

Steel Valley Dolphins

Sept Oct 2015



The official newsletter of the
USS Requin Base of the USSVI
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

USSVI Creed:

"To perpetuate the memory of our shipmates who gave their lives in the pursuit of duties while serving their country. That their dedication, deeds, and supreme sacrifice be a constant source of motivation toward greater accomplishments. Pledge loyalty and patriotism to the United States of America and its Constitution."



Meetings held on the second Saturday of the month normally in Leetsdale at the VFW Post and quarterly meetings held around our membership area.

- **Make a difference, get to a meeting!**

----- Pride Runs Deep -----

**Next meeting: NO MEETING THIS MONTH. Next Meeting at VFW Leetsdale
Nov 14th @ 1230.**

2015 USS Requin Base Officers

Base Commander	Hubert C. Dietrich	412-486-2635	hueyfromglenshaw@aol.com
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COB/Historian -	Clyde Porter, jr.	740-635-3179	candspporter@comcast.net



November

USS CORVINA (SS 226)
USS SCULPIN (SS 191)
USS CAPELIN (SS 289)
USS ALBACORE (SS 218)
USS GROWLER (SS 215)
USS SCAMP (SS 277)

November 16, 1943
November 19, 1943
November 23, 1943
November 7, 1944
November 8, 1944
November 9, 1944

Binnacle List

Bob and Carol Keller
Mat Holzer,
Rick Elster



Commanders Column:

It was great seeing everyone at the last meeting. There was no September meeting because of the Convention in town. I was both surprised and delighted to see Aaron and Sandy Ellis - they are doing well! Aaron had a stroke and Sandy had an operation. Their shipmate Ed Paul is running hot, straight and normal, since his health issues have been addressed - KUDOS to the three of you..... We also had two guests from another base and we appreciated them paying us a visit. They were visiting Major who was their shipmate.

Christmas Meeting & Luncheon:

Our December meeting/luncheon will be held on Sunday, December 6, 2015. The time will be from 12:00 Hours until 17:00 hours. It will be held at the TEUTONIA MANNERCHOR (German Club), 857 Phineas Street., Pittsburgh, Pa. 15212. It is located on East Ohio Street by the H.J.Heinz Plant, on the north side, just off of Route 28 and 279. The NORTH STAR KIDS will perform their holiday special program for us. The convention committee and the members at the October membership meeting voted to have a special holiday luncheon to say thanks to all the members for their support thru out the year and also during the convention. We wanted to give everyone a chance to enjoy the entertainment of the North Star Kids for the holiday season. The cost per person will be \$25.00 for a German style buffet, with a cash bar. If anyone has a special diet, please let us know so we can make accommodations for you. There will also be a gift exchange - \$10.00 limit. Reservations will be open **ONLY** for the membership & families until November 14 (base meeting), and then it will be open to guests and supporters of the base.

The Convention was a huge success. We had a few glitches, but all was resolved. We are still waiting on a few invoices so we can pay and find out where we stand financially. This could not have been so successful without a great committee. My co-chairs, Rick Elster & Joe Campisi did an outstanding job, working with me, over the course of the last two years. The rest of the committee was made up of Mike Allen, Lee Bookwalter, Clair Bouts, Don Bright, Ron Goron, Lou Hamil, Mark Hoag, Bob Keller, Frank Nicotra, Jeff Simon, John Stewart, Carl Stigers, Dolly Taskey and Rob Welts. (please forgive me if I forgot anyone.) These shipmates donated a lot of their time and effort over the course of the last two years - please give them KUDOS for a job well done.

ELECTION OF BASE OFFICERS - Bernie Sigler has been appointed as the nominating person for the Requin Base Election. Contact Bernie at - menhaden377@yahoo.com if you are interested on being nominated for one of the following base officers position.

1. Commander
2. 1st Vice Commander
3. 2nd Vice Commander
4. Secretary
5. Treasurer

- a. The officers will be elected by a majority vote of the members in good standing at the regular meeting held in the month of December.
 - b. A nominating committee will be appointed in the month of October to solicit nominations and will present the slate of nominees to the membership at the November meeting.
 - c. Additional nominations may be made by any member on the floor of the meeting prior to the election.
- There is currently an elected position open (1st Vice Commander)
There is a appointed position open (Storekeeper)! Please notify the commander if you are interested.

