



Mudflap



News and Activities from the Tidewater Region— Antique Automobile Club of America

Volume 71, Special Veterans Day Issue

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From The (regular) Editors' Keyboards

Terry & Susan Bond

Welcome to our special Guest Editor, Holly Forester. Holly has taken charge of editing this special issue of *The Mudflap* in tribute to our TRAACA Veterans. Holly also manages the Military Membership Program for AACA National and is doing a fantastic job. We hope you enjoy getting to know more about our club members and their service to our Country.

Celebrating TRAACA Veterans

Holly Forester

On the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month in 1918, World War I ended with the signing of an armistice between the Central Powers and the Allies. The following year, President Woodrow Wilson declared 11 November as Armistice Day in the United States, both in celebration of that victory and to honor those who had fought and died during the conflict. Congress formalized Armistice Day in 1938 and declared that date as a federal holiday. (Govinfo.gov, 6 November 2020).

Because of the war's tragic human toll, it was hoped that such large-scale conflict would never again occur. The slogan, "the war to end all war," was associated with that desire. However, war did occur again, so the title of Armistice Day eventually became an anachronism. After World War II, in 1945, a veteran who had fought in that war, Raymond Meeks, felt that Armistice Day should be expanded to honor all veterans rather than just those who had fought during WWI. (The Daily Sentinel, 11 November 2019). Nine years later, in 1954, Veterans Day



became the official moniker. In 2025, President Trump proposed changing the name of Veterans Day to Victory in World War I Day, but veteran backlash kept that proposal from moving forward.

In 1968, Congress enacted the Uniform Monday Holiday Act to give certain workers extended time off. As a result, in 1971, Veterans Day was moved to the fourth Monday in October. (<https://www.govinfo.gov/features/veterans-day>) Public reaction to the movement of the date led Congress four years later to restore recognition of Veterans Day to its original date. Therefore, Veterans Day is always celebrated on 11 November each year, regardless of the day of the week upon which it falls.

In 2016, President Barack Obama signed into law the Veterans Day Moment of Silence Act, which called on Americans to observe two minutes of silence at 2:11 p.m. EST each Veterans Day. (The 2:11 p.m. time allows all 50 states and Puerto Rico to participate simultaneously.)

Today, Americans continue to appreciate the service and sacrifice of their veterans. The following are dates that reflect that tradition.

25 March	Medal of Honor Day
29 March	Vietnam Veterans Day
9 April	Former POW Recognition Day

May	Military Appreciation Month
Friday before Mother's Day,	Military Spouse Appreciation Day
20 May	Armed Forces Day
Last Monday in May,	Memorial Day
12 June	Women Veterans Day
27 July	Korean War Veterans Armistice Day
7 August	Purple Heart Day
November	Military Family Appreciation Month
11 Nov	Veterans Day
7 December	Pearl Harbor Day

Currently, there are over 17 million veterans in the United States, representing about 7% of the population. Of those, 12% are women veterans. Just under 50% are Gulf War era veterans and 30% are veterans over 65 years of age

(WWII, Korea, Vietnam). (<https://www.theglobalstatistics.com/united-states-veterans-statistics>).

Virginia is currently ranked #2 in the United States in terms of veteran population. Among regions in the state, Hampton Roads has one of the highest number of veterans, with approximately 220,000 veterans comprising about 16% of the adult population (<https://www.hrmffa.org/about-us>).

Given those numbers, it isn't surprising that TRAACA would, in turn, have a healthy number of members who have served in one of the armed forces. As of last count, there are over 40 veterans in the club.

Here are some of their stories.

Matthew Weinstein



I am a veteran of the United States Coast Guard. The Coast Guard had a special program for sonar (permanent sea duty) which required only 2 years of active duty (other military branches required longer commitments). The two-year commitment allowed me to return to UVA to finish my undergraduate degree in the shortest amount of time.

After boot camp in 1967, I served on Active duty as a Sonarman 3rd class on the USCGC Castle Rock 6/1967 - 6/1968. Served on eight Ocean Station tours in the North Atlantic. An Ocean Station was a midpoint in the Atlantic about half-way between North America and Europe. They were labeled from North to South: Alpha, Bravo, Charlie, Delta and Echo. Canada manned Alpha and the USCG handled the other 4. I recall doing 5 Ocean Stations on the Castle Rock. While on station; we did air traffic monitoring for trans-European flights; military line of defense for western bound aircraft; aids to navigation for shipping, oceanography studies, and meteorology.

I also did one combat training tour in Guantanamo Bay in preparation for a 13-month Viet Nam tour. However, I was transferred to USCGC

Casco with 6 months left on active duty since I was unable to complete the Viet Nam tour. On the Casco, we did 4 Ocean Stations.

I finished active duty on 1/2/1969 and transferred to the Reserves, serving from 1/3/1969 - 1/2/1973, where I was promoted to Sonarman 2nd class. Sonar was being phased out, so I was reassigned as a Radarman 2nd class.

I joined TRAACA in 2021. In the past, I've owned the following classic vehicles:

1. 1931 Imperial Deluxe Chevrolet sedan.
2. 1951 Harley Davison Hydra-Glide.
3. 1957 Harley Davidson Duo-Glide.
4. 1959 Mercedes Benz 190SL Sport Coupe
5. 1972 Mercedes-Benz 280SE 4.5
6. 1987 Mercedes-Benz 560SL

I currently own a 1938 Oldsmobile Convertible Coupe 8 cylinder, which I purchased in 2020 from a dealer in West Palm Beach, FL. The entire fuel system has been replaced from the gas tank to the fuel pump to the carburetor. Most other repairs have been minor.



Gerry Massie

I am an 11th generation Virginian born and raised in Fairfax, VA. I joined the U.S. Navy a year after high school in 1971. My first duty station after "A" School in Key West FL was in Buxton, NC at the Naval Facility. My service was, basically, in the fleet and shore-based Anti-Submarine Warfare Community. Specifically, I was a Senior Chief, Ocean Systems Technician Maintenance. Part of my time was in shipboard sonar and part in shore-based tracking.

My last duty station was at Little Creek with the Mobile Inshore Undersea Warfare Group. My last shipboard duty station was onboard the USS McCloy FF1038 (Editor's note: named for LCDR John C. McCloy, recipient of two Medals of Honor). I retired in 1992, after 21 years of service.

After retiring, I went to work for GE Aerospace on the SQQ-89 sonar and retired from Lockheed Martin Ocean and Radar Systems 25 years later. I am blessed to have served and had my

years of service create my career.

I have 3 old cars and am a new member of TRAACA. I own a 1989 Pontiac Firebird GTA convertible, a 1996 Chevrolet Impala SS and a 2002 Chevrolet Camaro SLP SS convertible.

Even though I am a new member of TRAACA, I have been a member of AACA for a couple of years. With the help of Bob Parrish and Fred Trusty, in early 2025 we created a new AACA non-geographic region called "1994 - 1996 Impala SS". I am the current President of that Region and working to build that membership from its initial 19 AACA members.

