

Steel Valley Dolphins

April 2018



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 BADen at the American Legion Post and quarterly meetings held around our membership area.

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

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

Next Meeting: 1230 12 May 2018 at the American Legion in Baden Pa.

2017 USS Requin Base Officers

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



Binnacle List

Aaron Ellis
Ron Goron



the meeting's theme, "Love." The students are by Marcia Barna, an instructor at From the Top music shop. The Woman's Club has been an active organization for more than 50 years, holding various community fundraisers throughout the year. Meetings are held at 7 p.m. the second Monday of each month in the church. The March meeting will focus on Membership Month. Women interested in joining are invited to attend, or call Pam Priches, membership chair, at 412-651-1135.

From left, 400 birthday The student on-colored her by a ne Rebich. "T

Res Str a S fu M b

American Legion Post 902 in Houston presented a check for \$500 to the Submarine Veterans, Requin Base, in Pittsburgh. Pictured, from left, are Eric Bookmiller, chaplain of American Legion Post 902 and a member of the Subvets, and Huey Dietrich, commander of the Submarine Veterans, Requin Base.

The Clarksville Lions Club has elected Peyton Knoble as its

Commanders Column: April 2018:

RECORD MEETING ATTENDANCE – 66

Our last base meeting, which was held in Canonsburg, Pa was a great success! Before I go any further, I want to personally thank Shipmate Eric Bookmiller and his first mate, Margie! Eric set the meeting up at VFW Post 191 and did a wonderful job. Margie helped and assisted and she presented each member in attendance, a candy bar from the local candy company. This meeting was to honor our 2018 Holland Club Inductees.

Holland Club Chairman, shipmate Bernie Sigler gave a great opening introduction to honor the inductees. Bernie and Joey Campisi presented each honoree, two certificates, Holland Club Hat, Patch, Coin and Pin. They were all so happy and enjoyed the ceremony. In addition, a beautiful decorated sheet cake was served in their honor Their Holland Club Membership Cards have not arrived, but as soon as they do, they will be sent out!

HOLLAND CLUB MEMBERS 2018

Ron Campbell-Robert Davis-Ron Goron-Gary Gresh-Ric Guntang-Charles Loshkoch

FREE VETS BUS TRIP TO WASHINGTON, D.C.

Our guest speaker, Gary Fisher handles the WW II and Korean War Era Veterans and all who served prior to May 15, 1975 to travel to D. C. The next trip is scheduled for Thursday, May 24, 2018. Please call 724-709-3614 to Register. They will visit three war memorials and a stop at Arlington National Cemetery with meals being provided as well as snacks and beverages. Departure Points: Beaver-Ross Park-Greentree-Monroeville. There are a few spaces left for this trip.

REQUIN BASE SURVEY FOR VET TRIP TO WASHINGTON

The next bus trip is schedule around the first week in October. It would be wonderful if we could fill the bus with Requin submariners. I will put out first call for Requin Base shipmates (around 50 to fill the bus). If we don't have close to 50 shipmates then if you have a veteran buddy, he can be included. This trip is only for veterans, no friends or spouses.

We do not have any information as of yet. As soon as we have our group signed up, then we will find out all the details to pass on to the group. If we don't have enough members to almost fill the bus, then we will just let everyone notify Gary if you intend on going. This is just a survey - to find out if there is any interest on going. The trip makes for a long day and will depart around 0500 hours.

BIRTHDAYS

Members

Boutelle, Larry 5/27/33
 Davis, James 5/19/93
 Edwards, John 5/25/43
 Gresh, Garry 5/23/49
 Landri, Bruce 5/04/37
 Lyons, Ed 5/25/43
 Metz, Vince 5/09/67
 MacPherson, B 5/20/54
 Regits, Al 5/14/32
 Schmidt, R.L. 5/26/39
 Solinger, Bob 5/13/40
 Stewart, John 5/23/40
 Tolbert, Chuck 5/20/54