DUES COLLECTION:

The collection so far on the 2016 dues is as follows:

1. Officers & Committees - 100% (due inSeptember)
2. Associate Members - 87% (due in October)
3. Pa. Members - 60% (due in October)
4. Out of Pa Members - (due in November)
5. New Members who joined in 2015 - (due inDecember)

Calendars Sold:

1. Base Members - 93
2. Outside of Base - 106
- Total - 199

The Requin Base is proud to recognize the following shipmates for their loyalty to the base for 2016, for their continuous membership! Your pin will be mailed with your 2016 calendar. The five year shipmates will also receive a patch for the pin to be attached.

Five Years	Ten Years	Fifteen Years	Twenty Years
Tom Bates	Harold Farley	Bill Greenlee	Vince Segeleon
David Cochenour	Paul McKenzie	Sal Moliterno	Earl Wood
Fred Hayes	Bob Gourley	Doug Nunnery	
Frank Nicotra	Mark Winters	Tom Stewart	
Chuck Stoner	Ed Zdarko		

NEW MEMBERS:

Justin Crocker qualified in 2001 on the USS MIAMI SSN755. He left the navy in 2007 as a MM1(SS). Justin lives in Oakdale, Pa. Please e-mail Justin and welcome him aboard - jecrocker@gmail.com

Samantha Barszowski is joining as an associate member. Sam just graduated from the University of Pittsburgh and was a midshipmate, now (Ensign). Sam is proud to wear the deterrent patrol pin she received on a summer patrol. Sam is currently in Charleston S. Carolina attending Nuclear Power School. She hails from Phoenixville, Pa where she lives with her father Stephen. Sam is the Ensign who read the poem at the National Convention on board the USS Requin. Please e-mail Sam and welcome her aboard sib126@pitt.edu

Here is the poem that Sam read on 9/11
"When your final dive is made and your battery's running low

You'll know there lies a boat for you many fathoms here below
 With your annunciator's jammed on full and your depth gauge needles bent
 Your accumulator's dry of oil and your air banks are all spent
 It's when you get to wondering, "is my life boat rigged for dive?"
 Your guessing drill commences, "am I dead or still alive?"
 you pace the flooded decks with scorn and curse the flaws of man
 into the realms of Rex you've stepped and here you'll make your stand
 To live your life as sailors must at the bottom of the sea
 There's one you'll have to reckon - that one, my friend is thee
 Will your conscience do you justice when the final muster's in?
 Did you lead the kind of life you should in every port you've been?
 The answers to these questions and many, many more
 Are locked in the hearts of sailormen from Cannes to Singapore
 So, when your day for mass rolls around, the choice is up to you
 Sailor chart your course of life right now. chart it straight and true
 Now's the time to flood your tanks and trim up fore and aft
 It's a trifle late when the klaxon sounds to square away your craft
 Your final billet lies below on old oceans floor
 So be ready when the last word's passed
 Sailor, rest your oar"

ANNOUNCEMENT: FROM THE NATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE.

The USSVCF Scholarship Committee is now accepting Applications request for the 2016-2017 college school year. It will also be on the national web page under "Charitable Fund" on the left had side in "**BLUE**". Click on that and then follow "scholarship" to "Application" that should bring you to the 2016 scholarship package with three (3) down loads. If you have any problems please call Paul Orstad, scholarship chairman, and he will get you an application either by mail or down loading. His telephone number is - (860) - 334-6457.

