

Steel Valley Dolphins

January 2020



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 9 February at the American Legion in Baden Pa.

USS Requin Base Officers

Base Commander	Hubert C. Dietrich	412-486-2635	hueyfromglenshaw@aol.com
1st Vice Commander	Carl Stigers	412-995-8028	carstenstigers@verizon.net
2nd Vice Commander	Rick Elster	412-751-7967	Relster565@comcast.net
Secretary	Jeff Simon	724-502-4505	jeffsimon@zoominternet.net
Treasurer	Lee M. Bookwalter	412-795-8337	booky143@verizon.net
Storekeeper	Frank Nicotra	412-835-6540	nicotrafrank@gmail.com
Chaplain	Carl Stigers	412-995-8028	carstenstigers@verizon.net
Past Base Commander	Joe Campisi	412-322-3201	jcampisi1@comcast.net
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Photographer	Peter Foster	724+980-7657	gopetro2000@gmail.com
SVD Hard Copy	Rick Elster	412-751-7967	relster565@comcast.net

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



Binnacle List

:
Jack Sutherin
Luke Walker
Mary Ann Knotier



COMMANDERS COLUMN

At our January base meeting, your officers were sworn in for 2020:

Base Commander- Huey Dietrich	First Vice Commander – Carl Stigers
Second Vice Commander – Rick Elster	Secretary – Jeff Simon
Treasurer – Lee Bookwalter	Storekeeper – Frank Nicotra
Chaplin – Carl Stigers	Newsletter Editor – Jack Sutherin
Webmaster – Lee Bookwalter	COB/Historian – Clyde Porter
Asst Cob – Chad Underkoffler	Base Webmaster – Lou Hamill
SVD Hard Copy – Rick Elster	Photographer – Mike Pellegrino
Awards Chair – Dick Geyer	Holland Club - Chair - Bernie Sigler

We need the following support personnel:

Co-Chair to assist Vince Metz for the Eagle Scout Program
 Photographer and Asst. Holland Club Chair
 Base Connector to both the Requin Base and active duty personnel.

At both the board meeting and our Jan membership meeting, it was discussed that there will be no selling of anything at our base meeting without approval of the BOD! We support anyone or any organization that supports the base.

No distributing political articles or literature about politicians. Politicians may be invited with approval of the Base Commander for Veterans issues or guest speaker. The base will maintain its position that we do not endorse Politicians.

GUEST SPEAKER: We will have a guest speaker at our base next meeting which will be held at the American Legion in Baden. Christina Lonigro is a walking encyclopedia on VA and Medicare. She is tied into several Veterans organizations and supports groups both in Western Pa and Nationally. She will be addressing the membership for between thirty and forty-five minutes.

LIFE BASE MEMBERSHIP: With approval of the BOD and support of the membership -the following will start with the 2021 dues collection:

Under 45 - \$250.00

45 – 55 \$150.00

55 – 65 \$100.00

Over 65 \$50.00 – Member must also be National Life Member

(Does not apply to Associate Members because there are NO NATIONAL LIFE associates)

REQUIN BASE

TENATIVE MEETING & ACTIVITIES SCHEDULE -2020

BASE MEETINGS

BASE ACTIVITIES

February 8 – American Legion, Baden, Pa

March 7 – VFW Post 191 Canonsburg, Pa March 14 St. Pats Parade

April 11 – American Legion, Baden

Holland Club Inductees (20200

May 9 – American Legion, Baden

May 24 – Memorial (Requin)

May 24 – Carnegie Parade

May 25 – Sewickley Parade

May 25 Coraopolis Parade

June 13 – American Legion Post 290 Columbiana, Ohio

July 11 – American Legion Baden

July 4 – Canonsburg, Parade

July 4 Leetsdale, Parade

August 8 – River Forest Country Club

September 19 -American Legion Baden

October 17 – New Castle, Pa

Oct 10 – Columbus Day Parade

November 14 American Legion, Baden

Nov 8 – Veterans Day Parade (PGH)

December 12 – American Legion, Baden

Dec 7 -Pearl Harbor Day?