In 2000, I was a founding member of the local Tidewater Impala SS Club (TRIC) along with Bob Parrish. There are a handful of old TRIC members still around who get together for lunch every few months. Those owners are members of the new AACA Impala Region. Car clubs and gatherings have formed a lot of my friendships over the years, as did serving in the Navy.

Tom Allan

I joined the Coast Guard because I had always had an interest in what they did. This included the time in 1963 when the Cape Falcon came to offer us aid -- when on an overnight sailboat race in the Chesapeake Bay, we lost a crewman overboard in a squall (we found him very drowned a week later). I had worked a couple of summers at Virginia Institute of Marine Science and found I liked being on the boats more than in the lab...so it was a natural fit to go to Officer Candidate School after getting my degree.



In the Officer Corps, the CG has deck & engineering "specialties" at first; I chose deck. But I later did some engineering too when qualifying as a Double-ender in Marine Inspection. My favorite assignment was as a Group Commander

(now called Sector) in northern California. I also Commanded CGC Cape Carter (all vessels over 64' length are called "cutters" in the CG. Mine ranged from 75' to 378' loa.

The most memorable commands were a coastal search & rescue station (with a breaking bar), and being a Group/Capt of the Port CO in northern CA. Other notables were Port Safety Officer of NY/NJ, and Operations & Navigation head on a 265' ship out of Wilmington, NC.

I retired from the Coast Guard in 1987, having served over 20 years and on 5 ships, and 7 shore assignments with 2 shore commands and one ship command. The Coast Guard is a multifaceted organization doing search & rescue, maritime law enforcement, environmental protection, port safety & security, defense operations Arctic & Antarctic operations, etc. I was involved in most of those over the years.

Having always been interested in antique vehicles, and having had 43 of them and 3 motorcycles, and some motorbikes, there are many tales to tell. My favorites are mostly gone now, but a few standouts are: a '56 Chev. Bel Air HDTP w/

Power Pack; a reliable '23 Ford that was an experiment between Henry Ford & H. Firestone in re: the balloon tires; and a '23 Buick which I still have.

I was "introduced" to TRAACA by Jeff Locke, Terry Bond, & Merrit Horne in 1984. I was fairly active in club activities, in charge of the annual meet one year, Mudflap Editor, etc., but now, mostly due to health, I am not so involved. As M. G. Randall once said to me, (he in his late 80's and enroute from Michigan to Illinois. to see a car), "Keep movin', if you don't, you won't."



Dennis J Sobota CDR, CEC, USNR-R

My military career started in the Army Reserves in 1970. Vietnam was going hot and heavy and I was ready to be drafted! I had just graduated from Penn State in June 1969! I spent 5 ½ years in the Army Reserve. While attending grad school at the U of Pittsburgh, I met two officers from the Navy Civil Engineer Corps. They told me about a direct commission program that included crediting my Army time for pay purposes! I graduated in June and then raised my hand and was commissioned onto active duty in the Navy. I eventually spent 24 ½ years in the Navy--7 ½ years on active duty and 17 years in the Navy Reserve-- in the Navy Civil Engineer Corps (the Officer Corps of the Seabees). My combined service, Army, Navy, active and reserves was 30 years! (Another tidbit, my Dad was a WWII Seabee)

While on active duty, I had the following billets:

- *Facilities Officer for the Naval War College, Newport, RI.
- *Asst. Resident Officer in Charge of Construction, Chesapeake Division, Washington Navy Yard, DC.
- *Navy Program Manager, Strategic Structures Division, Defense Nuclear Agency, Alexandria, VA.
- *Facilities Officer for the Naval Supply Center, Norfolk, VA.

The most fun job for me was as a construction manager in the DC area! I oversaw projects at Andrews AFB and Henderson Hall, a USMC base adjacent to Arlington National Cemetery! I

saw Air Force One and Marine One every week! Also, while assigned at the Defense Nuclear Agency, I had an opportunity of a lifetime by serving as a military aide in Ronald Reagan's first inauguration. I had discovered that a coordinator of the military aides for the inauguration worked there in a different division. I approached her, volunteered and was accepted!

My two hobbies over the years have been home improvement projects and cars! I've owned a total of 45 vehicles and 12 motorcycles including 2 Corvettes, 2 Jaguar XKEs and 14 convertibles! My last being the 1964 Chevrolet Chevelle shown at the Classic Auto Mall. It was sold in 2024. My favorite had to be my first, a 1963 red Corvette roadster!! Of course, it wasn't really vintage when I bought it in 1967!



James Stansbury **1Lt. Army Corps of Engineers veteran**

The Vietnam War and anti-war protests were raging when I graduated from VA Tech in 1967. My draft number was coming up so I enlisted in the Army and after surviving basic and engineer training at Ft. Leonard



Wood I attended the engineer officer candidate school at Ft. Belvoir. Graduating as a 2Lt. in Oct. 1968 was the most proud achievement of my entire life since only 40% passed. My first duty assignment was to Ft. Bragg to get some actual troop experience with a platoon of rowdy combat engineer soldiers just back from Nam. By that time, the brass had learned that all new officers should not enter a hot war zone as a novice. By Sep. 1969 I was in Vietnam leading a heavy equipment platoon supporting a remote artillery fire base in a mountainous area near the DMZ. That hazardous duty was followed by a minor staff position at Fort Belvoir where I finished my three year Army obligation.

My most interesting assignment at Ft. Belvoir was to a team tasked to find blind dates for a class of West Point Cadets who were visiting each major Army Branch HQ to decide which

specialty (infantry, artillery, etc.) they would choose. Belvoir was the HQ of the Engineers at that time. Despite the anti-war protests at local colleges we found plenty of eager dates for each cadet (but found none for ourselves and we were not invited to the formal ball in the Officer's Club either).

Next I learned the Defense Logistics Agency in Richmond was hiring veterans and unexpectedly spent over 40 years working there as a civilian involved in the supply chain supporting worldwide military aircraft operations and maintenance for the Air Force, Navy and Army.

I have attached a photo of my first ever total restoration effort of an antique car. It is a 1933 Buick that started as a basket case and got its senior AACA award at the recent AACA meet in Hampton. The photo was taken on the set of a WWII era movie being filmed in Petersburg. *Ithaca* was the movie and Meg Ryan was the director. The car was only used in parked scenes. That is me on the running board.



John Clark

I was in the U.S. Army from 1974 to 1979. I was attending U of MD when I got my Vietnam draft number in 1972 (64). I took my physical exam and waited and waited. I finally joined the Army in May 1974. I attended Surveyor Training at Ft. Belvoir, VA and Combat Engineer Training at Ft. Leonard Wood, MO, before signing in to my first duty station back at Ft. Belvoir. Because of my training, my 2 Military Occupation Skills were Combat Engineer 12B10 and Topographic Surveyor 82D20. Throughout 1976, I did multiple flood control surveys in MD, SC, and TX.



This photo of the Firebird was taken outside the apartment I had rented in Fulda-Glazerzell.

I returned to Ft. Belvoir in 1977, when I received my orders to report to Germany. I was assigned to the 11th Armored Cavalry located at the time in Fulda, West Germany, as a Sergeant in the 58th Combat Engineer Company supporting our country's mission to thwart a Soviet and East German invasion through the Fulda Gap.