First Mates

Bruce, Connie 5/31
 Campbell, Nita-Lou 5/31
 Donnelly, Helen 5/20
 Foster, Stephany 5/17
 Geyer, Beverly 5/08
 Greenlee, Donna 5/19
 Humes, Gosia 5/13
 Lindsay, Sandra 5/20
 Masterson, Kim 5/25
 Naso, Cathleen 5/20
 Porter, Sharon 5/30
 Spensor, Carrie 5/17
 Stahl, Dorothy 5/24

ANNIVERSARIES

Geyer, Dick & Beverly 5/08
 Klein, Bob & Marilyn 5/12
 Myers, Bob & Jude 5/29
 Masterson, Bat & Kim 5/18
 McGinty, Shawn & Lisa 5/08
 Campisi, Joe & Jill 5/18
 Osborn, Russ & Francis 5/21
 Siege, Brian & Tina 5/29
 Zdarko, Ed & Barbara 5/27

Underkoffer, Judy 5/22

NEW MEMBERS

Jared Lawrence qualified on the USS BOISE SSN-704 in 2012 as a ETV(SS). He is active duty as a ETV1(SS) and serving as a navy recruiter in the Beaver Valley area. Jared lives in Clinton, Pa with his first mate Jordan. Please e-mail Jared and welcome him aboard – lawrenceJ104@gmail.com

We have recruited three (3) new members in 2018, with three more members in the pipeline. Our goal is to recruit 10 new members each year to help keep our membership status quo. Each year, due to shipmates going on Eternal Patrol and/or leaving the Requin Base and USSVI, we always try and keep building.

Currently we are tied for the sixth (6th) largest base in USSVI. Here is the list of the top ten (10).

Groton 1544 – Charleston 275 – Hampton 269 – Brementon 263 – San Diego 248– Requin 185 – Maire Island 185 – Long Island 176 – Peach 170 – Razor Back 160 – N. J. South 153. We are the largest inland Base.

BOOK RAFLE: We have received the two books from Frank Hood. He and his brother co wrote **POOPIE SUITS & COWBOY BOOTS** (Tales of a Submarine Officer During the Height of the Cold War). Frank was a member of the Requin Base. He moved to New England to be with his family and adorable grand kids. He will be the incoming commander of the Marblehead Base. The members at the last base meeting approved to purchase two (2) books. One will be for our base library and the other will be to raffle off to our members and friends (who ever purchases a ticket). Please let me know and I will send you your ticket receipts. (make out check to Requin Base and send to 213 Andrew Drive, Glenshaw, Pa. 15116. The raffle will be held at our June 16th base meeting (in Columbia, Ohio). This will give us some time to reach out to our shipmates and base supporters.

The book is autographed by Frank as well as his brother Charles. The cost of the raffle tickets will be \$1.00 a piece or eight for \$5.00. The book will be sent at no cost to who ever the winner will be.

SCORPION 50th Anniversary Memorial Patch and Coin has arrived. We have received two commemorative patches and a challenge coin. The 50th Anniversary Memorial Service will be held on May 26, 2018 at the Norfolk Navy Base. We sponsored two Scorpion crew members – COMMISSARYMAN FIRST CLASS, JORGE LOIS SANTANA – from Santura, P.R., AND DENNIS CHARLES KNAPP, MACHINIST MATE THIRD CLASS – from Washington, Pa. The biography of each submariner, patch and coin will be displayed in our case.

PRIDE RUNS DEEP:

Speaking of our display case, I need at least three or four shipmates who want to volunteer to put the display case back together again. We moved it from the storage area, out to the meeting room. It should only take a few hours to piece it back together and put our STUFF in side so the members and the American Legion can enjoy our treasures. Let me know when and if you are available!

Requin Base Meeting Minutes

April 14, 2018
Canonsburg PA

Base Commander Huey Dietrich called the meeting to order.