FUTURE ACTIVITIES:

Visit COD, Cleveland – North East District Three Meeting

HOLLAND CLUB FOR 2020

Joe Campisi and Frank Nicotra

BIRTHDAYS**ANNIVERSARIES****MEMBER****SPOUSE**

Bagley, Dan 2/11/60	Kim Bittner 2/19	Davenport, Kato/Carolyn 2-28
Cowher, James 2/18/67	Carolyn Davenport 2/04	
Dolgos, George 2/26/44	Linda Gaylor 2/09	Ed & Julia May 2/13
Gains, Lawton 2/19/44	Lyn Gourley 2/10	Al & Marilyn Regits 2/07
Harris, James 2/26/44	Rosemary McCarthy 2/12	
Keys, Richard 2/10/47	Cassandra Sewell 2/18	
McKinney, Steve 2/15/72	Isabelle Watson 2/22	
Osborn, Russ 2/05/50	Adele Wise 2/28	
Sewell, Joshua 2/14/78		
St. Clair, James 2/05/42		
Sutherin, Jack 2/03/42		
Walters, Luke 2/13/61		
Weavers, Ron 2/03/49		

WW2 MEMBERS: Biemer, Hollingsworth, Krautstrunk, Lowry, Voskuhl & Watson

CREW MEMBERS OF THE USS REQUIN SS/SSR/481

James Bence	Dennis Cantwell	Kato Davenport	John Donnelly
Lawton Gains	James Harris	Charles Hilgendorf	Bob Krautstrunk
Merlin Larson	Robert Moore	Charles Nixon	Alfred Regrits
Earl Riley	Robert Sampson	Richard Simpson	John Stewart
Paris Von Rabenau		Herb Wise	

MEMBERS WHO SAILED ON ETERNAL PATROL – 2019

Robert Garlock – Gary Gresh – Robert Klein – Aaron Ellis – Hubert Brown – Robert Kaufman – Robert Stahl

NEW MEMBERS OF THE BASE IN 2019:

Gregory Bayne, David Bonnett, Sandra Carmon, Gregory Clark, Jason Deichler, Sandy Ellis, Rick Flaugh, George Harrah, Bill Huff, Doug Johnson, Richard Keys, Kyle Lacey, Ed Mason, Richard McCullough, James Mears Brian Peltier, Chuck Shrump, Tom Strang, Luke Walters, Joshua Wissinger These shipmates have set the all-time RECORD of new members in any year for the Base – (21)

LOYALTY PIN PROGRAM – REQUIN BASE FOR 2020

FIVE	TEN	FIFTEEN	TWENTY	25
James Beachler	Rich Beauregard	Mike Allen	Dennis Cantwell	H. Hollingworth
Bob Clark	Jim Bence	L. Boutelle	James Lewis	R. Sampson
Justin Crocker	Bob Bittner	Don Bright	John Lukasik	
Reno Farino	John Donnelly		Bernie Sigler	
Dick Geyer	Larry Huntsman		Robert Sollinger	
Eric Greenwald	Fred Nelson			
Rufino Guntang	Chuck Nixon			
Aaron Houpt	P. VonRabenau			
James Hughes	John Stewart			
F. Koppenhaver	Carl Stigers			
Ed Perlowitz	Herb Wise			
Dan Phelps				
Harry Sills				
Ron Weaver				

REQUIN BASE CANDY PROGRAM

Our candy program is up and running all year long. Shipmate Bernie Sigler (DBF), our candy Czar, purchases the bars from Daffin’s and fills the orders as quickly as possible. The candy comes in boxes of 36 bars and the cost is \$1.00 per bar. The candy bars consist of Milk Chocolate, Crunchy, Peanut Butter, Almond, Carmel, Pretzel, and Dark Chocolate. We can make up a box of assorted bars.

We made up a special wrapper for the candy. It has our challenge coin and a picture of the Requin Submarine on it. I tell everyone that this is the only veterans candy bar they will find in the tri-state area.

The program is set up this way – the member who orders the candy pays \$36.00 upfront. Then to recoup his money, he sells the 36 bars of candy. This way it does not cost him a penny. The \$36.00 per box is divided - \$18.00 is given back to the candy company and the other goes to the base. The member decides which base activity that he wants the candy profit (\$18.00) to go – Kap(ss)4Kid(ss), Eagle Scouts, Base Memorial Fund or the General Fund. You can order the candy directly from Bernie – menhaden377@yahoo.com and pick it up at the next base meeting.

REQUIN BASE BOOSTER DRIVE

The Requin Base is kicking off its annual booster drive. This fund raiser has always been successful and it helps us balance our yearly budget without going into our reserves. Each year we solicit individuals, groups and veteran organizations to support us by becoming a BOOSTER. The yearly funds that support our budget comes from membership dues, selling of USSVI calendars, Edie's homemade Jam's Salsa, and candy sales, small stores and our booster drive.

If you belong to any other club organization, they are excellent partners. And if you are working, you could ask your employer and you will be surprised when he says YES!