I purchased my 1969 Firebird Convertible 'used' in December of 1971 during my Freshman year at U of MD with a school loan and help from parents. They wanted their car back! I could not get dormitory housing because so many students had draft deferments, and all rooms were taken by Sophomores. I had to drive from the north side of Baltimore to College Park, MD about 60 miles for, of course, 8:00 classes. I very fortunate that the Army shipped my Fire-

bird to West Germany in 1977 and upon completion of my duties in the Fulda Gap, shipped it back to the U.S. in 1980. I put over 40,000 miles on the odometer traveling and sightseeing when not on duty. The Firebird had previously served me well at all my stateside duty locations, which included New Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, South Carolina, Missouri and Texas.

The Firebird recently in Virginia Beach with the Cape Henry lighthouse in the background.



Scott Davies

I enlisted in the U.S. Navy in March of 1969 and completed boot camp at Great Lakes. On to Pensacola, FL for technical training and then my first duty station at CINCLANTFLT (Commander-in-Chief, Atlantic Fleet) in Norfolk, VA. A transfer to USS John F Kennedy (CVA 67) provided an opportunity "to see the world".



Scott Davies and Colin Powell

Following a MED (Mediterranean) deployment, it was on to Hawaii at the Naval Communications Station and CINCPACFLT (Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Fleet).

Returning to the "states" it was back to Pensacola for Instructor Duty, teaching communications in the Intelligence and Cryptologic fields. My next move was to Washington, DC having been selected for the White House Communications Agency. It was an honor and privilege to provide the Carter and Reagan administrations with communications support at the White House and world-wide, wherever the President travelled.

When I received my commission as a Chief Warrant Officer, it was back to the Navy assigned to the pre-commissioning unit for USS Normandy (CG-60), an AEGIS cruiser. (AEGIS being the most advanced radar/weapon system at the time). Shortly after the commissioning, USS Normandy was called to action for Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm. We were the newest ship in the Gulf and the first ship since WWII to deploy to active hostilities on her maiden deployment.

My final assignment was back to Washington, DC at the Office of Naval Intelligence as the Communications Officer. I retired from the Navy after 26 years of service.



1958 Corvette

Throughout my naval career I have had a companion in the form of a 1958 Corvette! The Corvette was "mine" during my junior and senior years of High School--it was really my brother's car, but he was away in the Navy. We shared the car when stationed together in Norfolk, but I

bought it from him upon returning from Hawaii. Pensacola, Washington, back to Norfolk, Staten Island, NY, Washington again, and ending back in Norfolk, the Corvette has been my transportation, hobby, goal and joy. It was a hotrod, custom, drag racer and finally a fully restored AACA Senior Grand National Award-winning beauty. During those same years I had many other cars and restored many Corvettes. About the time the 1958 Corvette restoration was nearing completion, I was able to achieve another lifelong goal with my purchase of a 1936 Cord. Unfortunately, it too has required more restoration than was expected but should be back on the road soon.



1936 Cord

Boe Bostjancic

I began my 8-year stint in the USMC in 1975. I completed boot Camp at Parris Island, South Carolina. Most of my time was spent at Little Creek Virginia, Landing Force Training Command, Tactical



Training Branch. As an amphibious warfare / recon instructor, I specialized in evacuation of US Embassies, as well as all properties housing American Citizens. I drafted and wrote the lesson plan for evacuation for the entire Fleet Marine Force. I was honorably discharged in 1983.



I purchased my 1967 Camaro on 10/30/1996. It is the 29th Camaro off the production line in Norwood, Ohio and I am the second owner. It is kind of rare as it has a split bench seat and automatic on the column. It also has a clock on the floorboard--yes that was an option. It has always been something my son and I enjoyed taking to Jenro's. Now he and his family own a 1956 Bel Air, and we enjoy sitting side by side and most car shows.

Bill Coburn, Col. USAF (Ret.)

I have had a lifelong love of both classic cars and airplanes. I began flying when I was a teenager and my interest in aviation ultimately led to a career as an Air Force Intelligence Officer. I served worldwide in a variety of locations including Europe, the Pacific, and Central America. My assignments led me to support combat operations as an intelligence officer in Operations Desert Storm, Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom, and the Global War on Terrorism, where I worked with flying units, special operations, and joint commands.

My Dad owned several classic cars including a 1926 Ford Depot Hack and a 1967 Dodge Charger. My first classic was a 1955 Buick that my grandmother once owned. My family still



owns and drives a 1996 Jeep Cherokee, the first of 5 Jeeps they own and drive today. My most beloved vehicle is my original 1985 Chevrolet Camaro that I bought new 40 years ago. This Camaro won the HPOF Original Oval at our Virginia Beach National in 2015 and a Vintage Chevrolet Original Award at the Virginia Beach Eastern Region Show last November.

Jim Villers

My 190SL has been a part of my life for the past 53 years. I bought it in 1972 as a young Naval Officer stationed in San Diego who needed a car to commute to work. Other officers were buying the new Datsun 240Z which cost more that I could afford. So, I began looking for a two seat sports cars with roll up windows. After driving many cars, I finally spent \$1,800 on a "nice" 1961 190SL named Mercy. The "nice" meant that I needed to have the front seats upholstered and have the engine head rebuilt. Since it was a European car, I also needed to update its lights to acquire a Naval Base permit to drive onto the base.

I enjoyed the car from the beginning. My wife and I drove Mercy on camping trips in the San Bernardino Mountains and toured interesting Southern California locations. We drove Mercy across country to my next duty station with our three month-old baby girl behind the front seats in a bassinet. As my family grew and the Navy moved us around, it was always my daily driver. When stationed overseas, the car spent two years in a Pennsylvania barn. My family enjoyed



Sunday drives in Mercy with our two young children sitting behind the front seats and we would play "the talking car game"; the kids would ask Mercy a question and she would answer with one engine rev for "no" and two engine revs for "yes". The metal grate bridge that we often drove over was known as the "singing bridge". My grown children still keep those fond memories of Sunday drives.

There are also are the wonderful benefits of clubs; they are an introduction to interesting people and an invitation to enjoyable experiences.

Holly Forester

My service in the Army began in 1980 after graduating through the Army ROTC and BSN nursing program at Old Dominion University. As an Army Nurse, I first went to Ft. Benning, GA (where I went through Basic Parachutist school), and was co-assigned in the Emergency Room and 2nd MASH. Tours in Arlington, Ft. Leavenworth (no, not the prison!), El Paso, Ohio, and two in Korea followed. I had clinical assignments in ER and ICU, with suicide attempts, gunshot wounds, and even a lightning strike victim as some of the most memorable patients. However, most of my career was in administrative nursing roles, including nurse recruiting, nursing education, and ROTC command. My favorite assignment was as Chief, Nursing Education at Ft. Bliss, TX. When I retired after 21 years, as a LTC, my interest in nursing education continued and I taught nursing locally for over 10 years.