Attendees: James & Jennifer Beachler, Tino & Sally Bolcato, Clair & Nancy Bouts, Eric & Margie Bookmiller, Lee & Patsy Bookwalter, George & Cindy Brown, Greg & Gwen Busko, Tom & Deneen Calabrese, Ron & Nita Campbell, Joe Campisi, Huey & Edie Dietrich, Gary Fisher, Gerry Gaylor, Dick & Beverly Geyer, Bob Gourley, Bill & Donna Greenlee, Gary & Debbie Gresh, Rick & Joan Guntang, Lou Hamill, James Kontier, John Lakasik, Bill & Sandra Lindsey, Jim & Charleen List, Charles & Nancy Loshkosh, Bat Masterson, Rory McRory, Jim & Sandy Messer, Vince Metz, Bob & Jude Myers, Rick & Patricia Nelson, Frank Nicotra, Mike Pellegrino, Chip & Sharon Porter, Brian Sieg, Bernie & Dot Sigler, Dan & Darlene SkullNecker, George Stass, Carl Stigers, John Swords, Jim & Char West, Mike & Tina Wyckoff

Base Commander Huey Dietrich: Quotes of the day: "Take your sub quals seriously. Just remember when you report to your new boat submarining is no big deal. Any ship in the Navy can sink but it is your ability to make the other part happen that counts."

Requin History: April 28, 1945 commissioned with Commander Slay D. Cutter in command. April 4, 1967, Requin departed for 6th Fleet deployment.

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.

Boats Lost:

USS PICKEREL (SS 177)	April 3, 1943
USS SNOOK (SS 279)	April 8, 1945
USS THRESHER (SSN 593)	April 10, 1963
USS GUDGEON (SS 211)	April 18, 1944
USS GRENADIER (SS 210)	April 22, 1943

We also remember our departed members of the Requin Base David Helmold, Jack Kordes and Larry Simon. Let us also remember 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 Chip Porter led the Base in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Members introduced themselves and the boats they qualified on.

Minutes of the previous meeting were published in the SVD and on the Requin Base website.

Treasurer Lee Bookwalter reported that an accounting of base assets, expenditures, and deposits is available upon request.

Other Reports:

Binnacle List: Ron Goron

Membership stands at 186

Storekeeper Frank Nicotra reported on available small stores at the meeting and online (RequinBase.org).

Memorials, Parades And Ceremonies:

Memorial service USS Reguin – Sunday May 27, 0945 muster

Carnegie parade – Sunday May 27, 1400 hours

Sewickley parade – Monday May 28, 1000 hours

Coraopolis parade – Monday May 28, 1330 hours

Canonsburg parade – Wednesday July 4

Leetsdale parade – Wednesday July 4, 1400 hours

Beaver Veterans Day – Sunday November 11

Shipmate Jim Metz Reported on Eagle Scouts court of honor presentations was given.

Social Events:

Three Rivers Leathernecks (color guard for memorial services) spaghetti dinner, April 22

VFW Post 3945 annual fish fry for veterans, Wednesday May 9

Guest Speaker Gary Fisher talked about veteran bus trips to Washington DC and other activities he is involved in.

Old Business:

None

New Business:

None

For The Good Of The Order:

Base members qualified in submarines for 50 years: Ronald Campbell, Robert Davis, Ronald Goron, Gary Gresh, Rich Guntang, Charles Loshkosh were inducted into the Holland Club.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned.

Next meeting: Baden PA American Legion at 1230 hours on May 12, 2018



Health Care Cost ► Military vs. Civilian | 2018

Retirees and surviving spouses and their families have experienced significant cost-share increases for their TRICARE benefits over the past couple military budgets. Increases in pharmacy costs, copayments, catastrophic caps, and annual deductibles and a new enrollment fee for TRICARE Select users continue to erode the overall benefit. MOAA perseveres as an advocate leader in ongoing efforts against insidious and disproportional cost-sharing increases to this hard-earned service benefit.