Over the course of the last (9) years, we have been fortunate to have successful booster drives, and we not only reach our goals, but exceed it. We also have great support from our members, who not only contribute, but solicit boosters to both their family and friends. There will be sample letter in the next issue of the SVD, and also at the next base meeting.

USS PITTSBURGH – INACTIVATION

We are finally getting back to normal, after our wonderful trip out to Bremerton for the inactivation of the USS PITTSBURGH SSN720. The shipmates who travel out to the ceremony were myself, Elster, Campisi, Underkoffler, Hamill, Brown, Sutherin, Sr along with his first mate, Ginny and son John, Jr., who lives out there with his first mate, Susan. Also, Gains joined us from Ma, along with Spencer and his first mate, Carrie and son from Ct. We met up with Bonnett who lives outside the gate. Also, Elster had an old shipmate Al Smith, that spent some time with us and we are waiting on his application. Photos of the visit can be found on our base website. <https://www.requinbase.org/basephotos/wppaspec/oc1/cv0/ab34>

USS PITTSBURGH SSN720 -events

Jan 16 – VIP Social – At the home of Admiral Perry – Historic Quarters

Jan 17 – Inactivation Ceremony – U.S. Navy Undersea Museum

Post Ceremony Gathering

Tall Tales – At Historic Horse & Cow

Jan 18 Barn Party -Former and Current crew, family & friends

Requin Base Meeting Minutes

January 11, 2020

Baden, PA

Base Commander Huey Dietrich called the meeting to order.

Attendees: Mike Allen, Eric Bookmiller, Lee & Patsy Bookwalter, Clair & Nancy Bouts, Don Bright, George Brown, Tom & Deneen Calabrese, Ron Campbell, Joe Campisi, Huey & Edie Dietrich, Rick & Judy Elster, Rick Flaugh, Gerry & Linda Gaylor, Dick & Beverly Geyer, Bob & Lynn Gourley, Lou Hamill, Ron & Trisha Horton, Kyle Lacey, Jean LeMeau, Bill & Sandy Lindsey, Bat Masterson, JB Messer, Frank Nicotra, Mike Pellegrino, Chuck Shrumpp, Harry Sills, Jeff Simon, Carl Stigers, John Swords, Chad Underkoffler, Mike & Tina Wyckoff

Base Commander Huey Dietrich: Quote of the day: “Submarine life is not a service but a religion”

Requin History: Launched January 1, 1945. January 20, 1948 given hull classification OSSR-481 and modified to the Migrain II radar picket configuration. January 15, 1951 entered Mediterranean until May when she returned to normal operations on the US east coast and in the Caribbean. January 1, 1953 maintained her schedule of Second and Sixth Fleet operations but at the end of the year put into Philadelphia PA for extensive modernization overhaul that among other things removed her last remaining anti-aircraft cannon.

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 SCORPION (SS 278)	January 05, 1944
USS ARGONAUT (SS 166)	January 10, 1943
USS SWORDFISH (SS 193)	January 12, 1945
USS S 36 (SS 141)	January 20, 1942
USS S 26 (SS 131)	January 24, 1942

We also honor our departed shipmate of the Requin Base, John Good, Robert Goodley, Tom Stewart, Earl Wood, Ed Cramer, Ed Paul and Vince Segeleon. 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.

Shipmate Chad Underkoffler led the Base in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Members introduced themselves and the boats they qualified on.

Requin Base Officers were sworn in.

Base Secretary Jeff Simon reported that Minutes of the previous meeting and Executive Board Meeting were published on the Requin Base website. With no objections, the minutes were approved as published.

Treasurer Lee Bookwalter gave an accounting of base assets, expenditures, and deposits are available upon request. With no objections, the report was approved.

Other Reports:

Binnacle List: Jack Sutherin, Luke Walker, Mary Ann Knotier
Membership stands at 193. Report of membership changes was given.

Storekeeper Frank Nicotra reported on available small stores.

Social Events

Inactivation of USS Pittsburgh, Jan 16 – 20 in Bremerton WA. Base members will be attending. Challenge coins for this event will be available in the Base Small Stores.

Memorial And Ceremonies

Members are encouraged to see the Calendar on the Requin Base Website for upcoming activities, events, birthdays and anniversaries.

Plans are underway to participate in the Pittsburgh St. Patrick’s Day Parade. As a result the March base meeting will be held on March 7 in Canonsburg PA.

Old Business:

None

New Business:

New Virginia class submarines are being named USS Oklahoma and USS Arizona

Donation was made to the American Legion Post 641 in Baden PA

Life Membership for the base will be available starting in 2021

VA enrollment and benefits were discussed.