SEPTEMBER

Members Birthday	Spouse Birthday	Anniversaries
Beauprez, Chris 9/14/67	Arroyo, Jamie 9/21	Ewald, Bob & Joeie 9/08
Bond, Mike 9/23/40	Baker, Angela, 9/25	Hoag, Mark & Adrians 9/20
Burdin, Tom 9/29/45	Beauprez, Debbie 9/25	Lewis, Jim & Karen 9/27
Carlton, Wil 9/21/36	Bence, Beverly 9/04	Riley, Ed & Rosemary 9/29
Dietrich, Huey 9/19/44	Boutelle, Barb 9/13	Paris & Linda Von Rabenau 9/08
Elias, Phil 9/04/50	Campisi, Jill 9/11	Wilkes, James & Gladys 9/08
Gasparovic, Mike 9/15/66	Cantwell, Buntly 9/14	Hilendorf, Chuck & Pat 9/17
Helmsing Jordan 9/15/86	Johnston, Janice 9/15	Holzwarth, Scott & Eva 9/29
Howton, 9/25/55	LaCoombe, Lynda 9/09	Lowengard, Lesli & Jean 9/1
Krautstrucak, Bob 9/18/24	Lucas, Pam 9/01	Morgan, Ed & Sanda 9/28
Kuhn, Blain 9/25/44	Cochenour, Carol 9/08	Steward, John & Lois 9/13
Molierno, Sal 9/18/25	McKenzie, Yvonne 9/30	
Riley, Earl 9/17/45	Stewart, Nancy 9/10	
Ross, James, 9/17/24	Larson, Judy 9/18	
McCarthy 9/27/57	Stroede Trudith 9/14	
Watson, Bob 9/21/25		
Zawierwszynski, Mike 9/13/82		

OCTOBER

Arroyo, Nick 10/10/89	Biemer, Helen 10/06	Alfred, Lloyd & Elizabeth 10/18
Beadle, Bill 10/29/35	MacPherson, Deb 10/06	Arroyo, Dennis & Jamie 10/12
Beal, Jeff 10/26/67	Alfred, Elizabeth 10/29	Calabrese, Tom & Deneen 10/31

Bruce, Jon 10/04/50	Bates, Tammy 10/04	Dietrich, Huey & Edie 10/15
Ewald, John 10/03/57	Calabrese, Deneen 10/07	Elster, Rick & Judy 10/09
Garlock, Robert 10/12/29	Gasparovic, Kela 10/25	Gaylor, Gerry & Linda 10/08
Gossmiler, Josh 10/05/78	Lukasik, Ginny 10/30	Johnson, James & Janice 10/24
Kaufman, Robert 10/21/19	Schmidt, Kathy 10/19	McGee, Bob & Karen 10/21
Mann, Steve 10/10/58	Dolgos, Kathleen 10/15	Moore, Bob & Jean 10/19
McKenzie, Paul 10/06/46		Gibson, Chris & Peggy 10/28
Nunnery, Doug 10/0/.36		Phelen, Jim & Marianne 10/24
Porter, Clyde 10/02/54		Simpson, Dick & Betty 10/30
		Tate, Richard & Laura 10/04

Any additions, deletions or corrections, please let me know.....

Requin Base Meeting Minutes

October 10, 2015

Leetsdale, PA

Base Commander Huey Dietrich called the meeting to order.

Attendees: Mike Allen, Greg Bayne, Lee & Patsy Bookwalter, Clair & Nancy Bouts, Joe Campisi, Huey & Edie Dietrich, Aaron & Sandy Ellis, Peter & Stephanie Foster, Major Galloway, Gerry & Linda Gaylor, Richard & Beverly Geyer, Ron Goron, Bob & Lynn Gourley, Bill & Donna Greenlee, Ric & Joan Guntag, James & Sandra Messer, Vince Metz, Ed & Dorothy Paul, Clyde & Sharon Porter, Bob Renninger, Jeff & Eileen Simon, Bob & Dorothy Stahl, George Stass, Carl Stigers, Don & Dolly Taskey.

Base Commander Huey Dietrich gave the quote of the day: "facts are stubborn but statistics are more applyable"

Requin History: On October 1, 1947 Requin moved north for exercises with her sister radar picket submarine Spinax SS-489. On October 1, 1966, Requin cruised around the South American continent with various South American navies. On October 20th Requin was dedicated as a memorial and exhibit and opened for tours.,

Base Commander Huey Dietrich: Let us at this time, with a moment of silent prayer, remember our Shipmates who made the supreme sacrifice that we may gather here in Peace. We dedicate this meeting to our Shipmates on Eternal Patrol, to perpetuate their memories in our lives and to honor our Shipmates on active duty in the service of the first line of defense of our Nation.

