

Delo Megan

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Period 2

Paul Harrington was a photographer in the U.S. Air Force during the Vietnam War and from 1960 to 1981. He joined the Air Force when he was twenty years old after he got laid off from his job as a photographer for the Boston Globe, which got shut down when people went on strike. His father encouraged him to join the Air Force since Harrington's brother was in the Air Force. Harrington claimed he wasn't manly enough to join the marines, so he joined the Air Force, seeing it was a better fit.

Harrington took tons of pictures in Tokyo, Vietnam, Korea and many other places during his time in the Air Force. One picture he took in Tokyo in the 1970s was of the riots and the rioters. A story he had of one of the riots was that his helmet was knocked off during the riot and one of the cops picked up and returned the helmet to Harrington, he was astonished that he would pick up the helmet although the streets and situation were crazy, and said he realized these people had feelings and were humans too. He also took a picture in a temple where they were taking victims from the F86 and all Nippon Boeing 727 collision near Sendi, Japan. He explained how emotional that experience was.

While Harrington did take some pictures in calm settings, he also put himself in danger when taking action shots of war scenes and other crazy scenarios. In 1972 he almost got shot by a sniper when taking a picture during a battle. He explained to us how he heard the bullet pass

over his head, and said that was the biggest near death experience during his time as a photographer for the Air Force. Harrington also explained to us how he never strapped on his helmet because if he got shot in the head he would want the helmet to fall off and not snap his neck, which explains how his helmet fell off at the riots as well. He told us that his first combat mission was in 1966 in Vietnam where the FAC (Forward Air Controller) spotted some North Vietnamese on a hill; he turned to Harrington and asked if he had a gun as the FAC rolled his aircraft in on the target and opened fire with a CAR-15. Harrington also told us how he crash landed twice once in 1966 and once in 1969. He told us that the crash in 1966 was caused because the pilot got shot in the hand and so Harrington had to help run the gas of the plane and land it. The crash in 1969 was a routine landing but the dropped gear collapsed and the engine broke off making them crash land in front of the marines watching the landing. Harrington, being the photographer that he is, jumped and was the first one out, shooting pictures of the whole crash.

One pretty magnificent thing from the interview with Harrington was him bringing and showing us great pictures that he took from over the years and also the fact that he brought an old rusty gun that he found, which made for a very interesting story. He showed us the gun that he found on the beach of Iwo Jima, that he assumed had been buried for twenty-seven years and also that the owner must have died along the beach. During King High Remembers he was able to find someone to identify the gun as an M1, which was also interesting and cool because he was unsure of the type of gun and it was able to be identified after all that time. He shared with us that in WWII the Americans slept with their guns so he figured that they would not leave their gun behind on the beach and therefore the owner of the gun had probably been killed. While he had some scary and sad jobs, Harrington told us that he also had a lot of fun jobs. Harrington told

us how in 1965 he saw a man take out his glass eye and saw a Vietnamese girl freak out and scream. The Sapporo Winter Olympics and the covering of the first girls at Air Force academy were also memorable and enjoyable shoots he was able to do during his time. With a bit of humor he told us about the time he was scolded at by President Lyndon B. Johnson for taking too many pictures at a war duty station in Omaha, Nebraska. While he was stationed at March Air Force Base, he also took some pictures in Riverside of a residential area of kids and women; he described a picture of a boy with his injured dog. Another sad picture he took was in Rialto of a man in tears after his young daughter drowned in a pool. It seems that Paul Harrington had many photographs that made the front page and were captured because of his determination to cover what needed to be covered, no matter what other people had thought.

We asked what his most memorable photography job he had was and he explained to us that it was the prisoners of war return in 1973. He explained to us that he fought Stars and Stripes newspaper to cover the story. The emotions and pictures he captured that day were ones that he would and could never forget, he even brought in one of the photos from the return and it was breathtakingly beautiful and heart wrenching. He also told us that the memorial night after the return of the prisoners of war was another night he could never forget. It seems that he had to fight to cover a lot of stories that ended up resulting in great photographs, especially his last job in 1981 for President Reagan's inauguration, which he covered as an aerial photographer.

At thirty-seven years old, Paul Harrington, who had never been sent to survival school finally went and eventually enjoyed it. Survival school was full of torture and being treated badly. At around thirty-nine or forty years old, he decided to retire because of age and his three children. After working for 21.5 years in the Air Force he retired in 1981. He kept up with

photography by covering Natalie Wood's death and working for the Associated Press for 23.7 years until finally retiring from that in 2004.