Conversion of SSNs to training ships was discussed.

Restrictions on meeting activities approved by the Board were discussed.

For The Good Of The Order:

Volunteers are need for the following committees: Eagle Scouts, Awards Chairman, Photographer, Assistant Holland Club Chairman, Active Duty Personnel Liaison, Requin Base Shipmate Liaison

Chad Underkoffler is temporary COB

Checks from Huey & Edie Dietrich were presented to the base

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

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned.

Next meeting: Baden PA American Legion at 1230 hours on February 8, 2020

The following is a copy of Captain Deichler's remarks (

“Thank you XO, and thank you Admiral Perry. Good afternoon Admiral Hahn, former Commanding Officers, submarine officers and sailors, families, distinguished guests and supporters of the USS PITTSBURGH, and welcome to the final ceremony in the remarkable 35 year history of the USS PITTSBURGH. A special thank you is extended to those that traveled far to be here for this celebration. I am Commander Jason Deichler, the 14th Commanding Officer of this mighty warship and a native of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

I have the distinct honor today of signing the final deck logs and securing the watch for the 32nd Los Angeles Class submarine and first second flight, vertical launch system equipped 688. Before those logbooks are signed and transferred to the National Archives, I want to take some time today, with all of you present, to recognize the families, crew and supporters of the HEART OF STEEL. My most sincere thank you to Rear Admiral Doug Perry for speaking today – his presence and influence on my career truly defines the brotherhood and bond between submariners that can't ever be broken – he sincerely embodies the concept of FAITH – a topic I will touch upon today.

Although it is a magnificent honor to inactivate a ship, it is not a task I wished for. I was surprised with a phone call one week into my command tour that PITTSBURGH would be decommissioned in 2020. For 18 months, I fought to maintain PITTSBURGH an active ship of line. The material condition, crew, and warfighting capability of this 35 year old vessel were still as strong our next submarine, USS VERMONT (SSN 792) soon to be delivered. But it was not to be. The old must be replaced by the new. As for this ceremony, I truly wish I could have sailed into the confluence of the Monongahela, Ohio, and Allegheny and landed 720 at the point. I would have had a Pittsburgh-yinzer fest not seen since the Regatta of 1995. That not being a real possibility, my crew truly desired to remain in Groton for this grand ceremony. But we had missions to conduct – we had fight left in us, and our orders carried us here. We had to prepare for operations never conducted on PITTSBURGH. But the brotherhood of all PITTSBURGH crew members transcends location, it transcends the machinery and steel tube that forged those bonds. So you can lament not touring the heart of steel one last time, or you can celebrate the accomplishments of the crew and the families over the past 35 years. I ask you do the latter.

The backbone of any crew, of any service member, is the family that supports them at home. To the families of current and crewmembers here today, thank you. Sincerely. The power of your faces, smiles, family grams, small tokens, and love enable the strength required for the impossible tasks we ask the crew to perform. It is what sets us apart in many ways from the armed services of other nations. We know the faces of our family, and we work to truly honor them.

Honoring me today, is my wife, confidant, and closest friend Michelle. At our wedding 21 years ago, we read the oft used passage from Corinthians 13, more famously known as “Love is patient” Michelle and I were kids, not much older than our daughter Hannah is now. We did not know what the future held for us, and we could have never predicted this amazing ride. Reading that passage now gives me such perspective on the beautiful, strong woman that chose me. “Love does not delight in evil, it always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.” Michelle, through, my career, and through this tour, you have in turn and, at times, simultaneously protected, trusted, hoped, and persevered. I don't know why, or how I earned this, but I promise once again, as I did on December 19, 1998, in front of Jeff, Lesa, Karen and Jimmy, to honor you until death do us part. Until the end of time, it will always be you and I. Please accept these flowers, and a promise from me to come back home soon. The orders are written, so if I know detailing, there is a better than 50% chance it will happen! I love you, and soon our family will be whole again.

Psalm 107 tells us that: “Some went out on the sea in ships, they went down to the depths; they reeled and staggered like drunkards; they were at their wit's ends. But they have a present and powerful help in that and every other time of need, so that when they are at their wits' end they are not at their faith's end.”

There is a faith in submarining that is a challenge to explain. Faith in the unknown, faith in a brotherhood, faith in our families.

Faith that goes beyond a steel encased tube.

Faith is truly a unique concept. Humans have searched for the meaning, a true understanding. Throughout my Command tour, I searched and found some of the essence of this faith. This journey however, started, well before my Command tour.

