

Jessica Bautista  
Crystal Awabdy  
Noah Cyr

George Riolo  
Navy Reserve  
26 years

### George Riolo EMI (SS) USN-R (Ret.)

On March 20th, 2015, we had the privilege of interviewing Navy veteran, George Riolo. He was very enthusiastic about sharing his stories from when he was in the Navy. George was born and raised in San Diego, California. He graduated from Lincoln High School in 1965 and joined the Navy Reserve shortly after. He joined quickly because there was a conscription at that time requiring all boys who were eighteen and older to register. “The only way to get out was if you were gay, very rich, or in the Peace Corps,” Riolo said when first talking about his experience.

He specialized in the electrical field, just like his brother. George was a submarine electrician. Instead of going to boot camp he went to submarine school, in San Francisco. He flew from San Diego to San Francisco and when he had landed, he was walking out of the terminal and there were war protesters. One of the protesters asked if he liked killing innocent babies and civilians. George was shocked and felt rather offended. He felt like the war was useless because no Vietnamese people were doing him harm and he felt it was a pointless war. The submarine school is where he got his first taste of anti-war sentiment.

After he went to submarine school, George was finally ready to be on a submarine and was assigned to the U.S.S Remora was the submarine. It was a little bigger than 100 yards long, more than a football field. He found out his brother was on the same submarine as he was!

George Riolo was first stationed in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii from 1966 to 1968. He explained how his mother and father were both in Pearl Harbor when it was bombed in 1941. He explained that a bomb actually landed in their backyard but did not detonate. He said, "Back then the weapons used in the early stages of World War II were not that advanced and some of them didn't work."

After leaving Pearl Harbor, George received the Congressional Unit Citation in 1968, which was also the year he left the Reserves. The first day he reported on board ship, he and his crew set sail in the 100 yard USS Remora SS487 Submarine. It was a 60 day run out at sea. They were patrolling the islands between Russia and Alaska, in the Bering Sea. During their run, a Russian destroyer ship spotted their periscope and detected their submarine. The USS Remora then dropped 350 feet and didn't surface for two days. It got stuffy and humid and started to smell very bad. After they surfaced, they continued monitoring Russian shipping.

George Riolo says it was very serious at sea even though they were not in combat. The base took care of him and his shipmates. He says he had it easy, but the only thing he did not like doing was washing dishes and serving food. Riolo said it was more relaxed in the reserves. The attire was very casual when out at sea, considering that his crew was just in a submarine, so no one really saw them.

There is a medal he earned by learning the entire submarine. It is called his Dolphins. It takes about a year to earn and it is a very memorable accomplishment because he did not just get it for serving and being on a submarine, he got it by doing more than that. George Riolo was very happy and excited to share his Dolphins with us. He was proud and even wore his decorated vest to show them off.

After George got out of the Navy, he went to San Diego State University using the GI Bill. He was interested in, and took classes for shop and photography and eventually when he was through with school he became a high school teacher for 33 years. Some of the other benefits he received from being in the Navy was that he bought a house without a down payment and he and his wife receive free medical care that is very beneficial. He has been retired for six years and is now rebuilding an old '62 Volkswagen for enjoyment. We had an amazing time interviewing George Riolo, and we hope he returns to King High Remembers in the future so he can share his military experiences with other King High School students.