

DOLPHIN SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION
Board of Directors

CAPT MERRILL H. DORMAN, USN (RETIRED)

Captain Merrill H. Dorman was born just before World War II in Boston, MA and grew up following the war in West Los Angeles, CA. He is a 1963 graduate with distinction from the U.S. Naval Academy. As an Ensign, he completed training in the Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program and Naval Submarine School.

CAPT Dorman earned his submarine “dolphins” while serving on USS TECUMSEH (SSBN 628G), completing five Polaris Deterrent Patrols in the Pacific. He then returned to the Naval Nuclear Power Training Unit in West Milton, NY for staff instructor duty. His department head tour was completed as Engineer Officer on USS SUNFISH (SSN 649) in Charleston, SC, followed by duty as Material Officer on the staff of Commander Submarine Squadron FOURTEEN in Holy Loch, Scotland. CAPT Dorman then served as Executive Officer in USS PARCHE (SSN 683) in both Charleston, SC, and following inter-fleet transfer, in Mare Island, CA.

In December 1978, CAPT Dorman took command of USS SILVERSIDES (SSN 679) in La Spezia, Italy, and commenced a 45-month tour that included four extended overseas deployments. A highly successful Arctic deployment, which was highlighted by surfacing his attack submarine at the North Pole on 11 October 1981, started CAPT Dorman on an eight-year specialty assignment as one of the Navy’s experts on Arctic Warfare.

Arctic Operations prior to the 1980s were largely focused on exploring that remote ocean environment; but during the 1980s, the emphasis shifted to developing an Arctic Warfare capability. In August 1982, CAPT Dorman was assigned as the Operations Officer for Commander, Submarine Force U.S. Atlantic Fleet (CSL) in Norfolk, VA where he was involved in the planning and analysis of numerous submarine deployments to the high latitudes. Three years later he was assigned as Director, Arctic Submarine Laboratory at the Naval Ocean Systems Center in San Diego, CA and served additional duty on both the Submarine Force Atlantic and Pacific Fleet staffs.

For the next four years, CAPT Dorman was responsible for coordinating the planning and directing the execution of submarine related research and development programs throughout the Arctic. It was during spring deployments as Officer in Charge of remote floating ice camps that he supervised many exciting events. Recovery of torpedoes through up to twenty-five feet of sea ice, escorting polar bears away from manned ice camps, and multiple submarine rendezvous at the North Pole are but a few examples.

In August 1989, CAPT Dorman returned to Norfolk and was assigned as Commander Oceanographic System Atlantic in charge of the undersea surveillance system supporting the Atlantic Fleet ASW forces. Two years later he retired from the Navy in Norfolk and joined EG&G Technical Services, Inc. as a defense contractor. CAPT Dorman's awards and decorations include the Legion of Merit with gold Star, Meritorious Service Medal with four Gold Stars, the Navy Commendation Medal and four Meritorious Unit Commendations. He is married to the former Elizabeth Dabney Heald of Lynchburg, VA. They have three children all with career Navy families and six grandchildren.

CAPT Dorman served as president and vice president of the Hampton Roads Chapter of the Naval Submarine League for a total of seven years and remains active. He has been a member of the Navy League for over 31 years. He joined the Board of Directors of the Dolphin Scholarship Foundation (DSF) in 1998 and served as Secretary-Treasurer for 20 years.