to attend our annual dinner scheduled for December. The ship expressed gratitude for what our Council has done in the past and is enthusiastic about rekindling the relationship going forward. There will be a Change of Command later this year and CAPT Gerard will keep in touch to make plans for continued collaboration, especially after the ship leaves the yards. Finally, CAPT Gerard presented a check from the Council for their Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) fund, and received some command coins in exchange.

As CAPT Gerard conducts reserve drills in Norfolk on a regular basis, we will be in a good position to stay in contact and support our long-standing adopted Navy warship.



April 2016, Churchill in Norfolk yards.



Look closely to see a rare gold Battle E award on Churchill's starboard bridge wing, indicating 5 consecutive years obtaining this award. Bravo Zulu!!

Short bursts:

Brain Bill memorial golf outing: Monday June 13th at Woodway County Club, Darien. Honor deceased SEAL hero who was a graduate of our local SEAL RDAC mentoring program. Play golf and/or attend the dinner. Full details here: www.alumni.norwich.edu/brianbillgolf

Naval Academy sailboats to visit Stamford: 4 USNA boats, manned by Academy midshipmen will visit the Stamford Yacht Club on June 17 to 20. Visitors with prior reservations will be able to tour the boats. For more details see this page on our Council website: www.navyleaguewestct.org/SYCUSNA2016.pdf

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

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 about the critical importance of sea power; and to help build America's future through successful youth programs. 270 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 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 109
active members.**

News: there is a new optional \$25 reduced annual dues rate, that substitutes an online SeaPower magazine in place of the paper copy. All other benefits are the same.

Annual Dinner Feb 11th:

Our annual meeting and dinner took place on February 11th at Giovanni's Water Edge Restaurant in Darien. We were very pleased that our principal speaker was Rear Admiral Sean Buck. He was Chief of Staff, J5, of the joint staff supporting the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff at the Pentagon.

One of the RDAC SEAL candidates present at the dinner, Robert Solonick, wrote an insightful "after action report" summarizing the key topics discussed by Admiral Buck. For those members who were not able to attend, a copy of Robert's report is worthwhile reading on our Council website at:

www.navyleaguewestct.org/AARNavyLeagueDinner.pdf



RADM Buck, center rear, with Dealeys cadets.

NJROTC news:

Brien McMahon High School:

Their annual awards night will take place June 2nd at 6:30 pm, in the American Legion Hall in Norwalk. All are invited to attend. Among the honors, our Council will award the Teddy Roosevelt Youth Metal to a selected high potential cadet.

Bethel High School:

Highlights of recent events include:

- Recognized as Navy Distinguished Unit with academic honors for 13th consecutive year.
- In March had their largest military ball in school history with 684 attendees.
- 7 cadets were selected for college ROTC scholarships, worth over \$1.3 million.
- Unit cadets are leaders in other areas at Bethel, including 13 who are varsity team captains, and 124 of the unit's 206 cadets are on the academic honor roll.

For more details and pictures of recent events at Bethel, see this section of our Council website: www.navyleaguewestct.org/BethelUpdate2016.pdf

Bethel's annual award night will be May 31st at 7pm in their auditorium; all are invited.



Bethel cadets with RADM Buck at our Council's annual dinner.

2016 Council Officers and Board:

OFFICERS

President.....Gerard Tighe
Treasurer.....open *
VP Sea Services.....Andrew Bisset
VP Membership.....R. (Pete) Kenyon III
VP Youth Programs...Stephen Gravereaux
Chaplain.....Deacon Louis Howe
Judge Advocate.....Douglas Brown
Secretary.....Peter Brown

* S. Gravereaux is acting Treasurer

BOARD MEMBERS

Mark Adams	Joseph Latwin
Miguel Amadiz	Don Logan
Marcus Arroyo	Theodore Jenkins
Louis DiGiusto	Robert Perkin
Edward Fitzgerald	Jennifer Stannard
P. Alan Gerard	Jason Wathen
William Grempe	RADM John Weigold

Emeritus member:

David Ellis



Putnam Cottage—see page 2.

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

c/o E. Fitzgerald
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**Polar bear checks out
rudder of USS Connecti-
cut (SSN 22) after the sub
broke through arctic ice.
Photo taken using peri-
scope. Our Council is
starting a new relation-
ship with the state's
namesake warship; see
page 1.**

