

## CAREER

I joined the Navy in February 1943. I was 17 years old and not too interested in school and besides there was a war going on, to a 17 year old that was a lot more interesting than school. I don't know how I ever talked my parents into signing permission papers for me to enlist but they did.

I was sent to Boot Training at NTC Sampson NY up on the Finger Lakes. Marching around in Upper New York in the snow and cold was not much fun. Upon graduation I was sent to Diesel School at the Baltimore Locomotive Factory at Richmond VA in June 1943. I spent the rest of the war at Repair Facilities at Guantanamo Cuba and the States. The war was winding down in 1945. Every one was counting their points. This was the system set up to determine when you became eligible for Discharge. It never occurred to me to stay in and no one asked me to. I was discharged in December of 1945 as a MOMM 3rd Class (Diesel Mechanic)

I found work in a Fish Plant in my Home Town of Gloucester MA. I wanted something better so I took the Exam for the Massachusetts State Police and ended up third on the list to be hired. Some how I couldn't see myself handing out Speeding Tickets or pulling people out of wrecks for the rest of my life. I realized I missed the Navy and decided to give it one shot at re-enlisting before I settled into the Police life. I was accepted in the Navy. I was offered my old rate back but I said no and re-enlisted as a Fireman 1<sup>st</sup> Class. This turned out to be a wise decision. I doubt I would have been sent to the Colonial.

I reported aboard the USS Colonial (LSD-18) in August 1948. I was assigned to the Port Engine Room as a Machinist Mate Striker. March of 1949 the ship received a quota to send someone to attend Salvage School at Bayonne NJ. I was selected to fill the quota (I probably begged for it). Salvage School was great I enjoyed the Hard Hat Diving and rigging Beach Gear. I graduated high enough to select my choice of Salvage Billets, but I had a return quota and I went back to the Colonial. I was a qualified Salvage Diver and was assigned to R Division. I still had to stand Throttle Watch in the Engine Room underway until 1950 because of Personnel shortages. I liked working in the Shipfitter Gang, you never knew what you were going to have to fix or build next. I took the test for the next Pipefitter Grade each time I was eligible and was promoted. I left the Colonial after 5 years as a Pipefitter 1<sup>st</sup> Class

1952 between Deployments to Korea I married the love of my life.

I left the Colonial on August 1953 my enlistment was up and I wanted to try some East Coast duty, so I went to Boston to re-enlist. Well that didn't work; I received orders right back to the West Coast to the USS Hancock (CVA-19) Re-commissioning Detail in Bremerton WA. In 1954 after the ship was commissioned I received orders to Instructor School San Diego and from there to Pipefitter and Metalsmith School Norfolk VA. I taught basic Class Room subjects and Shop Pipefitting and Welding skills. I took the Chiefs exam when I was eligible, and was promoted to Chief Pipefitter (FPC) in 1955

A memo came around from the School Command announcing a test to be held for Ensign and Warrant Officer. I was given the opportunity to take the test. My thought was to give it a shot for Warrant. When the results were posted in June of 1957 I was surprised to receive a Commission as an Ensign LDO (Hull) with orders to Subic Bay PI as Officer in Charge of the AFDL 11 a small floating Dry Dock. I guess the Bureau

figured that my experience in R Division in an LSD qualified me as a Docking Officer? I managed to survive 3 years of docking various types of small ships without tipping any of them over or punching holes in the Hull. December 1958 I received the routine promotion to Lieutenant JG.

I left Subic in 1960 with orders to the Board of Inspection and Survey at San Diego as the Damage Control Inspector.

The Board consisted of Officers with expertise in specific disciplines to inspect each Department of newly constructed ships and those already in commission to evaluate their readiness to carryout their mission. A failing grade tied the ship to the dock until the discrepancies were corrected and probably was a career killer for the Skipper and any Officer who's Department failed. The Board members were all Captains and Commander except for me. Being "George" the lowest rank I had the honor of taking care of all the Administrative chores at the Inspection Site along with conducting the Damage Control Inspection in the ship. I still don't understand at this early stage of my career why the Bureau considered me an expert in Damage Control. I'd never been to Damage control School. I was promoted to Lieutenant in June of 1962, but was still "George".

New orders in October of 1962 assigned me to the Aircraft Carrier Yorktown (CVS-10) as Damage Control Assistant (DCA). I served in the Yorktown for three years. I managed to receive a passing grade for every Damage Control Underway Training Exercise while in the Yorktown.

DCA on a Carrier was considered Arduous Duty by the Bureau. I received orders in February 1965 to Spanish Language School in Washington DC and upon completion, a tour supposedly on an idyllic Caribbean Island. The MAAG Dominican Republic as Shipyard Advisor. I arrived in the DomRep just in time for the 1965 Revolution. It was very interesting for awhile. I received the promotion to Lieutenant Commander in October 1966

My tour in the DomRep was cut a few months short by a set of orders in October of 1967 to the Bon Homme Richard (CVA-31) as DCA. That was an arduous tour. The ship made three deployments to the Gulf of Tonkin conducting daily 12 hour cyclic Air Operations and for the hours left in the day, maintenance and Replenishment at Sea for food, fuel and ammunition or re-fueling Destroyers. Back home in San Diego things were not much better. Seems we were always underway to provide a ready deck for pilots from Miramar and Lemoore NAS qualifying for Carrier Landings.

After 3 years on the Bon home Richard I received orders to MAAG Vietnam preceded by 49 weeks of Vietnamese Language School in Monterey CA. I reported to the Repair Base at Nha Be Vietnam as the Repair Officer on 3 June 1971. I assisted in the turnover of the Base to the Vietnamese Navy towards the end of my one year tour. During this tour I became eligible and made the list for promotion to Commander.

I left Vietnam in 1972 with orders to Fleet Training Group San Diego CA as Damage Control Department Head. Through out my entire career I was always on the receiving end of the whims of this Group. I'd been at this billet for about 2 year when the Bureau came looking for a Commander to fill the billet as OinC of Fleet Activities Detachment Yokosuka Japan at Yokohama. I asked my wife if she wanted to go to Japan she was all for it, so in August 1974 I jumped at the chance to get away from Fleet Training Group.

The Commander of Fleet Activities was 3 hours (18 miles) away by car to Yokosuka so I was pretty much on my own. The Base had Naval Housing areas scattered around Yokohama, a Police Force and also provided support for Tenant Commands in this area.

My job was surprisingly very political. I received many invitations along with my wife to attend Ceremonial and Social events by Japanese Dignitaries, Politian's and United States State Department Officials in Yokohama. My wife mingled with people at these events with a natural social grace.

I had a very successful career because of the challenging billets, the hard work, and dedication of many sailors and the support of a Navy wife. There are no doubts the long separations, providing a stable family home, picking up and moving the family, every two or three years sometimes even Overseas every is not the easy life. I never heard one complaint from my wife or daughter.

I retired on 1 February 1976.