USS SEAWOLF (SS 197)	October 3, 1944
USS S-44 (SS 155)	October 7, 1943
USS WAHOO (SS 238)	October 11, 1943
USS DORADO (SS 248)	October 12, 1943
USS ESCOLAR (SS 294)	October 17, 1944
USS SHARK II (SS 314)	October 24, 1944
USS DARTER (SS 227)	October 24, 1944
USS TANG (SS 306)	October 25, 1944
USS O-5 (SS 66)	October 29, 1923

We also wish to remember our shipmates of the Requin Base: Jack Hart, Thomas Wayland and Eugene Camarota. Finally let us remember all the brave submariners who died performing their duties aboard submarines, some individually and some in groups, but where the submarine itself was not lost.

Chaplain Carl Stigers gave the Invocation.

Chief Of The Boat Clyde Porter led the Base in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Members introduced themselves and the boats they qualified on.

Base Secretary Jeff Simon reported that Minutes of the August 2015 meeting were published in the SVD. There was no meeting in September.

Treasurer Lee Bookwalter's report was presented and approved by the members present.

Other Reports:

Binnacle List includes Mat Holzer, Bob Keller, Carol Keller, Mike Markel, Rick Elster

Eternal Patrol Monty Silvers

Membership stands at 216

Eagle Scouts presentations are ongoing and members are encouraged to participate.

Kap(SS)4Kid(SS), nothing to report

Memorials And Ceremonies:

Nothing planned

Old Business:

District Commanders in the North East Region all re-elected for 2 year term. Thanks to everyone for their support.

Convention News:

44,925 hits on our website

340 shipmates registered with a total attendance of 589

New Business:

A report was presented on the status of the Leetsdale VFW. A motion to donate \$50 to the VFW was approved by the members present.

National Dues are increasing by \$5 per year.

Base election will be held in December. Contact Bernie Sigler, Election Chairman, if interested. The following positions are up for election – Commander, First Vice Commander, Second Vice Commander, Secretary and Treasurer. First Vice Commander and Storekeeper positions are currently vacant.

Christmas luncheon and meeting on December 6 at the German Club. Cost of buffet and entertainment will be \$25 plus cash bar Tom Stewart from New Castle is down-sizing and can no longer provide berthing for the Nautilus. We are looking for a new berth preferably indoors. Current berthing cost is approximately \$61 per month.

For The Good Of The Order:

Huey Deitrich and Joe Campisi attended a road dedication in Williamsport, PA

Letters were read from Rich Beauregard, Frank Hood and Vietnam Helicopter Pilot Association.

Change of command for USS Pittsburgh on November 6, 2015.

Chaplain Carl Stigers gave the Benediction and blessing of today's meal.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned.

Next meeting: Leetsdale, PA VFW at 1230 hours on November 14, 2015.

[Local "Spook" Tells Tales of Time as Naval Cryptologist](#)

[Julia Bergman, NEW LONDON DAY, 7 SEP 15](#)

It was the winter of 1963 and George Cassidy was in the midst of the Navy's boot camp in Great Lakes, Mich., when he was told to go see the psychiatrist.

"This knocked the socks off of me," Cassidy said recently from his home in Stonington. "I didn't think I was stupid or crazy or something. ... You think all sorts of things."

The psychiatrist asked him personal questions and more broad ones about communications and whether he could keep secrets. He left the meeting with the psychiatrist still unsure of why he'd been ordered there in the first place.

Cassidy joined the Navy in October of 1962 right around the time of the Cuban Missile Crisis.

After the meeting with the psychiatrist, an officer approached Cassidy and told him the Navy wanted him to be a "CT."

"And I said 'what's a CT?,' and they said 'we can't tell you it's classified.' So I'm going OK why do I want to be something that nobody is going to let me know what it is," Cassidy recalled.