Many military retirees have limited knowledge on what their civilian counterparts pay for comparable employer-provided health care coverage. While a comparison of military retiree to employer-provided health care might be akin to equating avocados to kumquats, a well-informed constituency is fundamental to defending and defeating future battles with Pentagon and Capitol Hill influencers against TRICARE fee increases. In 2017, the average employer-provided family health care plan cost \$18,764, a 3.4-percent increase from 2016. Family coverage premiums have increased 19 percent since 2012 and 55 percent since 2007. Employees covered under these plans typically pay 31 percent of the overall premium, or \$5,817 a year, according to a Kaiser Family Foundation survey. While not diminishing the avocado to kumquat argument, let's compare TRICARE retiree coverage costs with the national average employer-provided family coverage

2018	TRICARE Prime	TRICARE Select	Employer-Provided*
Premium (annual)	\$578	\$0	\$5,817
Deductible	\$0	\$300	\$2,650
Catastrophic Cap	\$3,000	\$3,000	Variable
Min.-Max Out of Pocket	\$578-\$3,000	\$300-\$3,000	\$5,817-\$8,467

*Kaiser Family Foundation and Health Research & Educational Trust 2017 Annual Survey of Employer Health Benefits

Health care costs are projected to increase at 5.6 percent a year until 2025, driven by inflation in the cost of medical services and products and an aging U.S. population, according to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. Although the current outlook is that we will have a respite on new health care fee increases in the FY 2019 National Defense Authorization Act, TRICARE fee battles will remain on our radar screens for the foreseeable future.

Our civilian counterparts pay significantly higher premiums and deductibles for similar health care benefits. MOAA effectively conveys our shared belief that military retirees, families, and survivors earned their relatively low-cost health care benefits through long years of service and sacrifice. Attempts at comparisons are inevitable when discussing national budget outlays, which makes it crucial to understand and appreciate the “playing field conditions,” in order to set, meet, and achieve your advocacy goals. [Source: MOAA Newsletter | March 29, 2018 ++]

Biostatic Project ► Slowing Life To Save Life | DARPA

When troops are wounded, time is precious. That’s why the fast-ticking minutes that follow such an event are called the “golden hour.” Get the right care within the right time and you survive. Wrong care or an evac takes too long — you’re dead. While major efforts across the government push to advance medical technology in the field and speed up the vehicles that carry troops to top treatment, one new effort is trying something even more ambitious — slowing life to save life. Researchers at the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) recently launched a five-year project dubbed “Biostatic.” The program will “leverage molecular biology to develop innovative ways of controlling the speed at which living systems operate.” By doing that they hope to extend the “golden hour” before it’s too late.

“At the molecular level, life is a set of continuous biochemical reactions, and a defining characteristic of these reactions is that they need a catalyst to occur at all,” said Tristan McClure-Begley, the Biostasis program manager. Those catalysts, McClure-Begley said, are proteins and “large molecular machines” that transform chemical and kinetic energy into biological processes. “Our goal with Biostasis is to control those molecular machines and get them to all slow their roll at about the same rate so that we can slow down the entire system gracefully and avoid adverse consequences when the intervention is reversed or wears off.” The program starts small, first by aiming at slowing certain processes within cells, then slowing whole cells and later tissue processes, then onto the entire organism, he said.

But the goal isn’t simply to slow processes down but to do it without damaging the processes when they return to normal speed. “Our treatments need to hit every cellular process at close to the same rate, and with the same potency and efficacy,” McClure-Begley said. “We can’t focus treatments to interrupt just a subset of known critical processes.” The wrong kind of slow down, in the wrong sequence or at different rates, could kill a cell. To avoid those problems, DARPA wants to put their efforts on the protein level. And they’re looking to nature for some clues. Certain creatures such as tardigrades and wood frogs can go into a state known as “cryptobiosis,” where it seems like all their metabolic processes have stopped but they’re still alive, according to the DARPA release. Tardigrades, which are microscopic invertebrates, can use this adaptation to survive freezing, extreme radiation and near-total dehydration. Wood frogs use the same method to survive freezing solid for multiple days.