My grandfather, James B. Deichler, affectionately known Big Jim and Pappy, was a Pacific Theater World War II veteran. He served onboard LST 938, USS Maricopa County, and was a member of the Greatest Generation. He made a difference. Enlisting at

16, he hid his age, and set out to complete a Pacific theater tour that included the landing at Mindanao, occupation of the Philippines Islands, and mainland China. Returning from the war, he served the rest of his life as a professional Firefighter in Carnegie, Pennsylvania. Growing up, I remember weekends he and my Grandmother, Margaret, would travel to visit crewmembers from LST 938. What I remember vividly were the sea stories about his shipmates. Interested in this brotherhood, and his heroic career, I once asked him his rating. He chuckled and said, "Jason, back then we didn't have ratings. I manned a gun when I was told, I cooked meals when told, I swabbed decks when told. I fought for our country. That was my rating." He was my example of patriotism, one of my first examples for faith. Believe in your shipmates, and your purpose. We defend our country and the world against evil. I hoped and prayed for that opportunity when I joined the Navy. I hoped and prayed for that opportunity when I volunteered for the submarine force in 1998. I hoped and prayed for that opportunity when I was blessed with command of PITTSBURGH.

In January of 2018, I was given that opportunity, as I relieved Neil Colston as the Captain of PITTSBURGH. But this journey didn't begin nor was it tread alone. My four children, Hannah, James, Matthew and Ian lived and supported me in so many small ways these past two years, each providing me strength, comfort and wisdom. Each provided me a deeper understanding of my role as father and Commanding Officer – each help me shaped my understanding of faith.

My youngest son, Ian, told me simply that faith is believing in what you can't see. Smart beyond his years, he summarized submarining and Command in one short sentence. Believe in what you can't see. Submariners and Captains do this every day – we chase submarines we can't see; we operate equipment behind lead shielding; we have faith in our team beyond the bulkheads of our stateroom. Believe in what you can't see.

My daughter Hannah will tell you that faith is believing in home. Hannah has moved with Michelle and I since she was born in January of 2000, nine times in total. She will tell that strangers in a new town raise you up to cut you down, but that with the love of your family and your Navy family, you will always belong.

Exemplifying this, USS PITTSBURGH and her families had the honor of bringing our submarine safely to her new town to be as a final resting place. Bremerton is a long way from Groton. A daunting task for sure. This crew was asked, less than 45 days after returning from deployment, to conduct an under-ice transit from the only homeport they have ever known. Families were asked to uproot and move cross-country without their husbands. Aided by my wonderful OMBUDSMAN, Michelle Waters, each and every crewmember moved their families cross-country while conducting a first-of under-ice transit – winning the Squadron NINETEEN Navigation "N" in the process. Michelle accepted the role of OMBUDSMAN in March 2019, and then proceeded to move each and every family, cross-country, in April. I am not sure that this task can be truly understood by anyone that has never served as an OMBUDSMAN. Michelle has been the lighthouse that has withstood erosion as each and every wave crashed across her shoreline. She has been an amazing advisor to me on the crew's needs. Michelle, please accept this small token as a thank you from me and a grateful crew.

Back to this concept of faith. My son James, a burgeoning collegiate lacrosse player, will tell you that faith is having the knowledge that your training, ability and confidence will win the day. When I waiver in my confidence, he always quotes to me the famous Wayne Gretzky line, "You miss 100% of the shots you don't take." The current and past crews of PITTSBURGH never faltered when asked to take those shots, and I promise to detail those stories soon.

My last son, Matthew, well, he will stay quiet on faith. Such is his way. He has a calm and understanding that his father will always return home and bring his crew with him. Much like his father, this weighs heavily and silently on him. But if you dig a little deeper, his namesake, Saint Matthew, once famously scripted that faith, no matter if it is as small as a mustard seed, can move a mountain. Inside the brotherhood of submariners, it is the accumulation of those small "mustard seed" events that gives us a strong belief in each other.

It is the belief in one another that has filled this auditorium today. So many past crewmembers, supporters, and families traveled today to be here for this event. Thank you for the weather, distance and time you have endured to be here at this event.

Ten of the fourteen Commanding Officers or their spouses are present here today. None of these officers reside in the Pacific Northwest, and most traveled cross-country and thousands of miles to recapture or revisit that feeling of brotherhood. None traveled to walk inside the USS PITTSBURGH, and all understood the impossibility of this. All too understood that the inside of the USS PITTSBURGH is lifeless – no longer is there a a smell of amine and lube oil mist, or the growl of the Diesel Generator, or the voices of dripping sarcasm from the crew's mess, or a Chief's size 11 boot stomping through the bilge or the deafening silence of a nuclear propulsion plant or the smell of freshly minted steam. The essential inside of the submarine is gone.

