



# “THE HELM”

## NEWSLETTER OF THE WESTERN CONNECTICUT COUNCIL

Volume 2017 Issue 2

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### Upcoming dates of interest:

- **USNA boat visit:** June 16 to 18. See story at right.
- **Sea Cadet graduation:** June 12; see story on page 3.



Onboard USS Connecticut with CO, CDR Taddiken, in March.

## USNA sailboats visit:

The Stamford Yacht Club (SYC) will host the US Naval Academy Offshore Sail Training Squadron (OSTS) from June 16th to 19th, Father's Day weekend. Four to five boats will be involved. Our Council is supporting the event.

The embarked midshipmen receive training in ocean sailing, seamanship, navigation, leadership, and teamwork. The boats, Navy 44's, are crewed by 3rd class midshipmen and led by upper class midshipmen, faculty, staff, or civilian volunteers. They sail in four-week training blocks, taking weekend liberty in various east coast ports.

Local families have graciously opened their homes to provide room and board to the midshipmen during their stay in Stamford. SYC, a staunch supporter hosting OSTs for the

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## President's Letter:

Aloha,

As the summer begins I would like to welcome aboard our new Council Secretary and board member, Bill McDaniel.

This spring our adopted council boat, USS Connecticut (SSN 22), completed a 54-month depot modernization shipyard period that was followed by an Eastern Pacific deployment only three weeks later. My son and I had the privilege of visiting onboard during a port call in Pearl Harbor. We were hosted by the CO, CDR Brian Taddiken and XO, LCDR Ben Grant. The CO led a tour of the forward compartment and we spoke with crewmembers and were impressed by their knowledge and enthusiasm. Most striking was the torpedo room. Fun fact: there are more valves controlling weapons in the torpedo room of the Connecticut than there are valves on an entire Los Angeles-class sub. This complex design allows for unique flexibility during weapons employment. She was built to fight. I truly appreciated the time that the busy officers and men took to share their pride and professionalism in the “Arsenal of the Nation”.

Jennifer Stannard, Steve Gravereaux and I met recently and chose five Sea Cadet graduating seniors to receive a total \$10,000 in college scholarships. These Cadets set fine examples through their leadership, academic excellence and community service. I wish them all the best as they begin their college journeys at such great institutions as West Point, Purdue, UCONN, UNC Chapel Hill, and Norwich. Come to the Dealey graduation ceremony at the Stamford Yacht Club on June 12th at 7pm, where we will award the scholarships and thank those who made them possible.

I am also looking forward to another fun upcoming event involving USNA sailboats, as described in the article directly above.

Until we speak again, Ka Makani Aheae Ke Kai Malino – Fair Winds and Following Seas,

Jason Wathen

President, Western Connecticut Council

## Sailboats (continued):

(Continued from page 1)



third consecutive summer, opens their pool, tennis, and dining facilities. The midshipmen conduct a community relations (COMREL) event on Saturday for local middle and high school students. The COMREL consists of dedicated boat tours and a panel discussion focusing on college preparation and leadership. For any college bound high school student interested in the Academy or military service, this is a must-attend event but all college bound students could benefit as well. Sea Cadets from our Council-sponsored Dealey Division will again support the visit and COMREL; and it is open to our local NJROTC cadets and to children or grandchildren of Council members.

During the weekend there will be an opportunity to tour the sailboats, talk with the crews, and attend a BBQ on Friday night in honor of the midshipmen. Council members are invited to these events with prior registration, via contact with Council board member, Alan Gerard, at [pagerard@mac.com](mailto:pagerard@mac.com) or 203-918-0329.



Arriving in Stamford in 2016.

## Annual dinner success:

Our annual members meeting and dinner took place on Saturday April 1st at the Riverside Yacht Club, with sell-out attendance.