“Nature is a source of inspiration,” McClure-Begley said. “If we can figure out the best ways to bolster other biological systems and make them less likely to enter a runaway downward spiral after being damaged, then we will have made a significant addition to the biology toolbox.” The Biostasis program’s goals are to build “proof-of-concept” technologies and testing them in simple living systems. The work will include federal health and regulatory agencies to then develop a pathway for future human medical use. [Source: ArmyTimes | Todd South | March 26, 2018 ++]

Eyeglasses ► Obtaining at Minimum Cost

Sometimes it’s hard to see what’s right in front of you. When you reach the limits of your arm stretching you should get glasses. Those who wear glasses need to regularly get their eyes checked and get new glasses, or at least new lenses, every couple of years. Following are some cheap options:

1. Start with cheap reading glasses -- If you just need reading glasses, buy a bunch at a dollar store. Then, distribute them all over your home in places where you’ll want them — like on your nightstand, next to your favorite armchair and in the kitchen. Don’t forget your purse or car, too.

2. Check vision coverage and get a prescription -- When it comes to “real” glasses and contact lenses, first check out any insurance coverage you might have. Then, get your prescription. Under federal law, an eye doctor must give you a copy of your prescription if you get a fitting for glasses or contacts. The Federal Trade Commission explains:

“The doctor can’t require you to pay an extra fee, buy eyeglasses or contact lenses, or sign a waiver or form.”

3. Look for deals online -- The best deals on eyeglasses are often found online. Some online retailers allow you to upload a photo of yourself, and then add frames you’re considering to the picture so, you can see how you’d look in a particular pair of glasses. In addition, some sites allow you to select more than one set of frames to be sent to you without obligation. If you don’t like them, you can send them back at no cost. Other sites offer free returns within a certain time period in case the glasses you ordered don’t work out. Put all these advantages together, and online shopping isn’t just cheaper — it’s more convenient than going to a store.

4. Know where to shop -- Online retailers that specialize in prescription eyewear include:

- **Coastal**, which sells eyeglasses for as little as \$19 as well as contact lenses and sunglasses. Coastal also offers free shipping to anywhere in the U.S. and free returns within 30 days.
- **Warby Parker**, which sells eyeglasses and sunglasses. Warby Parker also offers a Home Try-On program and has stores in some states. The try-on program lets you test out five frames for five days for free before buying.

If you really want to shop in a physical store, check out the optical departments of warehouse clubs like Costco and Sam’s Club. Members may also be entitled to extra discounts on eyewear. At Sam’s Club, for example, a \$100 Sam’s Plus membership gets you \$50 off your first pair of glasses if you also buy a year’s supply of contact lenses. The most important piece of advice: Shop around. Don’t follow the old-fashioned method of going to a place that provides both eye examinations and glasses. You may end up facing a high-pressure salesperson while your eyes are still dilated.

Cell Phone Porting Scam ► How It works

There’s a new scam in town. Con artists are using something called a porting scam (or sometimes port-out scam) to gain access to victims’ personal and financial accounts and logins.

How the Scam Works

- Porting scams start with scammers stealing your phone number and service. How is that even possible? First, they get your name, phone number, and as much personal information as they can get their hands on. Next, they call your phone company claiming to be you. They tell the company that your phone was stolen and request the phone number be ported to another device and provider.
- If the cell company complies, scammers gain control of your number. They begin accessing accounts that require authorization via text message. Accounts can include email providers, social networks, invoicing software, and even online banking. Once they’ve bypassed that security, scammers can easily steal your identity and/or your money.

How to Avoid Porting Scams

- **Set up two-factor authentication.** In many cases, you can set up additional verification measures that would prevent a stranger from successfully porting your phone number
- **Contact your provider if your phone suddenly stops working.** If you can’t make or receive phone calls or text messages, don’t assume there is something wrong with your phone. Use a land line or a friend’s phone to report the problem immediately to your cellular service provider.
- **Be alert to any signs of phishing.** Be wary of any suspicious alerts from your personal or financial accounts or unsolicited requests for two-factor authorization.
- **Be cautious when sharing personal information.** Only share your full name, phone number and other personal information with people and companies that you know and trust.