"And it's going around and around. "What's a CT?" And nobody would tell me," he said. Finally one of the chiefs told him "it's something like a radioman."

Cassidy didn't want to be a radioman but he found out the training school for CTs, which he would later learn stood for cryptologic technician, was in Pensacola, Fla.

"This is in January 1963 in Great Lakes where it was 32 degrees below zero. I would've gone down there just to be a cook, you know?" he said.

He spent nine months at CT school in Pensacola, where his notebooks "and everything" we're kept in a safe. None of the materials could leave the classroom. He graduated in September 1963.

In those days, Cassidy explained, there were several different areas of CTs. He was a "T brancher," meaning the technical branch that dealt with radar reception, microwave reception, direction finding and signals.

Up until that point, the "rule on the street" was that CTs didn't go to sea. So when Cassidy received a set of orders to report to the USS Oxford, he paused.

"I said wait a minute, CTs don't go to sea and they said 'oh yeah, they do now. This is the Navy's first spy ship,'" Cassidy recalled. He was among the first cadre, or experimental bunch as he puts it, of CTs to be assigned to sea duty.

A World War II ship, the Oxford was converted in 1961 to a spy ship, Cassidy said. He first came aboard in 1963.

What first stuck out to him was "all these antennas.' The antennas, he explained, were "not for transmitting but for receiving."

"We would receive microwave transmissions and to receive it you had to get in between the transmitting and the receiving antenna which meant we would go to into base in Cuba or South America (for example) and pretend we were broken down so we could receive it and then get the hell out," Cassidy said.

He described how one room of the ship was lined with tape recorders, espionage equipment and receivers.

Cassidy was on the ship for 18 months, the best 18 months of his life so far, he said.

"We were spooks," Cassidy said. "We were spying. We were getting stuff that nobody else had ever received before."

The Oxford was the first vessel to successfully bounce a signal off the moon and have it received in Washington, D.C. This was to prevent anyone, including the Russian electronic intelligence trawlers that were always around the Oxford, according to Cassidy, from intercepting communications.

"We could send signals and nobody would even know," Cassidy said.

Cassidy said he feels comfortable talking about some of his experiences as a CT because of his appearance in a few chapters of James Bamford's book *Body of Secrets*, which Cassidy said went through about 18 different lawyers for the author and the Navy. The movie "The Imitation Game" brought renewed interest to the cryptology field. Though the movie has received criticism for taking too much liberty with history.

Fifty years later, Cassidy sat in an ornate room and read the orders, which list him having a top secret security clearance, he received in 1965. "George Cassidy, report aboard the USS Classified. Then in parentheses it said 'a U.S. submarine,'" he said.

The USS Classified was a diesel submarine called the USS Halfbeak. Cassidy wore a radioman patch on his uniform to hide their mission even from the crew itself.

In August 1965, Cassidy was part of a top secret briefing with various military "brass" detailing his new assignment. At the time, there was concern about advances in Soviet ballistic missile capabilities.

When he got back to the base, Cassidy said he "looked up on a National Geographic map" where they were going "and I said Oh (expletive). It was way north in the Barents Sea."

More specifically, it was an island where the Russians tested their missile and satellite radar.

"Our mission was to go up there and we knew from other intelligence that they were going to be testing in the month of October and November of 1965," Cassidy. "In all the history that you'll find online of the Halfbeak there's nothing mentioned about this because it's been wiped clean."

To keep the boat quiet, the transmitting tubes and radio communications were taken out.

"So when we left we really had no way to communicate with the outside world," Cassidy said.

The numbers on the outside of the boat identifying it as American were also painted over by Cassidy and other crew members.

The job was to record all the electronic counter measures off of other submarines, Russian submarines and aircraft, he said. And record all the telemetry they could receive from the Russian tracking station.

The first night they arrived in the area, they were able to get "some stuff," Cassidy said, but the crew figured it'd be more active in the daytime. "And it was," he said.

That next day they killed the diesel engines to "go down a little deeper," and just keep the electronic counter measures mast up. They could only go about three or four knots otherwise the ECM mast would create a wake.

"We got some pretty good stuff," Cassidy said.