But what remains are the stories, the memories and moments. I am sure as I listed all of the missing components, each submariner's nose had an olfactory response, ears heard ghosts and hands felt valves, sticks, periscopes. These senses, these moments – that is where the PITTSBURGH will eternally reside. Hidden in the corners of our minds, possibly recessed behind one too many beverages or a haze of gray smoke exists those special relationships. I consider myself truly blessed to close the final chapter and draft those final memories onboard PITTSBURGH.

My first Captain, Paul Siegrist, is in the crowd today. He pinned on my dolphins in 2002 and has been a constant presence during my Naval career. He was present when I took command, and he is here today as we secure the watch on PITTSBURGH. He made an indelible mark on how I navigated both the depths of each nautical mile steamed and my career. He also provided me a vision that has lived onto PITTSBURGH. He taught me three simple rules: Do it right, do it by procedure, and everyone comes home safe. I believe he is proud to know that I accomplished those goals. PITTSBURGH did it right, did it by procedure, and my crew all came home safe. This is not always a guarantee in our line of work – Captain Siegrist knew this well, as do all men and women that don a uniform. The complex tasks, duties and responsibilities each submariner carries are extraordinary. Submariners, PITTSBURGH submariners, make this extraordinary look pedestrian. Four-time super bowl champion coach of the Pittsburgh Steelers, Chuck Noll, when asked about how his professionals excel, how they make it look easy, once quipped, "Champions are champions not because they do anything extraordinary, they just do the ordinary better than anyone else."

My crew, like those of Captain Ray Setser, CDR Neil Walsh, CDR Charles Griffiths, CDR Steve Wolff, CDR Jim Adams, CDR Chris Sullivan, CDR Paul Bushong, CDR Jeff Curren, CDR Dave Hahn, CDR Mike Savageaux, CDR Bill Solomon, and CDR Neil Colston made the extraordinary appear ordinary because of their ability to get the tasks done – to excel at the day-to-day minutiae of submarining.

Over the last 24 months of PITTSBURGH's active duty service, we humbly accomplished a multitude of the highest priority Chief of Naval Operations tasking. During my first full month in Command, PITTSBURGH completed a surfaced, at-sea engineering inspection. I am sure there are many submariners in the crowd that are grunting, or groaning at the thought of that inspection, or they are asking, so what, hasn't everybody done THAT inspection? We all have, with varying results (and corrective actions) But it is not normal for a submarine to remain surfaced during an engineering inspection of this magnitude. It surely isn't normal during the largest east coast blizzard of 2018. Due to a material failure in our tank level circuitry, my team made the recommendation to me to remain surfaced and finish the inspection. After a discussion with the senior board member, and my Commodore (and former PITTSBURGH Engineer) Ollie Lewis, I was given the go ahead. So for 72 hours, in sea state 2, driving snow, ice and wind, my crew and engineering department, led by Master Chief Ed Oskorep and CDR Lee Keller, finished an grueling inspection while driving racetracks in Long Island Sound. Superior performance – by doing the ordinary, day-to-day tasks better than anyone else. Not to be outdone, LCDR Craig Potthast and Senior Chief ANAV Dave Jackson planned and executed flawless navigation across an eight month deployment, and over 39,000 nautical miles. Their Navigation Department earned the Navigation "N" award twice in three years, across two squadrons and two fleets, and an under ice transit, that after twenty days without a fix, navigated PITTSBURGH within 1000 yards of its estimated position. Truly extraordinary – made to look easy to the untrained eye.

An eight month EUCOM deployment, a 34 year old LA class submarine. One mission vital to national security, three theater anti-submarine warfare missions, and three foreign port calls. An impressive stat sheet brought to you by Weapons Department. LT Matt Bouwense, Senior Chief Chris Helms, Chief Grimes and Chief Jobs deployed maximum lethality to the combatant commander AT ALL TIMES. Although no kinetic weapons were fired, this group maintained a consistent and persistent tier 1 status as a ready tomahawk shooter – not a small feat. During an extended stretch, PITTSBURGH was the single American kinetic asset in theater. Had our Commander in Chief called for fire – PITTSBURGH was the submerged asset he would have called upon. Talk about quietly making the extraordinary look ordinary.

