

Savannah Mellott

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Otto Hartman

We had the honor of interviewing a heroic man named Otto Hartman. He is 82 years old, born in 1935. He grew up in Fort Wayne, Indiana and currently lives in Riverside, California. Otto Hartman served in the United States Naval Services for a total of 26 years. The Naval Service is the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard. He spent most of his time, 22 years to be exact, in the Marines in aviation.

He was an Aircraft mechanic and quality assurance.

With just 10 years of education he joined the service in 1956. His mother's older son were in World War 2 which had an impact on why he went in. Sadly Mr. Hartman is the only one left from his family that served.

Mr. Hartman was first sent to a Navy base in Jacksonville to a peace group where he was to learn about aircrafts. There he learned basic aircraft mechanics. With help from his buddy and a lot of practice he passed the test. He was then sent to Memphis, Tennessee to be interviewed by the citizens to see what job he would take on. He was told he would be a hydraulic mechanic. Basically any tubes or hoses broken on an engine would go to Mr. Hartman. He also worked on landing gear and flight control. After Tennessee he was sent to North Carolina to work in repairing stations. While working at a pump shop he was stationed at he realized he liked the work so he began tearing down noses of jet engines.

He was then sent overseas to Iwakuni, Japan in 1963. There he was assigned to VMCI1. While there he was on the USS Midway. The only difference between him and the Navy was he

wore green pants and the Navy wore blue. While in Japan he became the final checker for airplanes on the carrier. An interesting fact he shared was the way they would know if there was a leak or diagnose what the leak was would be to take their finger and put it in the leak then taste it. He told us that it would always taste very nasty.

When this visit was over he was sent to the Vietnam war. It took about a week to get there and by the time they arrived the war was over. He was on USS 4 Star which flew Combat Air Patrol . He also took part in the Cuban crisis as well as the Dominican Republic crisis, where he also flew Combat Air Patrol. Later in his career going to New River, North Carolina where he made staff sergeant. He was able to take some down time occasionally and went on a Caribbean cruise twice. One of his cruises he would check the boats to make sure they were safe.

He was awarded with the Presidential Citation and Navy Unit Commendation medal. Many were very confused on how he received the Navy Unit medal because you have to be in the Navy to receive this award. When he came home he asked the Marines if he could transfer to become an AC & Refrigeration Mechanic, they said no.

Mr. Hartman believes the government made an investment in him by taking him into the Military, especially since he went into the mechanical field. This meaning if they needed him there, he would be there. With that investment he got transferred to a support group and got quality insurance. Another part of the investment was a give or take, that was the food and sleep. In the contract he signed it said they would feed him 3 meals a day whether that be a nice sit down or a can of food while he was marching. However, in the contract it never said anything about sleeping.

Otto Hartman is a very inspirational and brave man who took pride in what he did. The joy in his eyes from explaining jet planes to us was just astonishing. He will always have a warm

place in our hearts. We thank him for his service and believe he is a true American hero, even if he does not believe so himself.