For more information

Learn more about how this scam works in this BBB article about cell phone porting. If you’ve fallen victim to this type of scam, you can help others avoid being scammed by filing a report [BBB.org/ScamTracker](https://www.bbb.org/ScamTracker). [Source: BBB Scam Alert | March 9, 2018 ++]

Retirement Trends ► How They Differ From Your Parents

It happens to all of us — one day, you’re in high school or college and dreaming of a limitless future. The next, you’re signing up for AARP and nervously wondering if your nest egg will remain uncracked long enough to sustain life throughout your suddenly imminent golden years. Although the concept of retirement remains largely unchanged, how you live out those years has shifted dramatically. Following are seven key ways in which your post-work life is likely to differ sharply from that of your parents.

1. You're more likely to delay your retirement date -- A growing number of Americans appear to have reached the same conclusion: Dreams of sipping colorful drinks on a deserted beach are just going to have to wait a while.

In a quarter-century, the percentage of workers expecting to retire after the age of 65 more than tripled, from 11 percent in 1991 to 37 percent in 2016, according to the Employee Benefit Research Institute. However, don't get too discouraged by these numbers. Recently, American workers have become a bit more optimistic about their ability to retire early. The percentage of workers who plan on postponing retirement has dropped from 22 percent in 2013 to 13 percent in 2016. Even more interestingly, the percentage of workers who *actually* retire after age 65 — as opposed to simply expecting to do so — remains more modest, rising from 8 percent in 1991 to 15 percent in 2016. And studies have shown that a substantial percentage of those who plan to work after age 65 will do so because they enjoy their jobs.

2. You're more likely to live downtown than in the suburbs -- The stereotype suggests that retirees want a quiet home in the country, undisturbed by the noise of modern life. The reality is quite different. In fact, retirees are flocking to urban centers to live out their golden years. AARP cites a report from TenantCloud, a property management software service, revealing that about one-third of all urban applications are for renters who are older than 60.

3. You're more likely to head outdoors for fun -- Americans of all ages increasingly look to the great outdoors and nature when planning activities. Activities such as camping biking and birdwatching are growing in popularity among all age groups, according to the Physical Activity Council's 2018 Participation Report. Older adults are particularly drawn to anything that gets them out among wildlife, including fishing and wildlife walks. Two activities long associated with retirement — golf and shuffleboard — are conspicuously absent from the list. That is more evidence that today's retirement is not your parents' retirement.

4. You're more likely to be healthier -- Good news for aging folks who worry about their bodies suddenly falling apart: Today's retirees can expect to enjoy much better health than retirees of earlier generations. From 1998 and 2012, the percentage of adults ages 80 and older in fair or poor health dropped significantly, from 43 percent to 34 percent, according to an Urban Institute Report. Alas, tomorrow's retirees might not fare quite so well. Between 1992 and 2010, the percentage of adults ages 51 to 54 who reported fair or poor health jumped from 17 percent to 22 percent. The source of this bad news? An increase in the rate of people diagnosed with diabetes, largely a result of our high-fat, junk-food diets and rising obesity rates.

5. You're more likely to live abroad -- For generations, retirees have used their free time to travel. Now, a growing number of such folks are choosing one-way adventures, with no plans of returning home. The percentage of Americans retiring abroad leaped 17 percent between 2010 and 2015, according to an Associated Press report. A little under 400,000 retirees are now expatriates, and that number is expected to grow. Some countries are more attractive destinations than others. In fact, one country — Costa Rica— is especially desirable for its cheap, modern health care, as we reported earlier this year.

6. You're less likely to downsize -- As workers near retirement, they traditionally have expected to downsize to more modest—and less costly — digs. However, that rule appears to be more myth than reality for millions.

A joint Merrill Lynch-Age Wave survey found that half of retirees did not downsize in their last move, with 30 percent actually “upsizing” into a larger home. The reason? These retirees want the room for family members to visit or stay.

7. You're less likely to leave an inheritance -- Better not show this one to your kids: An HSBC survey of workers in 15 countries and territories — including the U.S. — finds that 23 percent of today's workers prefer to spend all of their savings rather than to leave the cash to children. In fact, just 9 percent intend to save as much as possible and pass the money on.

