



"THE HELM"

NEWSLETTER OF THE WESTERN CONNECTICUT COUNCIL

Volume 2016 Issue 3

October 2016

Inside this issue:

SEAL picnic	2
Sea cadet news	3
Adopted ship news	4
NJROTC news	5
Bridgeport merger	2

Upcoming dates of interest:

- **Dealey Change of Command:** Oct 23rd; see email invitations sent to members.
 - **Annual Council dinner:** Dec 7th; see story to right.
-



Annual Dinner Dec. 7th:

Our annual holiday dinner will take place on Wednesday December 7th at the Riverside Yacht Club (off I95 Exit 5). Kindly mark your calendars now. Full details, including who will be our special guest speaker and an RSVP form, will be separately sent to members soon.

We will also hold our Annual Meeting at the dinner involving election of Council board members for 2017.

Members should feel free to invite family and friends who have an interest in the sea services.



Above and left are scenes from an earlier annual dinner.



President's Letter:

Greetings to all,

This week the Navy commissioned its newest ship. Admiral Harry Harris, Commander of the Pacific Command, said in his remarks, "If Batman had a warship, it would be the USS Zumwalt." If you have not seen pictures of our newest ship, check this link: <http://www.wmur.com/article/if-batman-had-a-warship-it-would-be-the-uss-zumwalt-admiral-says/6415351>

This is our first Helm newsletter since the Bridgeport Council members were merged into our Western CT Council. Welcome aboard! We are happy to have you join us.

We have two important events on the horizon. On October 23rd our Sea Cadet Division

will have a Change of Command. We will honor LCDR Jennifer Stannard, NSCC for her years of dedicated service at the helm of the Dealey Division and leader of our award winning Sea Cadet program. We welcome Chief Petty Officer Miguel Amadiz as the new Commanding Officer.

Please join me on December 7, Pearl Harbor Day, for our Annual Meeting. We are fortunate to be hosted by the Riverside Yacht Club in Greenwich. I look forward to seeing you there.

All the best,

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



Color guard from RPI ROTC units.



Chinook interior.

SEAL Picnic held in June:

This year's SEAL Picnic was held on June 18th at "Pugzee's Farm" in Washington, Mass. The 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 for veterans and their families.



At the picnic, there was a moving unveiling of a memorial dedicated to those lost in Afghanistan in August 2011 when their Chinook helo was shot down. The Farm includes a refurbished Chinook fuselage.

Captain Drew 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 Mr. Shapiro for his generous support of the program.



Recent outside publicity:

The Dealey Division Sea Cadet program was featured in two recent local articles, in the Darien News and New Canaan News. The identical articles, with photos, were very complimentary and provided a good overview of the value of the program to these young people. Here is a link to the August 5th New Canaan story:

<http://www.newcanaannews.com/news/article/Sea-Cadets-teaches-students-military-life-skills-8634119.php#photo-10678569>

SeaPower, the monthly worldwide magazine of the Navy League, had an article on our Council adopting the USS Connecticut in its September edition, pages 65 and 66. Link is here:

http://www.seapower-digital.com/seapower/september_2016?pg=66#pg66

Bridgeport, welcome aboard:

Navy League top leadership decided in May to merge the Bridgeport Council into our Western CT Council, and informed Bridgeport members.

We are pleased to welcome the 37 active Bridgeport members aboard! We hope you will find our activities to be of value and interest, and we look forward to welcoming you in person at any upcoming Council event, such as the December 7th dinner.

We also welcome your comments, suggestions, and involvement in Council operation and activities. You may learn more about the Council from past editions of this Helm newsletter on our Council website at: www.navyleaguewestct.org There is strength in numbers in engaging our local and national Navy League mission.

This merger leaves Connecticut with three Councils: Eastern Connecticut based in New London, Hartford, and our Western Connecticut Council.



Bridgeport was home to much defense industry. Above was the 1.5 million square foot Remington Arms plant in its heyday. Sikorsky still makes helicopters in nearby Stratford.



Sea Cadet news:

Graduation and Relieving of the Watch:

The annual event took place in June with families and friends attending at the Stamford Government Center. The graduates "piped over the side" were: PO2 William Lesoravage (George Washington University), PO2 Cheyenne de la Rivera (Nyack College), and PO3 Andres Arias (New England College).

Captain John B. Finneran Memorial Scholarships, totaling \$6,000 were awarded. These scholarships were started by the late John (Bucky) Finneran when he was Council president; they are made possible by the generosity of the Trimble Family Foundation, and we thank them.

The George T. Macintyre Scholarship, named for the former CO of Dealey Division, was awarded to PO2 William Lesoravage. We thank all those who have made generous contributions to this scholarship fund.

As the watch was relieved, PO2 Zachary Welborn was promoted to Division Petty Officer. We wish the graduates well.

Training Presentation night:

Another annual event took place recently, when the Cadets presented a summary of their diverse summer trainings. They gained public speaking experience as they reflected on what they learned over the summer. A number of both League and Sea Cadets were standouts at their training and earned top awards. Pictures to right show cadets training at US Coast Guard Academy, including Dealey PO2 Kutz. She will be featured in a nationwide cadet newsletter for completing summer leadership programs at West Point, Naval Academy, and USCG Academy where she was named Battalion Honor Cadet. Kaitlyn has applied for admission to all three of these academies.

