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SEPTEMBER 19, 2013

THE HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER



FOR THE PARKLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT

50¢ A COPY

Showing their strength Navy SEALs honor late comrade



Lauren McFadden and Andrea Palmisano, both of Allentown, push a barrel during the obstacle course.



PRESS PHOTOS BY MARK RECCEK

Dr. Ray Fritz, a South Whitehall podiatrist and retired Navy SEAL, talks with a team during a break from one of the obstacle courses at the benefit challenge.

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The event not only displayed the physical endurance and strength of those participating, but also their compassion.

On Sept. 8, residents from around the Lehigh Valley competed in the Navy SEAL Benefit Challenge in Whitehall.

The challenge benefited the Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware UDT-SEAL Association and families who have experienced the loss of loved ones in uniform.

The morning consisted of PT exercises at the Egypt VFW Post 7293, a 1-mile run and an intense obstacle course at Hoover Karate Academy, Whitehall.

After the obstacle course, the participants traveled back across Route 145 to the VFW to honor fallen U.S. Navy SEAL Brett Shadle of Elizabethville, Dauphin County, who died after colliding with another SEAL in midair during a parachute training exercise over Arizona.

The primary organizer of the event was retired Navy SEAL Dr. Ray Fritz, a podiatrist in South

Whitehall.

"This day is about him [Brett Shadle], we are honoring him," Fritz said.

Shadle's parents, Dave and LuAnn, accepted a blanket from Fritz and a proclamation honoring his life from Congressman Charlie Dent, R-15th. "Brett sacrificed himself, so we can enjoy our freedom," Dent, positioned in front of a Navy F-14 fighter jet, told the large crowd.

Dave Shadle said the event and presentation in honor of his son aided the family in coping with their loss.

"You find out how many people care," he said. "It kind of takes the stain away."

Although Brett, by nature, was a reserved individual, LuAnn Shadle said he would have been pleased with those honoring him.

"We appreciate them [UDT-SEAL Association] letting us come," she said. "We think what they're doing is excellent."

For more information on the UDT Seal Association, visit the organization's website at hudtseal.org.



From left, Ray Fritz, Nick Fritz and Ulisses Rodriguez, all of Allentown, pound mallets into a tire in between obstacles. Rodriguez will be leaving for SEAL training shortly.

LuAnn Shadle of Elizabethville, Dauphin County, displays a bracelet she had made of medals that belonged to her son, Brett Shadle. Shadle, a Navy Seal, died in the line of duty this past March.



Robert Muzslay, president of the Pennsylvania Chapter of the SEAL Association, Congressman Charlie Dent, R-15th, LuAnn Shadle, Dave Shadle, Dr. Ray Fritz, vice president of the Pennsylvania chapter of the SEAL association, and Steve Turoscy, representative of the Hoover Karate Academy, honor the Shadles with a proclamation at the Egypt VFW Post 7293 from Dent in honor of their son, Brett.



A group of women show their endurance by lifting tree logs during the Navy SEAL Benefit Challenge Sept. 8 at the Hoover Karate Academy in Whitehall. The morning included PT exercises, a one-mile run and an obstacle course. Money raised benefits the Pennsylvania, Delaware and New Jersey chapters of the SEAL association, specifically Navy special warfare families who have suffered great loss.