A crew of 150 hungry submariners. A crew of 150 opinionated critics, a surplus of Pollock, a shortage of chicken nuggets. Chief Steve Green, CHOP Sheridan Rucker and CHOP Ethan Stanley were the emcees in a gameshow where the only prize is the occasional positive comment card from Petty Officer "Big Homie" Nelson. I guess that isn't completely true. There was this other small prize called the COMSUBDEVRON TWELVE Supply Blue "E". Along with the FINEST Logistics Specialist division I have ever SEEN, led by LSC Michael Gray, the PITTSBURGH supply department kept the submarine stocked with fine food, parts while deployed, and set land speed records for the accurate offload of parts in Puget Sound. An army marches on its stomach. A Navy wins wars only if supplied. Five star service made to look ordinary.

For the crew and Chiefs – let me enumerate what you accomplished following deployment in front of your families and shipmates. Sadly, because WE WERE EXCELLENT at the ordinary, you tended to get overlooked for the EXTRAORDINARY feats you accomplished. Less than 45 days after returning from an eight month EUCOM deployment, with a 40% crew changeout, WE certified for arctic operations and set sail for an under-ice, change of homeport transit. 150 sailors and families had to arrive in Bremerton before June 1st, with the starting line of April 15th. CMC Dave Lewis handed over a fine Chief's quarters and Diving Officer of the Watch program for COB Dave Pope to lead into the precise shiphandling environment required for an under-ice transit. But more importantly, CMC Lewis and COB Pope led their sailors with a passion and compassion. If a sailor needed a minute, they took it. If a sailor needed to take care of his family, they stood beside them. I was blessed with two of the great ones, and so was the crew of USS PITTSBURGH. Thank you, CMC. Thank you COB.

As mentioned, we were under-ice and out of communication with no one rely upon except each other. No one to provide "off-hull" guidance or technical assistance. This is where auxiliary division, led by Chief Navarro-Diaz and Petty Officer Patterson shined brightly – they mustered their division to fix an emergent hole and inboard leak of the sanitary waste overboard discharge piping. Although there is usually "smell-driven" motivation in these types of situations, their efforts ensured extraordinary SMELLS remained ordinary. At the ready, had those sanitation nightmares spilled over, was HM1 Austin Lenzi.

The DOC is an essential part of any close-knit military unit. He is a close advisor to the Captain, and I have been wowed by his knowledge and compassion, and appreciated the times when DOC closed my door, sat down, and asked "How are you Captain?" There are few people underway that a CAPTAIN can lean upon. DOC, thank you.

Captains are assigned Executive Officers that in the purest personnel assignment vacuum, should complement their strengths. Either by will of character, or luck of detailing, I was assigned three of the best. Jeremy Garcia prepared the crew of PITTSBURGH for our EUCOM deployment and under-ice transit. His knowledge of navigation and operations truly made him a second-in-command. I have full confidence that Jeremy will lead his own submarine on many successful missions. A special thank you to Joe Fontenot, my "second" XO. Joe stepped in and served as Command Duty Officer during one mission vital to national security. His influence on my wardroom cannot be understated. Another future Commanding Officer that will win the day. And to Pete Gaal, my current XO – a sincere thank you and Bravo Zulu. Managing the unenviable task of leading a crew through an inactivation, he provided sound advice and calm during the storm. He fought to reduce pay and personnel issues from 150 to less than ten in under four months. Not a small feat, and a true testament to a man who cares for his people. Thank you, and thank you for suffering through my eccentricities over the past eight months.

As we stand now, we are 30 days ahead of the schedule for the decommissioning and inactivation of PITTSBURGH. Not only have we done this, but we have done it at a multi-million cost savings to the government. Frequently lauded by Puget Sound as the most efficient inactivation they have experienced, PITTSBURGH, as it always has, is setting the NEW STANDARD for inactivation completion. Sonar sphere hydrophones removed by Sonarmen, Fire Control Technicians, and Navigation Electronics Technicians were recapitulated and given to other ship's in record times and at a record cost savings. The efficiency of this decommissioning is because of the hard work of these sailors and the PSNS PITTSBURGH project team led by project superintendent, Dustin Butler.

Dustin, thank you. A special thank you to Mr. Josh Fleming as well. Josh is my project's Nuclear APS, and has the honor of being the first man to inform me of the PITTSBURGH inactivation. Josh will always have a special place in my heart for that phone call. He is a TRUE PROFESSIONAL and EXPERT – thank you Josh for taking my limited rage with grace.