We were honored to have as our principal speaker Vice Admiral Michael Gilday, Commander, U.S. Fleet Cyber Command and U.S. 10<sup>th</sup> Fleet. Fleet Cyber Command is responsible for the navy's cyber warfare programs. It conducts operations in cyberspace, the electromagnetic spectrum, and outer space to ensure our freedom of action and decision superiority while denying the same to our adversaries. Its activities include cryptography that has proven decisive in American naval history. Admiral Gilday led a lively discussion of this increasingly important warfare area.

We also held our Annual Meeting at the dinner involving the formal election of Council board members and officers for 2017 (see list on page 5).



VADM M. Gilday.

## Battle of Midway 75th anniversary:



LCDR George Walsh in 1944 aboard USS Ticonderoga.

Darien resident and WWII carrier pilot veteran, George Walsh, led the way for the city of Buffalo to honor its hometown hero, Wade McClusky, by unveiling a statue to McClusky commemorating the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Midway.

On 4 June 1942, McClusky led a squadron of dive bombers from USS Enterprise (CV 6) that found and sank two Imperial Japanese carriers of the four sunk that day, providing the strategic turning point in the war in the Pacific.



ADM Nimitz presenting DFC award to LCDR W. McClusky aboard USS Enterprise in June 1942.



# Sea Cadet news:

## Annual Inspection:

Regional Director LCDR M. Campbell, conducted the review. Our cadets and staff worked hard to square away the records. Their efforts paid off with Dealey being graded best in the region and our younger League Cadets took second. BZ!

## Veteran flag planting and Memorial Day activities:

Cadet volunteers joined with VFW Post 9617 to plant flags on veteran graves in St. John's cemetery in Stamford. Then Dealey cadets marched in both Stamford and New Canaan parades, where their presence drew many compliments. Finally, the Dealey color guard presented the colors at a memorial for PFC Eugene Manselle, a previously unrecognized Stamford veteran, who died in June 1968 in Vietnam. His name was just added to the downtown memorial due to an earlier oversight. The color guard is in high demand for these types of occasions.



## Annual Flagship competition:

30 cadets and 4 staff traveled to Mass. Military Reservation for the weekend of May 29th, to compete in various events such as semaphore, Morse code, fire fighting, and military drill. The competition was fierce with 9 units in attendance. Our cadets performed admirably, winning several individual events but falling short of taking top unit spots. It was especially a useful exercise for the many new cadets competing for the first time.



## New CPO:

Congratulations to Kaitlyn Kutz who was recently promoted to cadet Chief Petty Officer. This advancement is no easy feat and a great testament to this outstanding cadet. Kaitlyn will be attending the US Military Academy at West Point this fall.



## Graduation and Relieving of the Watch:

Dealey Division will say farewell to 5 graduating seniors on June 12th during a ceremony at the Stamford Yacht Club at 7pm. We will say fair winds and following seas to CPO K. Kutz, Petty Officer 1st Class Zachary Wellborn, PO 2nd Class Haakon Burns, PO 3rd Class John Butcher, and PO 3rd Class Gregory Villard. There will also be the annual relieving of the watch, as a new crop of cadets will take on new leadership roles. All Council members are welcome to attend this ceremony in support of our cadets.



## Adopted ship news – new skippers:

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

Our adopted Norfolk-based guided missile destroyer is very busy in this period undergoing a rigorous INSURV inspection. This independent group review evaluates a ship's readiness to conduct combat operations at sea, through an extensive system of checks on installed equipment and personnel readiness. Detailed and thorough preparation is required to get a good result from this inspection and we wish the ship well.

In early May, there was a change of commanding officers, with CDR Tom Van Scoten relieving outgoing skipper CDR Paul Alligeier. CDR Van Scoten received his commission via the Seaman to Admiral Program following Officer Candidate School. He is a graduate of both Old Dominion University and the Naval War College. He previously had tours ashore and afloat, most recently as Churchill's XO. Our Council wishes him every success as Churchill's latest CO.

In other ship news, during May, 35 onboard sailors were selected for advancement. Our congratulations go out to them!