One night while Cassidy was listening on the equipment and he heard a radar that he was able to identify as TU 95 Bear Bomber, the Russians long-range surveillance aircraft at the time. The CTs compiled a book that said "if you were listening on such and such a frequency and you heard a radar signal with a specific sweep sound and a sweep rotation rate, it might be this," Cassidy explained of how he was able to identify the aircraft.

"So I call the captain, I say "Hey, I got this TU-95. Strength is really, really weak though," Cassidy recalled.

The captain asked him to find out where the aircraft was coming from.

All of a sudden the radar strength hit the strongest level. The aircraft was right over the Halfbeak, which promptly pulled its mast down and dove down.

"We didn't find out until later, until these tapes went back to NSA (the National Security Agency), that the Russians had a way of reducing the power of their radar but still keeping all the parameters that they could to sweep out further," Cassidy said.

The crew went back the next night to go in closer. The guy on the periscope noticed something bizarre floating all around in the water. It was logs. Cassidy said the crew suspected the Russians dumped the logs in the water "so we couldn't raise anything."

"So we played up there for a while and then sonar says I've got two vessels with four high speed screws approaching us. Only one thing that could be, it was a Cruckley-class destroyer. ... We heard this noise and sonar says drop the depth charge. We had stuff broken," Cassidy said, but he said he couldn't say anything further.

Halfbeak returned home with "a lot of good intelligence," he said.

[From Leading Marching Bands to Commanding Submarines: How One Music Graduate Found Success in the U.S. Navy](#)

[College of Fine Arts, Aug 27](#)

When Jason Pittman graduated The University of Texas at Austin in 1998 and commissioned as an officer in the U.S. Navy, his intention was to serve his commitment, then use his Music Studies degree from the Butler School of Music to direct a high school marching band.

Now 17 years later, Pittman holds the rank of commander, and in June he took command of the USS Helena, a fast-attack submarine based out of Norfolk, Virginia.

While nuclear power submarine officer isn't an obvious career path from music major, Pittman took time between offshore missions to describe how all that time studying music and the euphonium continues to influence his Navy career today.

Navy Cmdr. Jason Pittman during a command-change ceremony onboard the USS Helena.

Are there any lessons from UT you carry with you today?

It's kind of interesting depending on how you think about it. Some of the things I think that transfer are like when you're working with an ensemble and you have to listen across and hear a bunch of things happening at one time, that is very helpful for me.

When driving submarine, a bunch of people are talking to you at one time giving you a bunch of information—to pick up on everything at one time is a skill that's been very helpful.

A lot of classes I had with Bob Duke have been very beneficial in that a lot of what he did was very data-driven—taking cold hard data and analyzing it to really see what's going on.

Do you run into many other officers who majored in music?

I was the first music major accepted to the program. Everywhere I go people are astounded I became a nuke, lasted this long and came into command. I feel like the education I got at UT and how the professors pushed you to think about things—how to learn, how to process info—is what's really been beneficial. The work ethic you get from a music background, that ability to focus for hours on end on a singular task, is really what helped me get through hours of training in nuclear power school.

Going through UT and the great teachers I had and learning how to do those things translated in a way people don't expect.

The work ethic and the drive are the real benefits to help me get where I'm at.

What is your core job in the Navy?

We call it a warfare designation. When I got commissioned, it was as a nuclear power submarine officer. Ever since then, I've been assigned either to a submarine or a shore command. Submarines is what I do for a living.

For the submarine itself, the Navy has three different types of submarines. The Helena is a fast-attack submarine. We cover a myriad of missions for the Navy. We do intelligence gathering, hunt other submarines and mine warfare. It can either plant mines or find a way through minefields. We also can bring Navy Seals on board and drive up to the shoreline and send them off.

I'm the commanding officer of the Helena, so I am responsible for everything the ship does. My job is to make sure that my crew is trained and ready and that my ship is in top physical condition.

The Helena just finished six months deployed to the Persian Gulf area of operations. They got back in May, and I took command in June. Now we're in a maintenance period where we get updates on equipment, and in a couple months we're on to the next deployment.