After meeting Scott Davies in 2002, his interest in antique vehicles gradually cultivated a spark in me and I impetuously bought a 1969 MGB. While "Sunny" ran most of the time, she had a need for cosmetic improvements. After buying all the parts for that, my actual restoration efforts went on the back burner, where they have been for more years than I care to admit. Currently, I am volunteering for AACA assisting with the Military Sponsorship Program, where I have processed over 1200 military applications for complimentary membership since 2016.



Sunny

Dick Chipchak

My brother graduated from USNA on 6/7/1961 with President Kennedy as a guest speaker. Kennedy was not only talking to the graduates, but he was talking to the youth in the audience (me) about serving our country. As a result, I joined the Navy and served from September 1964 through August 1968.

After going through Boot Camp and Machinist Mate Training School, I was stationed on the USS King (DLG -10). USS King was an Intelligence ship in the waters off North Vietnam. Our primary duty was sailing from the most northern part of North Vietnam to the most southern part of North Vietnam picking up enemy intelligence. When we were in the most northern waters, Russian bombers and Russian ships would fly very low over us and sail 5 feet away from us trying to pick up our intel. We also picked up pilots that were shot down by North Vietnamese soldiers.

My main specialty was as a Machinist Mate (MM) and I was part of the ship's Engineering Department, which consists of Boilermen, Electricians, and Machinist Mates (MM). We MMs received the 1200 pound superheated steam and used that steam to turn the turbines that moved the ship's propellers. We also used that steam to turn electric generators to produce the ship's electric power and to "boil" sea water to create fresh drinking water. Boilermen gave us the steam and Electricians managed the ship's power.



I remember the day one of our propellers hit a whale and how much our ship shook. When we went into drydock it was amazing the damage done to that propeller. Another colorful trip was sailing over the Great Barrier Reefs off Australia on the way to visit Brisbane, Australia.

Our Antique Car

My wife, Holly, and I ordered a 1972 Olds Cutlass Supreme Convertible in September of 1971. This car normally came with automatic transmission on the floor, but we special-ordered it with a Hurst 4 Speed. I found out years later that they only made 126 of that Cutlass Supreme Convertible model with a Hurst 4 Speed. I paid \$4,900 total!

Frank R Sheleheda

With a 1970 draft #27 and my college deferment expired, my father-in-law, CDR Tom Quinn enlisted me into the Navy in 1969. I served as a Cryptologic Technician (Technical) in the intelligence field. Two and a half years later, I applied for the Naval Flight Program (Pilot) and was sent to Andrews Air Force Base for flight physical, interviews and orientation training. Having passed all the interviews and testing, I was put on medical/dental hold due to a college football concussion and damaged teeth! Although not as a pilot, I was again honored to have my father-in-law commission me an Ensign (Cryptology) in 1972. I served the next 23 ½ years of my career as a Signals Intelligence/Staff Intelligence Officer.

Included in my 12 duty stations were tours with the National Security Agency (NSA) and Commander Naval Security Group Headquarters. Also included were assignments in Hawaii, Japan, Guam, Italy and Spain. I earned 12 personal awards, the highest being the Defense Meritorious Service medal for successfully defending the Navy's \$165M annual CCP budget before the House (HPSCI) and Senate (SSCCI) Congressional Intelligence Committees. I retired a Commander in 1996 as the Executive Officer of Naval Security Group Activity, Rota, Spain, a 1200 personnel command.

Following retirement from the Navy, I joined Northrop Grumman for 14 more years supporting the National Security Agency operations retiring in 2009.

William P. Treadwell

I proudly stand whenever veterans are recognized. I attended college on a U.S. Navy ROTC scholarship before serving ten years on active duty and ten years as a reservist with the Navy. Qualified as a Surface Warfare Officer, I served aboard a helicopter carrier, a fast support ship, and a coastal river division before being stationed in Scotland on the USS Holland for two years. My final active duty assignment was at Naval Weapons Station Yorktown. As a reservist, my most memorable assignment was onboard a reserve LST at Little Creek. My final tour was with a CINCLANT staff command at the Navy Annex in Washington. I retired in 1993, culminating twenty years of service.

As a member of AACA, I now possess two classic automobiles, a 1969 Camaro convertible and a 1973 Oldsmobile 442. The Camaro is most memorable as I have owned it since February 1971. As my daily driver for nearly ten years, it became a garage queen when I got housing with a detached garage at Yorktown. I have always enjoyed traveling and showing the Camaro.



Having a street rodder as a neighbor, Linda and I enjoyed many years with the Southeast Virginia Street Rod club, attending local shows as well as hosting an annual event. In 2008, the decision was made to fully restore the Camaro. Many summer trips were planned around car shows and cruise ins. Membership in the AACA came soon after, and the Camaro was shown and judged at many meets, culminating in its Senior Grand National award at Charlotte in 2024.

Rick Seaman

After trying to figure out life as a young kid after high school, I joined the Navy at 20 years old. With a last name like Seaman there really was no other service to join.

I became an Avionics Technician like my dad because I saw the trade that he received while in the Navy, and he went on to work for Delta for 31 years.

I was in the Navy for 30 years. I started out as an E-1 and retired as a CWO-4. As mentioned, I was in Aviation as an Avionics Technician. As an Avionics Technician, I worked on radar, radios, fire control systems, to include the missile and bombing systems, navigation, and carrier systems--just to name a few--on F-14 Tomcats and F-18 Super Hornets. I was a Chief Petty Officer and then Senior Chief Petty Officer and finally received my officer commission as a Maintenance officer in charge of 12 aircraft and 220 people during my last 13 years of service. I was a Maintenance Officer in charge of the repairs of F-18 Super-Hornets.

During my time in the service, I deployed 11 times--7 times to the Mediterranean Sea and 4

to the Western Pacific. I have circumnavigated the globe, and I have been to every continent except Antarctica. I have been as far south as southern Australia and north to the Arctic Circle. The best port I have ever been to was Haifa Israel — seeing Jerusalem, Bethlehem, the wailing wall, and swimming in the Dead Sea was epic.

I have owned my 1964 Plymouth Barracuda for 38 years. During my many deployments, I missed quite a few car shows. One of the biggest highlights was eating a nutritious meal of Vienna Sausages and Saltines--usually all my car friends sent me care packages of that when I missed a show, as seen in the attached photo of me and the Barracuda when I missed the 2017 Chryslers at Carlisle show.

In 2014, while deployed, I told my buddy Tom, "Get me a wagon." When he found the Dart Wagon, I bought it sight unseen!



Tom Bottoni

Hi! I am Thomas Bottoni, and I have been a proud member of the TRAACA for over 20 years. I am also a US Navy veteran, with 21 years of total service.

I originally joined the US Navy in 1993, right out of medical school and went on to receive my clinical training with a transitional internship at then Naval Hospital Oakland, and later with residency training in Emergency Medicine at Naval Medical Center San Diego. I served as an emergency physician with the Navy for 10 years in uniform, and for another 11 years as a GS civilian provider. Along the way, I served in numerous clinical roles in Keflevik, Iceland, Greece, Naples, Italy, Camp Lejeune, Twentynine Palms, CA, (with the US Marines) and most recently, at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth for 14 years as a member of the academic teaching staff until 2019. I am currently semiretired, and I provide clinical telemedicine services since the Covid pandemic.



