



“THE HELM”

Newsletter of the Connecticut Council

Volume 2024 Issue 1

October 2024

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Upcoming dates of interest:

- **State and national elections:** Tuesday November 5th

Council adopts sub USS Hartford:

The officers and crew of the nuclear powered fast attack submarine, USS Hartford (SSN 768), were officially adopted by our CT Council in September. Hartford joins previous Council sponsorships of USS Winston S. Churchill (DDG 81) and USS Connecticut (SSN 22), under a national Navy League program to support active duty warships.

Hartford is currently in the middle of a multi-year \$1 billion major overhaul at the Electric Boat shipyard in Groton, scheduled to be completed in late 2026; at which point a homeport change to San Diego will be made. The overhaul is affecting the entire sub, fore and aft, and includes a new

(Continued on page 2)



USS Hartford, on the surface through the ice in the arctic in 2018.

President's message:

We have some exciting news! We have a new Sea Cadet unit up and running in Bridgeport. It is named after CDR William Bundy, who went from the enlisted ranks to sub skipper. To see his bio, go to this link: <https://www.thehistorymakers.org/biography/cdr-william-bundy>

The Bundy Division drills at the Boys and Girls Club in Bridgeport. The CO is PO1 Sean Jones. PO1 Jones was formerly with Barque Eagle Division in Plainville. We look forward to great things from Bundy Division.

There was also a sudden change of command at Edson Division in New Haven. I took over in the interim until we got a new CO on board. The change over went well and Edson Division is even stronger. The new CO is Shane Molinari, a Marine.

Our other CT Sea Cadet units in Stamford, New London, and Plainville are maintaining their excellence. Each finished in the top 25 of units from across the country.

We are promoting more cadets than ever to CPOs and have had excellent Summer Trainings. LCDR Smith from Barque Eagle Division (Plainville) ran a League Cadet Orientation in June at Camp Nett in Niantic. It successfully trained 80 League Cadets in the basics of seafaring knowledge and skills.

And our Council has adopted another active warship, USS Hartford (see above story)! To keep up our good works, I strongly encourage you to maintain your membership, get active, and recruit friends and colleagues to join us.

Joe Latwin



Council President
Joe Latwin

USS Hartford (continued):

(Continued from page 1)

combat control system. This summer, the sub started integrating female officers into the crew, starting with the Supply Officer.

USS Hartford is one of forty-one active duty Los Angeles-class, nuclear powered, fast attack submarines. The sub has four torpedo tubes and twelve vertical missile launching cells. She was commissioned in December 1995 in Groton, and is the second warship to bear the name of our state's capital.



USS Hartford docking at Sub Base New London in 2019.



The first USS Hartford was a Civil War sloop-of-war steamer that was the flagship of Admiral David Farragut's squadron at the battle of Mobile Bay. Early in that action, one of his ships struck a mine (then referred to as "torpedoes"), and Farragut took the decisive action of placing his Hartford in the lead and giving the order which is the latest Hartford's motto, "Damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead", leading to victory.

Hartford is commanded by CDR Kevin J. Behm, USN, a 2004 Naval Academy graduate, originally from Pennsylvania.

We wish Hartford's officers and crew the best as they work diligently in the often trying times during a major shipyard overhaul; and look forward to supporting them as we do our other two sponsored vessels.

Finally our thanks to New Hampshire Council president Kevin Galeaz, himself a former submariner, who put us in touch with Hartford's CO.

Council 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



Website homepage screen shot.



Sea Cadet news:

In keeping with a major part of the Navy League mission, to help build America's future through successful youth programs, our Council supports the five Sea Cadet units in the state: Barque Eagle Division (Plainville); Bundy Division (Bridgeport); Dealey Division (Stamford); Edson Division (New Haven); and Nautilus Division (Groton).

Each unit is overseen by volunteer adult staff following national guidelines. Here are photos of some recent events at the units.



Above 4 photos: Barque Eagle field training exercise.



Below 2 photos: early meeting at new Bundy Division.



At left: Nautilus Division hosted out-of-state sea cadet units from Rhode Island (Falcon Div.) and New York (G. Washington Div.); over 100 cadets visited the Submarine Museum in Groton.

Sea Cadet news (continued):



Cadets from Nautilus Division attended a Submarine Training Seminar in Groton, that included many aspects, two shown here: damage control/fire trainer (left) and navigation simulator (right).



Dealey cadets placing cemetery flags.



Barque Eagle supported the Columbus House picnic to raise funds for homeless vets (photos above and to left).



Dealey Division at Stamford Memorial day parade (above); at annual Flagship competition at Joint Base Cape Cod with trophies won (right above); and at graduation ceremony (right).