I would like to express gratitude for three officers and families here today. Thank you to CDRE Lincoln Reifsteck, CDRE Todd Figanbaum, and CAPT Shawn and Tara Huey. These three officers are mentors and friends. Each has given me guidance throughout

my tour that has shaped who I am today. Speaking of faith – of forces beyond what we know – these three officers landed in the Pacific Northwest during my geo-bachelor tour onboard PITTSBURGH, and in turn, each keep me sane, and provided much needed guidance and relief. To Tara, thank you. A home-cooked meal means much more than sustenance – it means getting through another week from those that you love the most.

Now, before I finish, I want to personally thank, in front of our CREW, past and present, several supporters of the USS PITTSBURGH and her crew. Men and women that are the essence of what has made this submarine, and our country, GREAT, over these past 35 years.

Dr. Carol Sawyer. What else can be said? A unique person, a unique personality, and a true leader. Very few Captains talk about their relationship with the ship's sponsor. It isn't something we discuss in Submarine Command Course or leadership school. It isn't one of those lessons learned that we pass from Captain to Captain. Why? Because it is rare. Carol has been a blessing to all of the PITTSBURGH crews and Captains, and the lives she has touched. 35 years of dedicated service – a longer career than most Admirals. I cannot express in words the role you played in the sailor's lives, both before and during my Command tour. I can simply say thank you and pray our relationship remains forever forward. I will miss the phone calls, the postcards, the greetings and stories. This good and great America owes you a debt of gratitude.

Mr. Bob MacPherson – the crusty submarine warrant officer that has served his entire life. Bob had the helm of the Pittsburgh Navy League for nearly, if not all of my command tour. He has been a quiet and trusted advisor, a steady hand in when the sea state seemed unmanageable. Again, a rarity. I speak with other Captains often about my relationship with the Pittsburgh Navy League. None have nearly what I am blessed to have, and most definitely do not have such an amazing friend. Separated by thousands of miles, Bob always, always knew how and when to reach for support to the crew, and support to me. One particular morning during some challenging operations, Bob reminded of the power of belief, and strength in holding a true course. He, and the Pittsburgh Navy League, have been a constant presence throughout the years. Each submariner and sailor in this room should shake his hand, and live our lives asking what Bob so casually asks on a daily basis, "How may I serve?"

Retired Captain John Caspero. John leads the Pittsburgh Relief Crew, a truly unique organization. Let me accumulate a few of their accomplishments.

- 154 scholarships totaling \$142,750.
- 33 years of providing Christmas gifts for children of ship's personnel.
- 15 visits of over 350 ship's personnel, many of whom stayed in the homes of Pittsburgh host families.
- Support for 14 changes of command.

And one morning coffee with Jason and Michelle Deichler at a Pittsburgh Diner. That is what I selfishly take away – the hometown support and love for the crew. Amongst all of the monetary donations and blessings they have bestowed, it is John, and members of the Relief Crew's, love for their sailors that is most valuable and should be treasured forever.

Huey Dietrich and the REQUIN BASE PITTSBURGH SUBVETS. I told Huey and the boys once that when I see their brotherhood, I can see my future, my time when I depart the Navy, and I am happy. These fine patriots serve the city of Pittsburgh, veteran's and crew of USS PITTSBURGH. During my tour, they made THREE unsolicited and unfunded trips to Groton to see our crew. To sit down with the men. They didn't ask the PAO for a tour of the base, didn't ask for parties, they simply came, took care of the men, and celebrated being brothers. They were there the day before the USS PITTSBURGH left Groton for the last time. And I am always at your service, and always ready to raise and Iron with you boys at the GERMAN club.

As the sunsets on the PITTSBURGH, remember the moments. Have faith in those moments. Fiercely covet our brotherhood. Treasure and celebrate what the crews and families of this submarine accomplished. We ended the Cold War. We dominated every competitor that dared enter the water. We answered the call after the cowardly attacks on September 11, 2001. We drove a precise tomahawk dagger deep into the heart of evil during Operations Desert Storm and Iraqi Freedom. We combatted and participated in what will be the end of terrorism. We threatened all those that would so feebly attempt to end of way of life. We maintained the scales tipped towards the United States Navy in the Great Power Competition. WE DISPLAYED TO THE WORLD THE MEANING OF A GREAT AND GOOD AMERICA. WE REMAINED THE EXAMPLE OF WHAT IS RIGHT. Be proud, gentlemen.

For one last time, crew of the USS PITTSBURGH, on your feet!

Raise your TERRIBLE TOWELS HIGH, and for one final time: HERE WE GO PITTSBURGH"

Commander Jason M. Deichler, the last Commanding Officer of the USS Pittsburgh

Thanks to Bob MacPherson for this