The classic car bug bit me early! Even as a child in the 70's, I was fond of the older vehicles. I have since purchased two vintage Cadillacs and had them professionally restored over the years. The first is a well optioned 1962 Cadillac Coupe Deville, purchased in 1994 in southern California. It is originally a San Bernadino car, and it has been restored to its original color - Sandalwood gold. My other vintage vehicle is a 1959 Cadillac series 62 Fleetwood, in Empress Green color, originally from western Colorado. It was a rare car even in 1959, with just 12,500 produced, and few surviving today. This car received a full restoration from 2007-2011 and is always a head turner, especially with those twin rudder like bullet tail fins! (Remember, the 1950's was the dawn of the jet and rocket age - so, of course, car designs were so themed!)

I enjoy both vehicles for pleasure drives and local car shows. TRAACA has provided many opportunities to show these cars and the TRAACA members and friends have provided lots of resources to help with the maintenance and preservation of these cultural icons of Americana!



Dan Ciccone

I joined the USMC in 1972 from Detroit, Michigan, and attended boot camp in Parris Island SC. Upon completion, I attended Diesel Mechanic school at Camp LeJeune, NC.

After graduation, I was transferred to Camp Pendleton in California.



After a short period of time, I was shipped out to Okinawa, Japan. Then, after a successful tour, I was shipped back to Camp Elmore, Norfolk VA, the headquarters of Marine Corps Forces, Atlantic/Fleet Marine Force, Atlantic. I enlisted as an E-1 and achieved the rank of E-5 (Sergeant) within my 4-year contract.



Ron Hartman

I decided to enlist in the U.S. Army in 1983 after I had heard they had a dire need for people in the environmental field. I was working at that time for the



U.S. Department of Labor in Arkansas as an industrial hygienist. After telling my boss about this opportunity, he allowed me to go away to basic training with the Army Medical Service Corps at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. On June 24, 1983 I received my commission as a Second Lieutenant in the Army Reserve. For the next 16 years, I served as an Environmental Science Officer with the Army while still working full-time with the Department of Labor. My main duty station was at Fort Belvoir, Virginia where I did environmental testing and safety inspections at various facilities on the Army base, as well as Vint Hill Farms Station and Fort A.P. Hill. Sometimes the Army would send me to Fort Meade or the Aberdeen Proving Grounds, both located in Maryland. I really enjoyed the variety of work and the different investigations that I got to do with the Army's Preventive Medical Sciences. In October of 1995 I received an honorable discharge after I had resigned my commission. By this time, I was working for Navy Medical here in Norfolk and was traveling worldwide frequently.

It became difficult to continue my work with the Army, as I was gone travelling so much. I was proud and honored to serve my country as a member of the U.S. Army. It was an experience I'll never forget.

My antique car is a 1947 Chrysler Windsor Club Coupe which I bought from a friend of a friend in 1974. It had been his car when he was in high school in Philadelphia, PA in the 1950s. The car was in pretty rough shape, but my dad and I managed to

tow it home to our place in Wayne, PA. Since I was still living at home during this time, my dad and brother and I worked



on the *My wife, Sally, and I with the Chrysler car for*

several hours each day, sometimes until late at night. We did most of the work ourselves and we used to drive the car to many of the car shows in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. The Chrysler has resided in Norfolk with Sally and me since 1986 when my dad and brother drove it down here from Wayne, PA. We've enjoyed taking the car to many of the TRAACA meets and functions. It is mostly original and still needs some more work done, mainly electrical. I hope to get a lot of this done within a year.

Bob Stein

My military service is somewhat unusual - I volunteered for the U.S. Air Force in April 1974 as a newspaper writer and later editor, moved to the California Air National Guard (CANG) as an active reservist running the CCTV station in 1977, switched to the U.S. Army where I played



French Horn and Baritone with the U.S. Army Band from 1978-79, then finished up in the U.S.

Navy working out of the Hometown News Release Center and the Naval Operations Base in Norfolk from 1980-1984. The Vietnam war ended while I was still in Basic Training (much to the relief of my parents) and I was sent to George AFB, CA (now closed) in the Mojave Desert.

I was lucky to work on and then inherit the best newspaper (Hi-Desert Flyer) in Tactical Air Command (TAC), but not so lucky when I tried to get off George AFB. Everyone else in the office retired or got transferred, and the base commander got so tired of having the Officer in Charge (OIC) telling him "Just a minute - I'll ask Airman Stein," that he sent the OIC back and made me part of the command staff. I spent the last part of my USAF time with Colonel's sticker! I was also a

favorite for military exercise deployments, where I got a somewhat unusual commendation for being 'extremely resourceful in obtaining supply and equipment items.' Yes, even then I was a scrounge!

Three feature articles were published in Airman Magazine, the newspaper continued to be the best, and I thought I had a career path set. However, my original plan to retire from the Air Force was abandoned when a rified captain was made Editor of the paper due to his technically outranking me. His policies took us from the number #1 spot in all of TAC to #12 out of 13 in a few months, and two of us on staff opted to leave the Air Force, while the third was mercifully transferred.

John T. Blair

I graduated High School in May of 1967 and wanted to go into the Air Force. My dad insisted that I at least try going to college. I caved and went to Old Dominion College and enrolled in Engineering. Well, this was the height of the Vietnam war, and I really didn't want to be in school, so in May of '68 ODC politely told me I needed an attitude adjustment and to take a year off from school--in other words, I flunked out. I knew I'd be getting my draft notice very quickly, but I needed a job. So, I worked for Phillips Bros. Lincoln Mercury in their tire department, selling and installing tires.

Meanwhile, I'd been talking to the Air Force and Navy recruiters, and they wanted a 6-year obligation for Electronics. I wanted advanced electronics (because of my 6 years as ham radio operator WA4OHZ). I took the Navy's entrance and advanced battery of tests and qualified to do anything. So, I enlisted in the Navy Air Reserves for Electronics. My dad, being a retired officer, was able to administer the enlistment oath on October 19, 1969, which was pretty cool. The program I enlisted in was going to send me to Electronics school for 1 year after boot camp. Then I had several options: I could go to the fleet for 2 years or extend for a 4th year and get guar-



I was able to transition to the California Air National Guard unit at Ontario, CA where I picked up a lot of video techniques while making use of stage set-building skills learned in college. When I moved to Los Angeles in 1978, the Army band offered not only an active reserve spot but had the side benefit of money-making gigs that included a Christmas special with Debbie Boone, daughter of Pat Boone. When I moved back to Tidewater in 1980, I was able to switch a final time to the U.S. Navy, where I did stories on sailors and sent them to their local newspapers. All my service transfers were paperwork and uniform only - no other training was required. But I do have to stand up a lot when they recognize the various branches of the service!

anteed shore duty. That was a no brainer, sign me up! Then off to take my physical. They classified me NOT color normal and washed me out of Electronics. There was only one Airedale rate I qualified for and I was coded for an Aviation Maintenance Administration (AZ). They correlate maintenance data on the aircraft.