[Source: MoneyTalksNews | Chris Kissell | March 20, 2018 ++]

Chartiers Valley Grad Takes Command Of USS Pittsburgh Nuclear Submarine

David Zuchowski, *The Almanac*, April 4

It's more than just a simple coincidence that U.S. Navy Cmdr. Jason Deichler, a native of the Pittsburgh suburb of Scott Township, took over as commanding officer of the USS Pittsburgh earlier this year.

With a naval career that started soon after graduating from Carnegie Mellon University in 1999 with a bachelor's degree in mathematics, Deichler eventually was screened to become a commanding officer of a submarine. When the USS Pittsburgh, a Los Angeles class nuclear-powered submarine, came into his "window of opportunity," he expressed his desire to command the ship to a group of superior officers. He took over control of the ship Jan. 12.

"Based on my career and achievements, I got the command of the ship," he said in a recent phone interview. "I now consider this the pinnacle of my career."

In service for 34 years, the USS Pittsburgh was one of the first fast-attack submarines to fire Tomahawk cruise missiles at enemy targets during Operation Desert Storm and later saw additional service during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

One of the oldest boats in the Atlantic fleet, the sub recently attained the short list distinction of having completed its 1,000th dive, a rare occurrence for a nuclear sub.

"The USS Pittsburgh is very well built, and I take pride in the fact that a lot of steel in these subs was made in Pittsburgh," Deichler said. "The ship's 1,000 dives is testament to the maintenance organization - both civilian and naval, as well as the men on board, to keep it seaworthy and operating as it should be."

As the ship's new captain, the 40-year-old Deichler said his first priorities were to talk with its former leader, Cmdr. Neil Colston, about the sub's future operations and to understand the readiness of his 150-man crew.

"On a monthly basis, new people come on board while other senior people move out," he said. "But, for the most part, the crew remains pretty stable. Even so, one of my main objectives is to train the relief to become experts on the ship's systems."

Besides previously working directly with assistant navigator, Senior Chief Dave Johnson, he got to visit other subs while previously on staff assignment. As a result, he now has face and name recognition with about half of the sailors on board the USS Pittsburgh.

Soon after Deichler assumed command of the sub, Pittsburgh Mayor Bill Peduto - a fellow Chartiers Valley High School graduate - tweeted him a congratulatory message.

"I'm so proud to be a representative of the city," Deichler said. "I keep trying to explain to my men what it's like to have an entire city behind you. I find it very enabling."

Now residing in Mystic, Conn., with his wife, the former Michelle Hoover of Pittsburgh, and four children - Hannah, James, Matthew and Ian - Deichler is often away at sea for a minimum of two weeks up to an indefinite length of time, limited only by the amount of food aboard the sub.

Not only is he frequently away from home, his career has taken him and his family to many areas of the country, necessitating frequent moves. Deichler said he often talks to his family about what he does and why he does it.

"I tell them I do it for them and for the safety of the nation," he said. "Like many Navy wives, Michelle has grown up with the values of faith and family and is proud of the work I do."

While he's away at sea, his family can find support in the Family Readiness Group, a non-profit on base that provides services and help like babysitting and simple things like having coffee and conversation about issues that concern them.

"Borrowing from the 1979 Pittsburgh Pirates, I like to tell the wives and crew that 'We are family,'" Deichler said.

While it may seem like a hardship for his children to have lived in and moved to California, Hawaii, Georgia, South Carolina and Connecticut during his career, their experiences there have let them encounter different people and assimilate some of the good qualities they've been exposed to at each place they've lived.

While both of Deichler's parents, James and Karen Deichler, are deceased, his mother-in-law, Lesa Hoover, resides in Mt. Lebanon and his sister, Kristin Deichler, is principal at South Fayette Middle School. Last December, Deichler and his family returned to this area to visit relatives for Christmas.

Another sister, Kimberly Deichler, lives in Cleveland where she works as the public affairs officer for the Cleveland Children's Symphony, and sister Kari, Falbo resides in Kenosha, Wisc., where she's employed as a guidance counselor for a