

Michael Fijalka

Michael Fijalka grew up in Bremerton Washington in a large family with Coast Guard ties; his father, three uncles and a great uncle all served in the Service. He decided on applying to the Coast Guard Academy after seeing a very slick presentation from Air Station Port Angeles during a junior year civics class. He graduated from East High School in Bremerton and entered the Coast Guard Academy with high hopes and aspirations on June 28th, 1976.

While at the Academy, Michael enjoyed summer cruises on Eagle, sailing each summer onboard from swab cruise to first class cruise where he qualified as an underway OOD. He was a member of the marching band (Trombone), bowling team, and a manager for the gymnastics team and the first women's softball team. He graduated pretty much dead center in the class and received his Bachelor of Science degree in Management. Michael married his Academy classmate and sweetheart of four years, Sharon Willis, just three days after graduation.

Michael with Sharon at his side remained in New England to begin their careers with Michael on Vigilant out of New Bedford. He held several jobs at Reserve Training Center Yorktown until selected for the Navy Exchange program and served as the CIC Officer onboard the USS Barney (DDG-6). Deployed for six months to the Mediterranean Sea as part of the Sixth Fleet Battle Group, he qualified as a Naval Surface Warfare Officer.

After debarking Barney, Michael was a watch stander at the Commandant's Command Center and then the Atlantic Area Operations Center as Senior Controller. Notable cases he briefed included the Exxon Valdez (Mar 89), Whales Trapped in the Arctic Ice ('88), Grounding of CGC Mesquite in Lake Superior (Dec '89), The Perfect Storm/F/V Andrea Gail (Oct '91) and the start of The First Gulf War (Aug 90). In 1994, he deployed to Haiti as part of the Maritime Defense Command Port operations staff for Operation Uphold Democracy. Michael and Sharon started their family on Governors Island with the birth of their only son, Michael. They moved to the Northern Virginia area in 1996 when GI was closed.



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No doubt they would have finished their careers on GI had the Coast Guard not moved out. Michael completed his active duty as a member of the HR Information Services Staff at CG Headquarters, retiring on Sept 1st, 2000. He is a 1994 Graduate (with Distinction) of the U.S. Naval War College, Naval Command and Staff College, and holds a Master's Certificate in IT Project Management from Regis University.

Military awards include three Coast Guard Commendation Medals, a Navy Commendation Medal, two Coast Guard Achievement medals, The Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, and various other service unit and operations awards.

His second career began as a civilian staff member of the Coast Guard working for six years in the HR Information Services Division as a Functional and Technical Team Lead as well as Database Administrator for the implementation of PeopleSoft HCM for Active Duty and Reserve military personnel. Promoted to Division Chief, HR Systems Management Division in 2006, he led Coast Guard project activities to successful conclusion, on schedule and on budget, in Jan 2015 with the implementation of PeopleSoft Global Pay as the Service's new enterprise military payroll system integrated with HR processes – a first across the federal government for military pay using COTS. He retired from the Coast Guard civilian position In February 2017 with a combined total of over forty years of service to the Coast Guard.

He was a member and Chairman of the Defense Users Group, aligned with OHUG; and was also a member of PMI, IHRIM, AFCEA, and ISACA. He held numerous certifications, including: PMI certified PMP; "Certified in the Governance of Enterprise IT" (CGEIT), a Certified Information Security Manager (CISM), and Certified in Risk and Information Systems Control (CRISC) by ISACA. He received the "Leadership in Systems Integration Award" from The Association for Federal Information Resources Management in 2015.

His philanthropic pursuits include participant, coach and mentor for over 20 years in cycling, triathlon and running events and raising over \$150k for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society's Team-in-Training; He has been a Boy Scout adult leader for over 20 years; and was a member of the board of directors for the Historical Miniature Gaming Society, Inc. Michael and his family continued their love of the sea with over 25 family cruises on Disney Cruise Ships.

Michael and Sharon's one son, a fine young man with a difficult life, was an Eagle Scout, Graduate of George Mason University and a member of the Thespian Society. He succumbed in February 2016 following his fifth battle with cancer.