When I was in Boot camp we filled out a "dream sheet", where I would like to be stationed. I said, "If I have to go away from mommy and daddy, I want to go to an aircraft squadron in California. My orders come in, and what do I get—a bird farm (aircraft carrier CVA-62 - USS Independence) stationed in hometown USA (Norfolk). I report to Norfolk Naval Base and wait from my ship to pull back in from a 2-week outing. My dad was a perfect case for when everything goes right in the Navy. For me, everything was going to go wrong. First there was that bit about not being color normal and washing me out of all the jobs I wanted. Then, when I reported to the ship we went through some classification where the ship's personnel figured out where we were needed. The sailor in front of me was a high school dropout and they made him an AZ (the only thing I could be). I'm up next. My background by now includes 5 years in auto mechanics, 6 years in electronics as a Ham radio operator (WA4OHZ), and Navy Radioman school. I also held a Navy radio call sign (Navy Military Affiliated Radio Service - NØZZJE), was a Net Control Station for a Navy Mars Transcontinental net and had been programming computers for the year I had been in college. They could really use someone like me, right? Sure - NOT! They made me an Avia-

tion Boatswain's Mate pushing planes around on the hanger deck. What a letdown. After that, I checked into the Air Department and the Air Boss started asking me some questions, and I ended up working in the control tower which was really great!

I decided to get out after my 1st hitch and go back to college (ODU) and get my degree in Engineering. Back at ODU, I talked to the Dean of the Engineering School and told him I wanted Mechanical (ME) and Electronics (EE) degrees. He told me I couldn't do that. I asked why and he said because it hadn't been done before. I told him about my mechanical and electronics background to no avail. So, I ended up going for



a Mechanical degree. Following that, I got a job with the Department of the Navy in Simulators. I ended up working for several different commands in my 32 years with DON. I retired in October 2007.

Mickey McChesney

I joined a Naval Air Reserve Unit (VS-751) while still in High School (1957). A number of my friends also joined that year. That was better than the Hometown National Guard Unit, you know. Active duty shortly followed graduation that next year.



The next 27 years were spent building my career and I progressed from Airman Recruit to Chief Warrant Officer 4. As an enlisted sailor, I served as an Aircraft Electricians Mate and, as a CWO, served as an Aircraft Maintenance Control Officer. I worked on all types of aircraft including jets, helicopters and prop driven aircraft. My best tour was my last: I was assigned as acting Maintenance Officer to



build a Maintenance Dept. Two years later, job complete and ready to deploy, I retired (1985).

I got into the antique car hobby the year prior to my retirement with the purchase of a 1956 Chevy Bel Air. I restored many Chevys after that including: two 1932s, 2 more 1956s, one 1955, two 1957s. I currently own a 1982 Buick and a 1984 Olds. The two '32s are my real accomplishment since both cars were complete body off restorations done by me in my shop behind the house. Both of those cars are Grand National Senior cars and one was awarded a National Prize. Both cars are now in a private collection in Canada.

Terry Bond, CTAC, USN

My 23-year Navy adventure/career began in early 1969, during the Vietnam War. Facing the prospect of a sure one-way ticket to the Army, I decided to join the Navy instead. A few months later, my hometown, Battle Creek, MI was in the rear-view mirror and I was headed to



parts unknown.

Following basic training at Great Lakes, IL, I was sent to a special school in Pensacola, FL. I was in the 7th class to graduate from that school and became what was known in the fleet as a "spook." The description seemed to fit because nobody knew what we were or what we did. After a failed effort to "disguise" us as "radiomen" our job title was officially changed to "Cryptologic Technician." I was in the Administrative branch and received my first assignment to Washington, DC. Susan and I had met at Western Michigan University and, just before moving to Washing-

ton, DC, we were married in Park Forest, IL, her home at the time. I was glad she was able to join me, but I'm sure her parents were wondering about what kind of adventure I was taking her away to. In Washington, I worked in a sealed vault with a mix of half military, half civilian, and some retired former Navy. Among them were engineers, scientists and even one who helped break the Japanese code during WWII.

From Washington, we were sent to a small Navy station on the Northeastern coast of Scotland. We lived in the hills on a sheep farm and our landlord just happened to be President of the local antique auto club there. Amazing!

It was after Scotland that I realized a Navy career was beginning to look rather attractive. We returned to the US and spent the next four years at Fort Meade, MD, where I again had the chance to work with some amazing people.

Next, I returned to Scotland where we spent the next three years playing with antique cars once again. Of course, there was Navy work also, but I wasn't really allowed to talk much about that. I still had not been stationed aboard a ship. Yes, there are "dry-land" sailors!

Our return to the US was to Chesapeake and the Naval Security Group Activity Northwest - right down the street on Ballahack Road. Promotions continued and, while there, a number of great accomplishments, including being honored as "Sailor of the Year." Now official Chesapeake residents, we joined the TRAACA but that chapter waits for another opportunity.

Still not having reached the magic "20 year" point, there was one more overseas tour of duty facing me. It was perhaps the most interesting of them all. I was sent to a special Defense Courier station in Sigonella, Sicily for a two year assignment. I was able to travel to many fascinating places while there including Germany, Spain, Greece, Italy, France, Crete, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, Israel, Diego Garcia, Bahrain, and many others. I was even able to add a few aircraft carrier landings and launches to my resume! Since it was considered hardship/dangerous duty, and we were concerned about security for the family, Sue and our children remained home in Chesapeake. In return for taking this assignment, I was guaranteed a return to the Norfolk area, and able to complete my 23 years total at the Fleet Combat Training Center, Dam Neck, in Virginia Beach.

Those years went by so quickly. It's hard to cram the essence into the small space provided, but I did continue a second career with Sentara Healthcare where I helped implement a Veteran's hiring program. In AACA, during my term as National President in 2010, I am proud to have begun the tradition of having our veterans stand to be recognized at our national events.

We're proud to have served.



Joe Gentile

I joined the Navy in December 1983 and became an enlisted Aviation Mechanic Structures (AMS). Then I volunteered to be a Helicopter Naval Aircrew. After Aircrew school I received orders to world-famous Seahawks of HM-16 in Norfolk, VA to fly as an Airborne Mine Counter-



Measures (AMCM) Aircrew in the RH-53D Sea Stallion. The AMCM Squadron was tasked with sweeping and locating sea mines and clearing a path for naval vessels. The crew streams and recovers various mine-sweeping equipment from the ramp of the helicopter. The squadron motto was, "Where the fleet goes, we've been."

In 1984 while attached to Navy Helicopter Mine Countermeasures Squadron HM-16 in Norfolk Virginia, I needed a daily driver and found a 1970 AMX that was advertised in the local Auto Trader magazine for \$1800. It was painted partially gray

with a primer driver side door. The original owner was an Air Force Master Sergeant that registered the car on Langley AFB. So, this AMX had lived its whole life here in the Tidewater area owned by someone in the military. I then received orders to NAS Alameda CA but couldn't work on the car a lot due to having many deployments. In February of 1990, I was transferred back East to Naval Air Development Center (NADC) in Warminster PA. Now that I had a one car garage, I started the restoration of the AMX in my spare time. The car was painted to its original color Sonic Silver in 1991. After I put the car together, I was once again transferred back to Norfolk VA in 1991. My plan was to pull the motor and detail the engine compartment. Once out of the Navy, I wanted to get it back to full stock,

so little by little I worked on restoring the interior and chassis. At the TRAACA Fall show in 2022, I won Best of Show. Then I receive my Junior, Senior and Grand National AACA awards and in 2025 I was presented with the James Melton Memorial Cup given to outstanding senior car for the Southeastern Division.