### USS Connecticut (SSN 22):

CDR Carl Trask, from Glendora, California, relieved Cmdr. Brian Taddiken, as commanding officer of our adopted nuclear submarine. "When I look at this crew, and I see all that they have done, I see the greatness that is America," said Taddiken. Under Taddiken's leadership, the crew completed a 54-month depot modernization period, which was immediately followed by an Eastern Pacific deployment only three weeks after leaving the shipyard.

The sub earned the Retention Excellence Award, two years in a row, and had the lowest unplanned loss rate in the entire submarine force. In 2016, the ship was awarded the Engineering Readiness Red "E". They also received the Personnel Readiness White "P", which is an award that the ship would not normally be eligible for because they were in the shipyard.

Trask comes to Connecticut from Omaha, Nebraska, where he served as the branch chief for Ballistic Missile Requirements and Resources for United States Strategic Command. "To the family and crew of Connecticut, I am humbled to be your captain," said Trask. "You have worked hard and sacrificed much to get the boat out of the shipyard and to sea."

Connecticut is one of three Seawolf subs. Originally intended as a class of 29 submarines, the end of the Cold War and budget constraints led to the reduction. The class is significantly quieter than Los Angeles-class submarine, faster, has more torpedo tubes, and can carry more weapons.



Churchill firing 5 inch gun during earlier deployment. Outgoing blurred shell can be seen leaving expanding muzzle blast.



SSN 22 underway in December 2016 after lengthy stay in the yards.

## 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](http://www.navyleaguewestct.org) then click "join/renew". Or ask any Council Board member for a form. Thank you.

**Our Western  
Connecticut  
Council has 158  
active members.**

**There is a new 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:

All three of our local NJROTC high school programs recently held their scholastic year-end award and change of leadership ceremonies. Below are some highlights and photos:

### **Bethel High School:**

The Navy League Youth Medal was presented to cadet Donovan Eaton. Two graduating seniors received Air Force ROTC full college scholarships: cadet Emily Johnson, former battalion commander, will attend Yale University, and cadet Ken Foss will attend the University of Connecticut.

During the ceremony, Bethel officially received their 14th consecutive annual Navy Distinguished Unit award. Bravo Zulu to all the cadets and to unit instructors retired LCDR M. Dwinells and retired Master Sergeant J. Meehan!

### **Brien McMahon High School:**

The Navy League Youth Medal was presented to cadet Ltjg Benjamin Ling. Two graduating seniors received full ROTC college scholarships: cadet S. Suarez (Navy) will attend Howard University and cadet Elias Bou-Chahine (Army) will attend Norwich Univ. Both were former Unit Commanders.

### **Bridgeport Military Academy:**

Over 100 cadets were recognized for academic and military achievement, and new leaders were installed. This will be BMA's first graduating class. The Navy League Youth Medal was presented to junior Cadet Master Chief J.C. Arias.

In the change of command ceremony, Cadet Commander F. Cremel relieved Cadet Commander E. Dias as Battalion Commander for the first semester of the 2017-18 school year. Click on link below to an excellent article in the Connecticut Post about the ceremony:

<http://m.ctpost.com/local/article/A-salute-to-Bridgeport-Military-Academy-s-First-11176862.php#photo-12979765>

Our Council congratulations go to all the award recipients and graduates at the three high schools!



Bethel cadet Ken Foss with his Air Force scholarship award to University of Connecticut.



BMHS cadet Sienna Suarez with Navy recruiter, and symbolic scholarship check for \$180,000.



Promoted BMA cadet commander F. Cremel is pinned by NJROTC senior instructor retired CAPT Bill Glass.

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](http://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

### 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

### Emeritus member:

David Ellis



Outgoing Council President Gerry Tighe (left) with incoming Jason Wathen, at April 1st annual meeting.

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

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**US Naval Academy training sailboats will visit Stamford in June. See story on page 1.**