Cadets win top award:

Adding to Dealey's long, storied history of accomplishments, in June they were awarded the national Sea Cadet program John J. Bergen Trophy as the #10 best in the nation. This is the first time Dealey has broken into the top 10. Our best Council "bravo zulu" goes out to the cadets and their dedicated staff. Well done indeed!

USNA sail boat visit:

Cadets enjoyed meeting midshipmen and touring visiting Naval Academy sail boats during their visit to the Stamford Yacht Club this past summer.

New Dealey leadership:

All Council members were separately invited to attend the Change of Command ceremony to take place on October 23rd. Dealey Commanding Officer, LCDR Jennifer Stannard, NSCC, will be relieved by USN Chief Petty Officer Miguel Amadiz. The Chief, recently promoted to this rank, is assigned to a local Navy recruiting position. The Helm will report on the Change of Command ceremony in our next edition. We send our best wishes to both incoming and outgoing CO's, who earn our respect and gratitude for their uncounted hours serving this highly worthwhile local youth program.



New CPO Miguel Amadiz at cake ceremony for his promotion, along with outgoing Dealey CO, LCDR Jennifer Stannard.

Adopted ship news:

USS Winston S. Churchill (DDG 81):

We were pleased to recently receive the following update from CDR Tom Van Scoten, CHURCHILL's XO and soon to be CO:

"CHURCHILL successfully exited our Selected Restricted Availability and completed contractor sea trials. Next week, we will complete TYCOM Sea Trials and officially begin our Basic Phase training. The crew is happy to be out of the yards and anxious to return to operational status.

We will have a busy Fall season this year to include submarine sea trials support and Opposition Forces (OPFOR) tasking to assist training the next deploying Carrier Strike Group. We will be underway most of October, again just after Thanksgiving and most of December.

Thanks as always for the support of the Navy League!"

We wish the ship's company well in this period of honing their already highly regarded operational excellence.

USS Connecticut (SSN 22):

In late Sept., we launched a website dedicated to our new relationship with our 2nd adopted ship at: www.navyleaguewestct.org/USConnecticut.html

We also received an update from the sub's CO, CDR Brian Taddiken:

"Since we last spoke, progress on CONNECTICUT has been impressive. July was packed with training and preparations for our Post-Overhaul Reactor Safeguards Examination (PORSE). The inspection team gave us a good look, liked what they saw, and we passed the examination! It was a huge win for the Crew.

Following the PORSE, we spent a bit of time making the final preparations to startup the reactor and engine-room. Then on 16 August at 12:08, and 22 seconds, we took the reactor critical for the first time in 51 months! A few hours later, we shifted the electric plant and divorced from shore power...we were now operating on nuclear power! It was a great day and the Crew performed superbly.

We are loading our weapons handling skid today in preparations for the final grooming of the Torpedo Room and weapons handling system. All in all, August has been a great month for CONNECTICUT."

We thank the Captain for this update, and wish all aboard continued success as they prepare their sub to again join fleet operations after a lengthy stay in the yards.



CHURCHILL recently promoted seven to Chief Petty Officer rank. Our Council congratulations go out to them!



SSN 22 underway. According to public information from Electric Boat, her builder, the Seawolf-class sub is "less detectable at high speed than a Los Angeles submarine sitting at pier side".

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. 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.

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 148
active members.**

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

NJROTC news:

Bethel High School:

The Bethel NJROTC unit is off to a great start this year. In Sept. Bethel hosted 8 NJROTC units for a 4-day Basic Leadership Training at Camp Natural Bridge, West Point NY. 265 cadets attended, including 85 cadets from Bethel and cadets from Brien McMahon NJROTC and the Bridgeport Military Academy. The training helped bond the cadets through shared hardship as they worked together to get through the obstacle course and learn marching drill. The event ended with a formal pass-in-review ceremony with over 400 parents and supporters attending.

The cadets are looking forward to more training this fall, including sailing and flight instruction.



Above: Cadets are guided over obstacles by their Drill Instructors

Below: Sgt 1st Class Holland (USAR) aiding a cadet under barbed wire. All cadets got to low crawl through the dirt. After, they got to bond with SFC Holland, who also serves as a local police officer.



Bridgeport Military Academy:

With the merger of the Bridgeport Council (see page 2), we are pleased to add another NJROTC unit to our area of coverage. The Bridgeport Military Academy, started in 2013, is a public city charter school with a highly active NJROTC unit consisting of 330 cadets. Senior unit Naval Science Instructor is CAPT Bill Glass, USN (ret).

We plan to report future news from this unit, as we do with the other two NJROTC units in our area at Bethel and Brien McMahon high schools.



At left: Cadet Lieutenant Evanna Dias is presented the Navy League Youth Award by Captain Bill Glass at the Bridgeport Military Academy's end of year Honors and Awards Ceremony on June 2nd. Cadet Dias was promoted to Cadet Lieutenant Commander and has assumed duties as Battalion Executive Officer.

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

2016 Council Officers and Board:

OFFICERS

President.....Gerard Tighe
 Treasurer.....Richard Koch
 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

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



Council board member and ex-President, Rear Admiral John Weigold (right) with Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Admiral John Richardson at a breakfast in NYC in May.

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

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



**Refurbished Chinook helicopter fuselage is part of a private memorial to SEAL's and other servicemen killed in action in Afghanistan in August 2011.
See story page 2.**