Skip Patnode

I spent 22 years in the U.S. Navy (1957 to 1979) as an Aircraft Engine Mechanic. After completing schooling and many menial assignments, my shipboard experiences began. I was assigned to Anti-Submarine Aircraft Squadron (VS-25) based in San Diego and operating off the Aircraft Carrier USS Yorktown (CVS10). That's right, the old Yorktown with wooden runway and all which is now a museum in Charleston, SC! Besides working in the Power Plants Shop as an engine mechanic, I also flew as an aircrewman in the S-2 Tracker Aircraft as an electronic equipment operator. I amassed 50 catapult shots and 50 arrested landings, I guess they call them launches and traps today.

My first time testing the aircraft engines at full power was an experience! We were the first plane on the catapult right at the front of the flight deck. Nothing but water ahead. The seasoned mechanic there with me knew what was in store but never told me. He said to do both engines at the same time, so I pushed the throttles forward to do the magneto check then he told me to check full power. Well, as I advanced the throttles and power increased, the nose wheel strut collapsed! I bent the brake pedals and left fingerprints in the controls! He just laughed uncontrollably, knowing that was normal and just sat there waiting for it!

My first flight was a kind of eye opener. The acceleration going down the catapult was fantastic! But, when that ended, I knew we were going to crash. It felt like we were just hanging in midair. The crewman beside me was lighting a cigarette, I figured if we were going to crash, the ocean would put that out! Then, I looked out the window and saw the waves below getting smaller and smaller and the ship getting farther behind so I started to breathe again.

One dark night, off Hawaii, we were flying right on the water when suddenly, a bright red light came on right in front of us. We instantly went up and over and discovered later that a young officer on that ship heard us coming and turned on the mast lights. Had he not done that, we were low enough we probably would have taken out the mast and us with it.

On another night, off the Philippines, it was so hot down in the living spaces that I decided to climb onto the tail of one of our aircraft to sleep. I slept so soundly that I never heard the other planes start up the next morning. The first thing I heard was a plane being launched off the catapult right beside me. The plane I was on was chained down and at the rear of the line on my catapult but that made no difference, I panicked!! Until I finally came to, I hung onto that tail for dear life. I knew I was going flying!! Never did that again.



cover their six packs were how they transported the little target drones. I spent some time as Career Counselor and then they received a shipment of 57-foot target boats with five 427 Chevy V8 engines in them. They discovered that not only was I an Aircraft Engine Mechanic, I was also an automobile engine mechanic. Target boats here I come!

After that assignment, I was transferred to Memphis, Tenn. Where I taught for four years in the same schools I had attended a few years earlier.

From there I went to a target drone squadron (VC-6) in Norfolk, Va. I thought this might be great, they go to sea with six packs, only to dis-

My final destination was the Jet Engine shop at NAS Norfolk. I was not only the shop chief, I became qualified to operate the T64 Turboshaft engine test cell. I also did a lot of liaison work with the various test cell engineers. My last day there, I ended my career by assembling all the troops and thanking each and every one of them for all their help along the way!!

Mark Davidoski

I served in the Navy from 1973 - 2007, retiring after 34 years! After flight training in Pensacola, I was an F-14 Radar Intercept Officer based at NAS Oceana in Virginia Beach. I deployed aboard USS Eisenhower and USS Nimitz worldwide while flying with some of the best fighter pilots ever. We were involved with the aftermath of the Iranian hostage crisis for many months while operating in the Persian Gulf and Northern Arabian Sea. Despite our best efforts to coax Iran's Air Force into the air, it never happened. So, the "highlight" of the cruise was setting the post-WW2 record for consecutive days at sea. We also logged a "Sixpack Cruise" by virtue of holding three beer calls over an 8 1/2 month period. Each beer call included two cans of formaldehyde-stabilized beverages. The after-taste lingers!

Later years included port visits on every continent except Australia and Antarctica. The flying was always fun, as were the free times in places like Cannes, Rio de Janeiro, Gibraltar, Singapore and good old Naples. My wife Kathy was able to meet me in Monte Carlo and in Rio - two very different, but enjoyable places for a visit!

After the Navy I worked for an organization that tested, analyzed and improved Combat Identification systems for the Department of Defense. This helped to minimize friendly fires incidents

while enhancing the lethality of Army, Marine Corps, Navy and Air Force units.

The best road trips were to northern Finland (for a huge exercise that got lots of attention from Mr. Putin) and to White Sands Missile Range, NM (for anti-drone systems testing). Of interest to car people was the popularity of American vehicles within Finland and the other Nordic countries. I enjoyed comparing notes with a studio lighting specialist on the Finnair flight. He was a huge MOPAR fan and was very proud of his antique 300C. Near the main gate for the Finnish Exercise Headquarters was an early 70's El Camino.

I drive a 1974 1/2 MGB - GT with the Tidewater MG Club. We've cruised as far as Louisville, KY with friends and continue to take twice-yearly excursions within about 300 miles of home. I also have a 1954 Healey 100 that is almost ready to emerge from a longer than expected reconstruction. My interest in British cars originated in high school when my older brother had a series of Healeys. Kathy and I look forward to TRAACA shows in the coming months.



Harry G Park, Jr.

United States NAVY
(1987-2007)

I enlisted in Pittsburgh PA as a Fireman Recruit E-1 and attended boot camp and Machinists Mate "A" school in Great Lakes. Upon successful completion, I was assigned to the following commands:

USS VULCAN AR-5
USS Shenandoah (destroyer-tender)
USS WASP LHD-1 (Amphibious Assault ship)

USS Mount Whitney, the flagship and command ship of the United States Sixth Fleet. USS Mount Whitney serves as the Afloat Command Platform (ACP) of Naval Striking and Support



Forces NATO (STRIKFORNATO).

As a Machinists Mate, I worked in the engine room of some of these ships which is pretty much the heart of the ship because we made the power, water, and steam to propel the ship through the water. I also worked in Repair Department on the USS Shenandoah and was deployed to Desert Storm/Shield repairing various ships.

In addition, I was stationed at:
NAS Patuxent River
STAFF DUTY AT TRANSIENT PERSONNEL UNIT, Norfolk
STAFF DUTY JOINT FORCES STAFF COLLEGE

When stationed at Transient Personnel Unit I was selected as Sailor of the Year for NAVAL STATION NORFOLK.

I retired after 20 years as a Chief Petty Officer.

David Cook

I chose the Navy because I wanted to learn a trade that I could use when I got out, and they had the best training program for a machinist than the other branches. Little did I know at the time I would serve 20 years, but I don't regret one second of the time I was in. I served as a US Navy machinist from 1982-2002. I operated lathes, milling machines and drill presses. Basically, I fixed what other people broke..lol.