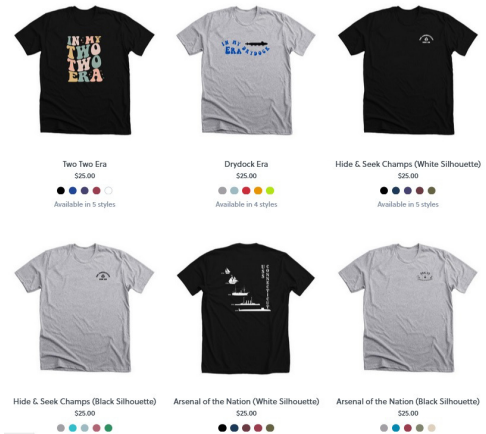
Other adopted ship news:

USS Connecticut (SSN 22):

As previously reported, our first sponsored submarine, USS Connecticut (SSN 22), is in a shipyard in Washington state to get a new sonar unit and bow, and have repairs made to ballast tanks..

Our Board recently voted to make a donation to the sub's Family Readiness Group (FRG), that is run by volunteer family and friends of the crew, to provide events for them not covered by official Navy funds. The FRG is also currently conducting an online fund-raising—you can order unique t-shirts and support a good cause by going to our Council homepage and clicking on the fund-raiser site from there: www.navyleaguewestct.org/

Our Council "adopted" this Seawolf class nuclear fast attack submarine in 2016. There are 3 Seawolf class subs that are the quietest and fastest in the fleet. Long shipyard periods are challenging and we send our best wishes to CO, Commander Ra, and to his officers and crew.



Screen shot from USS CT FRG t-shirt site.

USS Winston S. Churchill (DDG 81):

In 2024, our sponsored destroyer has been pier-side in her homeport of Mayport, Florida, or operating at sea in western Atlantic areas as far east as Bermuda. Most recently, the ship was at sea for about two weeks in August in support of USS Harry S. Truman (CVN 75) carrier strike group exercises. Recent photo at right shows sailors preparing for helo air ops. (See second ship photo on page 7)

Our Council "adopted" this Arleigh Burke class guided missile destroyer, following her port visit to Stamford, CT in August 2003. Since then, the ship has conducted numerous overseas deployments and has earned many operational excellence awards. We wish the CO, Captain Patrick O'Loughlin, and his officers and crew, the best as they prepare for whatever assignments they may get.



NJROTC news:

We are proud to support four Navy Junior ROTC units in CT high schools: Bethel High School, Bridgeport Military Academy, Brian McMahon High School (Norwalk), and New London High School. The schools are now back in session after their summer vacations.

The Council wants to take this opportunity to **give LCDR Mark Dwinells USN (ret), Senior Naval Science Instructor of Bethel's unit for the past 22 years, our best wishes as he announced his retirement from Bethel at the end of the spring semester.**

Under his leadership, the Bethel program was founded in 2002, and has been given the "Navy Distinguished Unit Award with Academic Honors" for 20 consecutive years from 2004 to 2024! Also, Bethel was named "Most Outstanding Unit" in New England in 2024. The program completed the 2023/2024 academic year with 175 cadets, 105 of whom were on the Honor Roll. (Bethel has a total student body of roughly 1,000 students). Bravo Zulu for a job well done!



LCDR Dwinells and Mrs. Dwinells at one of the highly successful annual Military Balls that he started at Bethel High School.

SEAL candidate mentoring

The local volunteer Navy SEAL Recruiting District Assistance Council (RDAC) candidate mentoring program, led by Council Board member and retired Navy Capt. Drew Bisset, continues to maintain its training momentum, preparing these impressive young men for the arduous SEAL screening and training to come.

One recent event, highlighted in photos here, was a 5k "Miles for Mission" run on September 22nd, sponsored by Saint Francis Church in Stamford, for the benefit of the Salvation Army. Candidates wore tan t-shirts.

The RDAC SEAL candidates won the timed run with candidate Steve Josephs placing 1st in a time of 17:44 and seven of the top ten runners were RDAC candidates.





Connecticut Council
Navy League of the United States
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 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. Renewal is online at our Council website, www.navyleaguewestct.org then click "join/renew" at the top. Thank you.

Our Connecticut Council has 245 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.

2024 Council Board

OFFICERS

President..... Joseph Latwin
 Treasurer.....Richard Koch
 VP Sea Services.....Andrew Bisset
 VP Membership.....R. (Pete) Kenyon III
 VP Youth Programs...Stephen Gravereaux
 Secretary.....Tara Louise Edwards
 Communications.....Edward Fitzgerald
Emeritus member: David Ellis

OTHER BOARD MEMBERS

Robert Perkin Tess Oxenstierna
 Gerard Tighe John Weigold

SEA CADET CO BOARD MEMBERS

P. Alan Gerard, CO Dealey Division Stamford
 Sean Molinari, CO Edson Division New Haven
 Keith Cross, CO Nautilus Div. Groton
 Stephen Smith, CO Barque Eagle Div. Plainville
 Sean Jones, CO Bundy Division Bridgeport



Part of the crew of our adopted destroyer enjoying a rare swim during some downtime underway this summer.

Note armed shark watch sailor on deck, as a precaution.