Navy Cmdr. Jason Pittman and his spouse Victoria Pittman during his command-change ceremony onboard the USS Helena.

As a teacher, you would share knowledge with your students. Do you still feel that you get to do this, but with sailors instead of music students?

Absolutely. All my friends were convinced I was getting out [of the Navy] to go be a band director.

I love music. I love working with people and teams and helping them achieve things they didn't think they could do. In the Navy, a lot of guys I'm working with are very young and still very much trying to figure out what the world is. I get a lot of satisfaction in helping them become not just great sailors and leaders, but great people.

I didn't become a band director, but I still feel like I'm a teacher. As I get more senior, I bring my knowledge and help these guys learn how to be the very best at what they do.

Do you still play music?

I have instruments lying around the house. I taught marching band until 2007.

My biggest connection is still doing work with Blue Coats Drum and Bugle Corps. I sponsor at least one member and help with their fees to go march.

Navy, Local Officials Kick Off Sub Century

Julia Bergman, New London Day, Oct 17

GROTON, Conn. – At 377 feet long, the nuclear-powered attack submarine that made its way up the Thames River Friday afternoon dwarfed those that came nearly 100 years before it.

Sunday marks the 100th anniversary of the first submarines to arrive at the submarine base, and Navy and local officials gathered Friday at one of the many piers where submarines dock at the base to commemorate that anniversary and kick off a yearlong celebration of submarines.

Gov. Dannel P. Malloy has designated October 2015 through October 2016 as the celebration of "Connecticut's Submarine Century."

The USS California, a Virginia-class submarine back from a month-long operation, served as a symbolic re-enactment of the arrival of the first submarines to be homeported in Groton in 1915.

On Oct. 18, 1915, the submarines G-1, G-2 and G-4 under the care of the tender USS Ozark arrived at the sub base. Then the submarines E-1, D-1, and D-3 with the tender USS Tonopah arrived, bolstering the small force.

"From these seeds would sprout the nation's first submarine base," Capt. Carl Lahti, commanding officer at the base, said in his remarks.

Today, 15 nuclear-powered submarines are homeported at the base, according to Lahti.

The Naval Submarine School, where nearly all the Navy's submariners pass through, is also celebrating its 100th birthday.

Sen. Chris Murphy, D-Conn., was one of several special guests who embarked on the California as it made its way to the pier.

"What a ride, really a highlight of my first three years in the United States Senate representing southeastern Connecticut to get to ride into port with Commander (Eric) Sager and his very capable crew," a visibly giddy Murphy said.

Mayor of the City of Groton Marian Galbraith also rode in on the submarine.

"It's our opportunity to tell the state, the nation, but most importantly the Navy that we are so proud to be your home," Galbraith said of the yearlong celebration. "We are submarine proud."

Galbraith, Lahti and Murphy all outlined the strong relationship in this region between the Navy and the community.

Since its establishment as the nation's first submarine base, Lahti said the base's mission has been "to provide the facilities and deliver the services that create the environment for the fleet, the fighter and the family to deploy combat ready submarine crews and to train a corps of professional submariners."

Today, the base carries out that mission through a focus on infrastructure, energy, the environment, encroachment and engagement, he said.

Since 2005, more than \$200 million in federal and state investments to the base have been made to reduce unneeded infrastructure, make energy improvements, and, Lahti said, "become one operational unit remedy away from being off the Superfund list from the EPA," among other projects.

Asked by reporters after the news conference whether he feared another Base Realignment and Closure round, Murphy said, "I'm not afraid of BRAC coming back."

"We've made such amazing investments in the sub base both from a federal perspective and a state perspective that we're confident the sub base is here to stay," he continued.

The Navy is gearing up to build more submarines than ever before, Murphy said, with two Virginia-class submarines being built a year and construction soon to start on the Ohio-replacement class, the Navy's new class of ballistic missile submarines.

Sub Leaders Discuss Progress on Integrating Women into Force

David Larter, Navy Times, Oct 26

Sailor issues were on the docket at the annual unclassified gathering of the Silent Service in late October, from the expanding number of female submariners to the resiliency of junior sailors.

