

Crew, Commanders Bid Farewell to USS Pittsburgh at Sub's Inactivation Ceremony



Sailors assigned to the Los Angeles-class fast-attack submarine USS Pittsburgh fold the boat's ensign during an inactivation ceremony at the U.S. Naval Undersea Museum in Keyport, Washington, on Jan. 17. U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Andrea Perez

As the last commanding officer of the USS Pittsburgh said Jan. 17, "the old must be replaced by the new." And with that salutation, the crew of the Los Angeles fast-attack submarine, past commanding officers, Navy League members and supporters bid farewell to the boat during its inactivation ceremony at the U.S. Naval Undersea Museum in Keyport, Washington.

The USS Pittsburgh Relief Crew under the auspices of the Pittsburgh Council has provided significant support to the submarine over its 35 years of active service. Though the boat, named for the city in Pennsylvania, has been deactivated, a scholarship sponsored by the council for current or past crew members and dependents of the sub will live indefinitely at the Pittsburgh Foundation, a Pittsburgh metropolitan area philanthropy organization.

Carol H. Sawyer, the submarine's sponsor and a professor of organizational leadership at University of La Verne, California, spoke at the Jan. 17 inactivation ceremony.

The ceremony was the crew's final event before their ship is decommissioned and stored at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard in Bremerton, Washington.

"The backbone of any crew, of any service member, is the family that supports them at home," said Jason Deichler, the 14th and final commanding officer of the USS Pittsburgh, who himself is a Pittsburgh native.

"To the families of current and crewmembers here today, thank you. 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."

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uw1Es04_09k&t=57s

Carol H. Sawyer, a professor of organizational leadership at University of La Verne, California, also spoke of what it's meant for her to have been the submarine's sponsor and a part of the Pittsburgh family since the ship's commissioning in December 1984.

"It means that every day for 35 years, I have embodied the gratitude of the American people. In my very person, in who I am, I have literally lived our gratitude for the commitment, the service, the professionalism, the sacrifice and the patriotism that I have witnessed," Sawyer said.

Rear Adm. Douglas Perry, commander of Submarine Group 9, and a prior crew member aboard Pittsburgh, served as the ceremony's guest speaker.

Pittsburgh completed its last deployment on Feb. 25, 2019. Then the boat and her crew made their first arctic transit for a final homeport change from Groton, Connecticut, to Bremerton, arriving on May 28 to begin the inactivation and decommissioning process. Pittsburgh is the fourth U.S. Navy vessel to be named for the city of Pittsburgh.