I was stationed in Norfolk, VA; Charleston, SC; and Groton, CT. My service included a deployment during Desert Storm/Desert Shield, where I was stationed on the USS Iwo Jima (LPH 1) and we carried the Marines into the shore.

I got to see so many parts of the world and experience so many different cultures that I wouldn't have been able to otherwise. While on a port call in Ireland, I kissed the Blarney Stone in Ireland during a hailstorm. No...I wasn't bonked on the head during the hailstorm...lol, but it was an experience I'll never forget!

My car:
1972 Oldsmobile Cutlass Supreme. It is a num-



bers-matching "U" code drivetrain which designates a 455 cubic inch engine and TH400 transmission (approximately only 2,873 were built for 1972). I've owned it since 2018, and I really like that it's a unique car that you don't see every day. I drive it every chance I get, including two trips to Ocean City Maryland for the Endless Summer Cruise in 2018 and 2021, and the OBX Rod and Custom Festival in 2024. The car has won numerous awards including the Best GM runner up in Oct 2021 and Third Junior at the AACA Special Eastern Fall Nationals in 2024.

Pete Koch

I joined the military in 1965 and chose the Navy over the other services because I was intrigued by the challenges of landing on Aircraft Carriers. As a Naval Aviator, my service included flying the A-6A Intruder Aircraft in combat operations and deployments during the Vietnam War and the upgraded A-6E in combat operations in Lebanon and Libya.

During my deployment to Vietnam, we had flight operations in North Vietnam, South Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. All my Carrier-based operations were flying from the USS Constellation on Yankee Station in the South China Sea. Constellation was home ported in San Diego, CA. In North Vietnam, my missions included Operation Rolling Thunder, a massive aerial interdiction campaign, and participation in Blue Tree reconnaissance and Iron Hand anti-Surface-to-Air Missile (SAM) operations with RA-RC Vigilante aircraft.

In Laos, one memorable mission occurred in Vientiane and the Plain of Jars to support covert CIA operations. While Laos was technically neutral, both the US and North Vietnam conducted significant operations there. The Plain of Jars was a strategic location in northern Laos and communist forces fought to gain control here and to maintain the Ho Chi Minh trail, their major supply route. I participated in Operations Steel Tiger, Commando Nail and Commando Bolt, which conducted operations to interdict their use of the trail.

A personal milestone was a temporary assignment to the 7th Air Force at Royal Thai Air Force Base in Nakhon Phanom, Thailand. This was vital to coordinate planning and communications between Air Force F-100's and F-4 Phantoms from Ubon and Udorn bases in Thailand and Navy aircraft from the 2 carriers on Yankee Station striking adjacent targets on the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

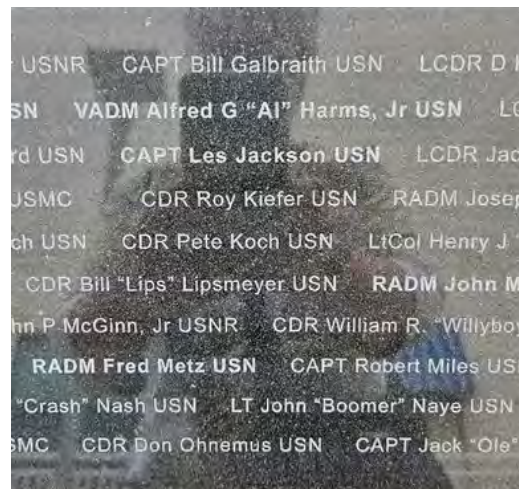
After Vietnam, I participated in USS John F. Kennedy/Carrier Air Wing staff readiness planning for Lebanon/Syria operations and USS Coral Sea / Carrier Air Wing for El Dorado Canyon, "anti-terrorist" retaliation strikes against Libya.

I retired from the U.S. Navy after 24 Years.



As an original owner of a 1965 Pontiac Grand Prix, TRAACA club member Neil Sugermeyer encouraged and sponsored my membership in both the Antique Automobile Club of America and the Tidewater Region of the AACA. I have been proud and honored to know some of most generous, helpful and talented families and friends for the past 35 years as a member of our Antique Automobile community throughout the United States.

Editors note: My family and I visited the Virginia Beach oceanfront on 14 September. We came across the Military Aviation memorial plaza and noticed the Intruder monument. Lo and behold, we found Pete Koch's name on one side of the monument.



In closing, communicating with the various veterans who submitted information for this article touched my heart-again. For, while I was in high school, I had a particular fascination with and was incredibly moved by the boys/men who were not that much older than I was, who were going off to the war in Vietnam. I feared that my brother would be called for the draft and, more than once, I cried tears after hearing about how many men had been killed on a particular operation there. Later, I joined the Army as a nurse to take care of those who-willingly or not-go off to support our country's commitments, even at the risk of their own lives.

So, I have always had a soft spot for veterans, which is what led to my desire to recognize and promote them. Whether that is through volunteering with the AACA Military Sponsorship Program, which provides complimentary membership for one year to those veterans who are interested in joining AACA or through writing an article about them, I am thrilled to share their stories. It has been engrossing to me — as I hope it is for you-to read about their various experiences in the military, whether it was as a pilot, engineer, musician, or sonar technician. Although their experiences are varied, they share similarities: sacrifice, time away from loved ones, education and growth, comradery, fear of the unknown, pride, patriotism, and many others. So, whether we see all their stories in this article or not, look at the list of veterans attached here and know that they have an experience in our American life that is rapidly becoming rarer than ever. On this Veterans Day, just for a mo-

ment, think of their stories. They deserve at least that, but probably much more.

November is also Military Family Appreciation Month. The military family includes spouses, children, parents, and siblings. Military families make significant sacrifices as they support their service members, often without recognition. They may not serve in the same way, but they still experience the upheaval of reassignments and deployments. They integrate into new and different "cultures" with distinct lingo and practices. They experience the stress and fear of a family member in combat. They manage finances, health care, household repairs, and pets. At times they may have to pack, move and unpack their households alone. They may even have to deal with changes in their loved one after a deployment and or the details of final arrangements. Because of this support, they are often integral to the success of the military members. Every one of the veterans in TRAACA had a military family that gave them support in some way. So, on behalf of them, I offer a sincere "Thank You" to all military family members.

Tidewater Region AACA Veterans

Thomas Allan
Jere Avenson
Travis Baker
John Blair
Terry Bond
Boe Bostjancic
Tom Bottoni
Dick Chipchak
Dan Ciccone
John Clark
Dickie Clifton
Bill Coburn
Dave Cook
Mark Davidoski
Scott Davies
Holly Forester
George Galyo
John Gancel
Joe Gentile
Larry Goughan
Ron Hartman
Andrew Heath
Sam Kern

Pete Koch
Frank Linse
Daniel Matthews
Gerry Massie
Mickey McChesney
Herb Mumford
Andy Ott
Harry Park
Skip Patnode
Jack Pavlidis
Tony Scarpelli
Rick Seaman
Frank Sheleheda
Nick Smith
Dennis Sobota
James Stansbury
Bob Stein
Ken Talley
Bill Treadwell
Jim Villers
Matthew Weinstein
James Woodall
Chip Woolford

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