Leaders discussed new approaches to handling stress and mental health and their planning as enlisted women enter the submarine fleet over the next year. Some highlights:

Mental health

A submariner is medevaced from their sub every 14 days for mental health issues, an issue the Submarine community is trying to tackle through better access to mental health care, the Atlantic Fleet's top enlisted bubblehead said Oct. 22.

Mental health issues account for about 30 percent of the unplanned losses — where sailors leave the fleet for reasons other than normal rotation or temporary assigned duty, Force Master Chief Wes Koshoffer said.

It's a trait that is pronounced among the millennial generation now populating the lower ranks, with most losses among sailors E-1 to E-6.

"I'm a fan of millennials all day long: They are smart, capable, driven — they are getting the job done," Koshoffer said. "But there is a flaw in the system, and that's this millennial phenomenon that the reaction to discipline, failure or rejection, generally [elicits] a response disproportionate to what you would expect."

Setbacks and challenges can cause tumult, even suicidal thoughts for younger sailors.

"A first breakup with a girlfriend, maybe they fail a qualification board and they've never failed anything before ... and the first words out of their mouths are 'I'm going to kill myself.'"

The force is trying to get ahead of the problem by improving crisis lines and making sure sailors aren't stigmatized for reporting mental health issues, an important step toward lowering the Navy's suicide toll.

"We cannot rewire an entire generation, but we can adjust, we can change the environment," he said.

Fleet areas now have an embedded mental health professional who works with chaplains to better address the issues.

"We've trained ourselves on how to react, we don't overreact," he said. "We take them off the ship, get them help ... and when we get the 'go' signal from a mental health professional, we get them right back in the force instead of overreacting and having them as a loss forever."

Women on subs

The first four enlisted women passed the intensive basic enlisted submarine course Oct. 16, Koshoffer said, bringing the integration of enlisted women on subs this year one step closer.

The women will join the Blue and Gold crews of the guided-missile submarine Michigan, where berthings are being modified to accommodate them.

The sub force is reviewing its policies around relationships between submariners, Koshoffer said, citing a few couples who met in "A" school and who are now in advanced training together.

"The sum total of the plan to integrate enlisted women into submarines, we are revising our instruction that was — no kidding — 49 pages long of excruciating detail on what you wear on the treadmill and how you manage the head. The instruction just ought to read: We will treat each other with dignity and respect because we are professionals.

"We have a fraternization policy and until we cross those lines, proceed."

The videotaping of women officers undressing on board the ballistic missile submarine Wyoming was alluded to during the junior officer panel.

Lt. Cmdr. Krysten Ellis, a supply officer who served on a submarine, told the audience that she thought the Silent Service could integrate enlisted women but that setbacks are likely.

"The sub force has always been able to adapt," Ellis said. "Obviously things happened when women were integrated. ... When enlisted women integrate, they'll have a plan, they'll execute it and some bumps will happen. They'll recover from those bumps and good things will happen. I don't have any doubts the sub force will be able to adapt."

Naval Reactors controversy

The selection of Adm. John Richardson to be the chief of naval operations has been a sore point in the retired submarine community, who were concerned that his leaving the eight-year Naval Reactors job after just three years sets a precedent that could undermine nuclear safety.

If NR becomes a landing pad for rising four stars, the thinking goes, then the Reactors boss could be thinking about follow-on military commands instead of overseeing the Nuclear Navy and its largely spotless safety record.

At the conference, one audience member asked Adm. Frank Caldwell, the new NR head, if he would serve his entire term so he "won't have to worry about his fitness reports or any of that BS."

"I think the answer to that is the Navy and the nation sees value in this eight-year tour," Caldwell replied. "There is a lot in this program that is significant, and there is value in having continuity of leadership. And I think what's been indicated to me is a commitment to preserve this as we go ahead."

Also during the answers, the Reactors boss said the force was looking at upping its capabilities against ships, by adding an anti-ship missile.

"I think it's something we need to consider and move out on," he said. "We are looking at that and we are taking some steps to deliver that to the submarine force."